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**Dominant notions of masculinity fuelling violence among young  
male students Durban South Africa**

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL SCIENCE  
IN POPULATION STUDIES

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## **Declaration**

I **Kwanele Mndebele** (216016702) declares that:

1. The research presented in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
2. This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any university.
3. All the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.
4. This dissertation does not contain any graphics, texts or tables copied from the internet unless specifically acknowledged and the source being detailed in the dissertation and in the reference section.
5. I understand that the University of KwaZulu-Natal may take disciplinary action against me if there is a belief and proof that this is not my own unaided work or that I have failed to acknowledge the source of the ideas or words in my writing.
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**Signature:** K.M Mndebele 2022/12/05

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

First and foremost, I would like to thank God for granting me the opportunity to pursue my Master's degree. I would also like to thank him for granting me the strength and wisdom to fulfil my studies. Secondly, I would like to express immense gratitude to my parents, who have granted me the opportunity to further my studies. I would like to express an immense gratitude to my Academic Supervisor, Prof Pranitha Maharaj. I am grateful for her immense support and guidance throughout this journey. I am extremely grateful for their unwavering support, prayers, love and patience with me through this journey. I would like to thank my close family and friends for their continuous support, encouragement and prayers.

Lord I am Grateful for your Mercy.

## **Abstract**

Universities are increasingly becoming hotspots for violent crimes such as murder, suicide, intimate partner violence, collective violence, and many other violent acts that have made headlines across the country. The prevalence of highly violent acts influenced the need to look at the socialization of young men into manhood as boys face challenges when they transition into manhood. This study aims to shed insights into notions of masculinity influencing violent behaviours among young male students in Durban. This research analyses the intersection of masculinity perceptions relative to violent behaviours to aid in expanding knowledge of intervention strategies. The sampling technique was purposive sampling to ensure that the information gathered from fifteen participants reflected the research objectives. The study used the thematic analysis method as a data collection tool to ensure meaningful, trustworthy, and insightful qualitative results. Social constructivism theory was used to provide further insights and understanding of how young men learn and model that masculinity can influence violent behaviours.

The interviews indicate that the behaviour of young men at the university is primarily influenced by masculinity ideas that society has already expected them to conform to. The interviews suggest that young men at tertiary institutions strive to continuously achieve and maintain their social status by engaging in behaviours that align with social values perceived to be masculine. Furthermore, the findings indicate that some young men in tertiary institutions adhere to patriarchal ideals to strengthen their masculinity, earn respect, and maintain their social position, which may influence how frequently they use violence. Among higher education institutions, there is a gap in implementing more programs aimed at addressing gender norms and transforming modern masculinities to aid in combatting violence. The study identifies a great need for universities to provide professional services such as psychosocial support, online education programs, and organized forums and dialogues relating to violence among young males at universities.

## **ACRONYMS**

<b>AIDS</b>	-/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
<b>DUT</b>	-Durban University of Technology
<b>GBV</b>	-Gender-Based Violence
<b>HIL</b>	-Higher Institutions of Learning
<b>HIV/AIDS</b>	- Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>LAN</b>	- Local Area Network
<b>LGBTQI</b>	- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer
<b>MKO</b>	- More Knowledgeable Other
<b>MUT</b>	-Mangosuthu University of Technology
<b>PSET</b>	-Post-School Education and Training sector
<b>SADAG</b>	-South African Depression and Anxiety Group
<b>SADF</b>	-South African Defence Force
<b>SAPS</b>	-South African Police Services
<b>UKZN</b>	-University of KwaZulu-Natal
<b>ZPD</b>	- Zone of Proximal Development
<b>WHO</b>	-World Health Organisation

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## **Chapter one- Introduction**

### **1.1 Background to the study**

Violence has always been a part of human history. Around the world, its effects can be felt in several different ways. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Global Homicide Study, men account for 95% of homicide perpetrators and 79% of homicide victims worldwide. Men also outnumber women in every violent crime category (Gibbons, 2014). Literature indicates that there is concern that young males between 18 and 35 are more likely to commit physical violence against children, intimate relationship violence, bullying, and sexual abuse and exploitation (DeKeseredy, 2020). The author highlights that there is no single definition of violence because it varies among cultures and nations. Kambon and Henderson (2008:06) define violence as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological, maldevelopment, or deprivation”.

Additionally, the World Health Organization (2015:36) defines youth violence as “physical or psychological injury done to people either purposefully or as a result of negligence that involves young people as offenders, victims, or both; or that poses a risk to the youth.” In the context of this study, youth violence is defined as the deliberate use of physical force or power by young people between 18 and 35 to threaten or hurt others. Youth violence substantially correlates with child abuse, intimate relationship violence, and self-inflicted violence (Ferdon et al., 2019).

Literature suggests that there is a link between negative notions of masculinity as predominant factors reinforcing violent behaviours among young men in South Africa (Yesufu 2022). The South African Police Services (2020) reported that the country recorded 2,771 murders of women in 2018–19, which translate to one woman killed every three hours. The evidence of violence against women and children recorded from the period of 2015 to 2020 found that 13,815 women aged over 18 years were killed over that past 5-year period. This translates to about seven women murdered daily, or 2,763 homicides yearly (Khumalo, 2020). To better understand the significance of this phenomenon, this research explores how dominant notions of manhood are fuelling the increase of violent incidents in the country.

he World Health Organisation reports that more than (30%) of university students have experienced a common mental disorder. Furthermore, in South African universities, a prevalence of 30.6% of students had thought of suicide in a year and 20.8% of first years had experienced anxiety, and 13% had experienced depression in the year 2020 (Owusu-Ansah et al, 2020). The author discussed self-directed violence as a significant concern affecting many South African university students. In South Africa, self-directed violence is becoming increasingly common. Drawing from Taljaard (2013) “suicide is the second most frequent cause of mortality among university students after accidents”. In relation the context of this study, self-directed violence was discussed as suicidal behaviour and self-abuse. Self-abuse includes behaviours such as self-mutilation. Suicide is the world's thirteenth leading cause of death. Self-inflicted injuries are the sixth leading cause of illness and disability and the fourth leading cause of death among people aged 15 to 44 (Maple & Sanford, 2020).

Men are more than four times more likely than women to commit suicide (Bantjes, Kagee, and Meissner, 2017). The author highlights those young men among South African universities are increasingly engaging in self-directed violence. In early March 2019, a 21-year-old first-year student at the University of Pretoria tried to commit suicide by hanging herself. A week later, Kago Moagi, a 19-year-old student at Witwatersrand University, jumped from the sixth floor of the Braamfontein building. There were also approximately 23 suicide attempts at Pretoria University and other cases from different universities (Rousseau et al, 2020). In a one-day workshop held at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) Westville campus, attended by more than 30 psychologists and counsellors from student support services from all four of colleges, Dr Jacqui von Cziffra-Bergs of the Solution Focused Institute of South Africa highlighted that the university is currently faced with rising incidences of self-directed violence (CBD workshops, 2020)

The focus of this study is on interpersonal violence affecting university students. South Africa has one of the highest rates of interpersonal violence (IPV) in all forms. Interpersonal violence makes up approximately half of all fatal injuries in South Africa. Unfortunately, most attacks are frequently undetected, resulting in major challenges for the legal, financial, and healthcare systems (Frade & Wet-Billings, 2019). According to Jawaharet et al. (2017:19), “Interpersonal violence involves the intentional use of physical force or power against other persons by an individual or small group. Interpersonal violence may be physical, sexual, or psychological (also called emotional violence) and may involve deprivation and neglect”. Literature reflects that the impact of interpersonal violence among young men is

significant (Moe, Villaveces, Rivara and Rahbar, 2021). Most cases, particularly those involving victims who identify as LGBTQI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer), go unreported or, if reported, are not followed up on and investigated (Taliep, 2021). The basis of this evidence highlights an emphasis on the significance of interpersonal violence among young men in South Africa.

The author discussed collective violence as a crisis that affects higher institutions of learning in South Africa. Collective violence refers to violence committed by larger groups of people and is divided into three types: social, political, and economic violence (Ham et al., 2019). Protests and public or social demonstrations that include implicit or explicit violence or aggression are considered violent. Violent wars between nations and groups, terrorism by states and groups, rape as a weapon of war, mass displacement from homes, and gang warfare are all examples of collective violence (Tilly, 2003). South Africa has a long history of racial violence. Throughout apartheid, collective violence was the only means for people to express their wrath and demand their needs and rights. To resist social disparity, the young generation transmitted the culture of group violence to the modern day. Numerous scholars have argued that the protest movement that dominated South Africa's political scene in the 1980s and 1990s continues to play a significant role in the post-apartheid environment (Alexander, 2010).

## **1.2 Rationale for the study**

It is important to consider the context in which men form their identities to better understand men and the development of their behaviours. Gender roles significantly impact young men's development. The focus of this study is male identity (Grogan, 2021). Multiple researchers have heavily debated what constitutes masculinity. According to Messner and Sabo (1994:16) “masculinity consists of those behaviours, languages, and practices that exist in specific cultural and organizational locations that are commonly associated with males and thus culturally defined as not feminine.” Every society has a robust cultural image of a specific gender (Messner & Sabo, 1994). Men's positions in society have always been seen as being highly significant. Boys are expected to meet society's expectations for whom they ought to be at birth. They are exposed to men and their social, cultural, political, and economic activities from birth in their society (Jewkes & Morrell, 2018)

Furthermore, the world in which they are born introduces them to men and behaviours on a social, cultural, political, and economic level. According to Jewkes and Morrell (2018: 99),

“Masculinity is defined as a set of practices into which individual men are inserted in terms of upbringing, family, neighbourhood, work, and sub-cultural influences.” Socioeconomic positioning has such a profound impact on men's sense of self that men's personalities are constructed through social structures that exist in addition to individual decisions. This necessitates the development of traits that influence the need for responsibility for others, dressing, speaking, dominating, being violent, physically strong, being a provider, being a leader, recklessness, and many other social characteristics attributed to men by various societies (Jewkes & Morrell, 2018).

An un-masculine individual would behave differently, according to Jewkes and Morrell (2018: 23), “being peaceable rather than forceful, conciliatory rather than domineering, hardly able to kick a football, uninterested in sexual conquest, and so forth.” This study aims to comprehend how young men's violent behaviours and masculinity growth are related. Willie et al. (2018:

89) claim that “young males are overrepresented in gangs, soldiers, and militaries and that men and boys commit 90% of all violent crimes worldwide, which suggests that masculinity may

be a factor in conflicts and juvenile violence”. Young men do not grow up to be violent. However, specific pressures and experiences drive them to engage in violent behaviour. According to Langa (2020) “Young men are pushed into roles they do not need to play due to a lack of resources, options, and opportunities, as well as societal pressures to be forceful and dominant”. Masculine ideals, such as the restriction of emotional expression and the pressure to conform to dominant and aggressive expectations, may increase the likelihood of boys engaging in general acts of violence, such as bullying, assault, and physical and verbal aggression.

### **1.3 Problem statement**

It is widely acknowledged that young men face challenges in their transition to their manhood. Literature shows that young boys encounter difficulties in his transition to manhood as they must meet the expected demands of society of what it means to be a real man. According to the World Health Organisation (2020), men in South Africa are more likely than women to commit suicide. Studies have been conducted to understand the roots and triggers of men's social conduct or misconduct (Steiner, Butler, and Ellison, 2014). Without doubt, men are often guilty of causing social ills but the pressures on men is often not acknowledged and recognised. In most instances, the focus is on their conduct. Less attention is given to interrogating and reflecting on how masculine notions are formed and subsequently practised, and the influence

of social settings on these processes (Zounlome, Wong, Klann, and David, 2021). Studies have associated socialization of boys to manhood as the fuel to their comfort in increasingly and continuously engaging in violent acts (Herbert, 2018). In this context, South African universities are increasingly becoming violent places, reporting an increasing number of different forms of violence each year. Male students are reported to be mostly the offenders in these cases (Beyene et al., 2019).

In the midst of these challenges in taking steps to making campuses safer environments, there is a need to add the topic of masculinity into the literature of factors fuelling violence among male students. The level of crime and violence among male students is reported to be high, however the causes of such levels have not been investigated in relation to masculinity ideologies that are held by different ethnic groups which in turn can breed conflicts or violence under certain socio-economic conditions. This study aims to explore the dominant notions of masculinity that fuel violence among young male students, to prevent and construct intervention strategies against the increasing reported cases of student violence in South African universities.

#### **1.4 Research objectives**

The overall objective is to shed insights into the role of dominant notions of masculinity that fuel violence among young men students.

The specific objectives of this study are:

- To explore attitudes to the use of violence among young male students.
- To explore how dominant notions of masculinity shape violent behaviour among young male students.
- To ascertain opportunities and constraints for changing behaviour among male students in Durban.

In order to achieve these objectives, the study attempts to answer these fundamental questions.

- What are the perspectives and experiences of violence among young male students in Durban?
- How are notions of Masculinity formed among young male students in Durban?
- What are the opportunities and constraints for changing behaviour among young male students in Durban?

## **1.5 Theoretical Framework**

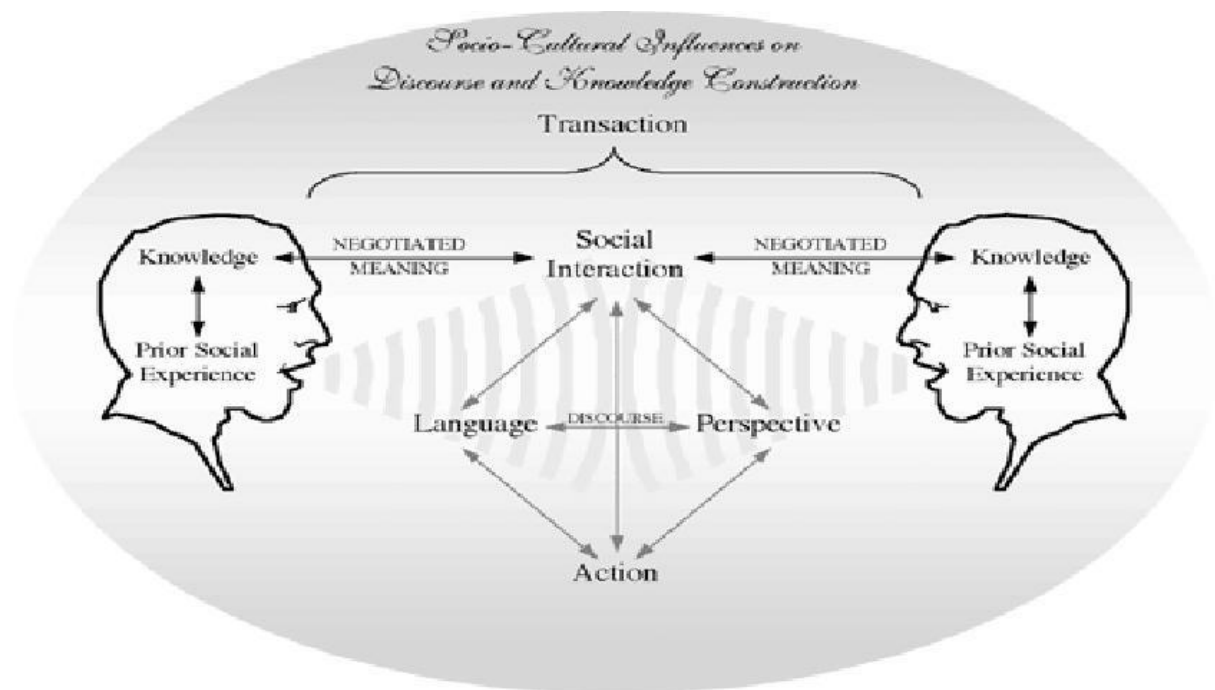
This study utilized the social constructivism theory as a theoretical framework to explore dominant notions of masculinity that fuel violence against young male students at the Howard campus. Social constructivism theory was proposed by a Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934). The theorist under question is the father of social constructivism. Vygotsky followed the work of John Piaget, which is attributed to constructivism's roots. Vygotsky recognized the larger socio-cultural framework, whereas Piaget concentrated on the stages of child development and the socio-cultural context. Vygotsky emphasizes that social interaction comes before development and that socialization and social actions lead to consciousness and cognition (Mohammed, and Kinyó, 2020). Social constructivism emphasizes the relevance of culture and context in understanding what happens in society and building knowledge based on this understanding. The fundamental principle of social constructivism is knowledge, reality, and learning. Every society has exceptional standards and expectations of male social behaviour (Topçiu & Myftiu, 2015).

Three fundamental presumptions underlie this theory: reality, learning, and knowledge (Brau, 2020). Themes such as social interaction, the more knowledgeable other (MKO), and the zone of proximal development are also explained (ZPD). Human effort, according to this theory, creates reality. People in society collectively shape the characteristics of the world. This concept is devoid of reality. It did not exist prior to its social invention. He goes on to say that social connection is essential for cognitive development. Social learning occurs before developmental processes. Every cultural function that a child goes through manifests itself twice, first on a social level and a personal level, according to him (Topçiu & Myftiu, 2015). In this study, a child's social demonstrations or teachings are internalized first, and then the child practices the teachings individually.

Social constructivism, education is a social process. It does not only happen to one person, nor is it a passive evolution of actions influenced by the environment (McLeod, 2020). People learn more effectively when participating in social activities. The social level is between people, and it is called the inner psychological level. The individual level is inside the child, and it is called the intra-psychological level. At the inner psychological level, the child learns through contacts and interactions with people, and later the child assimilates and internalizes this knowledge, adding personal value to it (Vygotsky, and Cole, 2018). This theory argues that knowledge is a human product and is socially and culturally constructed. Individuals create meanings through their interaction with each other and with the environment they live in.

Vygotsky elaborates on the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) concept. MKO is defined as “someone who has a greater grasp or higher competence level regarding a particular task, process, or concept than the learner. The MKO is often a teacher, coach, or older adult, but it could also be a peer, a younger person, or even a computer” (Vygotsky, 1980:70). The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), as defined by Maclead (2019:15), is “the gap between the level of potential development as determined by problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers and the level of actual developmental level as determined by independent problem-solving.” The child's capacity for problem-solving and the support they receive are highlighted in this defence. ZPD is explained as when a teacher and a student collaborate to finish a task that is too hard for the student to finish independently. (Maclead, 2019).

**Figure 1.1: The social constructivism theory**



**Source: Doolittle (2001)**

The above diagram demonstrates the collaborative nature of learning. Social constructionist knowledge develops when people interact with each other. Young men rely on their environment, parents, role models, and culture to develop knowledge to construct their knowledge and perceptions of the world. This theory assisted the researcher in understanding that young men's knowledge and understanding of masculinity evolve from social negotiation. This reflects that new knowledge is developed, obtained, and expanded from the social interaction of young men with other men. The exchange of ideas goes along with human contact. This study teaches young men how to become men through meanings modelled and passed down by their surroundings. Using this theory, the researcher explored ideas young men have acquired and prioritized to develop their masculine identities that may encourage the perpetration of violent incidents (Surenda, 2022).

## **1.6 Structure of the dissertation**

This research is divided into five chapters. The first chapter focused on the study's background. It then goes over the study's rationale, problem statement, and research aim, objectives, and questions. This chapter concluded by discussing the theoretical framework utilised and the overall structure of the study. The second chapter presented a literature review on masculinity and violence, reviewed masculinity perceptions among young men in the country, and examined the prevalence of violence in South African universities. This chapter examined masculinity norms that may influence young men's violent behaviour. The literature on masculinity norms was used to comprehend young men's perspectives on violence and manhood. The third chapter examined the research methodology of the study. This chapter outlines the methods, tools, and methods used to gather, evaluate, and process information. The fourth chapter covered the main findings of the interviews. The last chapter provided a discussion of the main findings of the interviews. The chapter concludes with suggestions for further interventions.



## **Chapter Two- Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a review of literature focusing on the intersection of dominant notions of masculinity and violent behaviours among young men. Masculinity consists of different meanings and has constantly changed over time. Knowledge of dominant notions of masculinity are derived from different social organizations, cultural differences, epistemological perspectives, diversity, and other societal elements that contribute to shaping a masculine identity (Cheryan, and Markus, 2020). The focus of young men as a result of selection of young men as a community context to focus the research project is derived from the comprehensive epidemic of Gender-based violence and increasing violent incidents in most South African universities yearly (Mahabeer, 2021). This raises interest in how notions of masculinity are perceived and interpreted through influencing violent behaviours and how the comprehensive violence plague can be condensed through developing prevention strategies to create a safe environment for higher learning institutions. Firstly, this chapter discusses theories by previous authors to understand the construction of a male character and South African masculinities. Secondly, this chapter presents of a discussion of violence prevalence in South African societies. The author follows by discussing violence in South African Universities. Lastly, this chapter reviewed literature on the intersection of violence, inequality, unemployment, alcohol, and masculinity.

### **2.2 Understanding masculinity**

The term masculine generally refers to behaviours and traits associated with the male gender. Masculinity can be interpreted as having characteristics that are traditionally thought to be suitable for men (Franklin, 2012). “The idea is that men are supposed to act in a certain way according to socially constructed definitions, and those who are diverse from accepted meanings of men are referred to as less masculine” (Berger, Wallis, and Watson, 2012). Masculinity emanates from the conception of gender roles. Gender roles are also known as sex roles, they determine how males and females should speak, think, dress, and intersect with society (Carrigan, Connell, and Lee, 2018). The internalization of male and female behaviours and practices related to culture, religion, social class and other social factors affect the formulation of gender identities (Bussey, 2011).

According to Kharbe, (2016: 22) “Cultural notions of feminine and masculine behaviours are shaped in part by observations about what women and men do. This kind of gender marking tends to discourage women or men from entering gender-inauthentic occupations”. This explains the conception of gender identities, which indicate that the image of men and women is fabricated through assigned social roles which predetermine the gender stereotypes about behaviours of men and women in specific regions (Ellmers, 2018). According to Rind, Shahriar, and Sangi, (2018:07) “Gender stereotypes refers to a generalised view or preconception about attributes, or characteristics that are or ought to be possessed by women and men or the roles that are or should be performed by men and women”. This research study seeks to fill in a gap of knowledge in relation to understanding the power of dominant notions of masculinity in shaping violence among male students in Durban, South Africa.

Masculinity scholars have attempted to understand men's behaviour by examining the ideology of individuality and essentialism. Drawing from Mfecane, (2018: 23) “humans are described as being by nature individualistic, creative, imaginative, and rebellious.” Furthermore, the individualistic theory explains society as made up of autonomous individuals, and the structure is the result of their conscious decisions and actions. The individual act is portrayed in this statement as a rational, purposeful pursuer of masculinity and an active agent in its attainment (Mfecane, 2018). This theory explains that behaviours relating to maleness are based on decisive individual choice. Masculinity exists only as acts undertaken by the individual within an environment made up, among other things, of other individuals in this framework of individuality (Goncalo, and Staw, 2006).

In addition, some scholars have produced understanding of masculinity based on the essentialist perspective. “This ideology suggests that males and females’ behaviours are influenced by unchangeable qualities that determine who they are.” As a result, all men have essentially masculine qualities, and all women have essentially feminine qualities (Maaranen, and Tienari, 2020). This contribution of knowledge explains how and why men and women behave in particular ways and how the criteria of ideas are set in different communities to shape a masculine character. The overall idea of the essentialist is that men and women are naturally distinct; therefore, their social roles, behaviours, and characters will also be different (Valenius, 2020). Concerning the context of this study, essentialists explain violent behaviours as influenced by unchangeable natural qualities that formulate manhood in society.

This study further explores the sexist, stereotyping and machismo attitudes related to masculinities that shape violent behaviours among young people. According to Swim, and Hyers, (2009: 16) “Sexism is a systemic form of prejudice, stereotyping or discrimination against people based on their gender”. It is a belief that one’s gender is superior or more valuable than the other. According to Swim, and Campbell, (2003: 34) “Sexism consists of attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, and practices at the individual, institutional, and societal level that involve negative evaluations of people or promote unequal treatment based on gender”. Sexism is highlighted to reinforce patriarchal ideas and help ensure male dominance in society (Ncube, 2020). The literature indicates that senior and young women in South Africa are primarily affected by this prejudice as evidence reflects that there is a high rate of incidences of gender-based violence directed to women occurring in the country (Kgatla, 2020). Statistics in South Africa reflect that one in five women have experienced physical violence at the hands of their partners (Statistics South Africa, 2017). This study recognises the occurrence of these incidences reflects a form of sexism known as misogyny (Ncube, 2020). Misogyny refers to hatred and prejudice against women (Srivastava et al., 2017). This study highlights that most knowledge produced on sexism puts an emphasis that sexism mostly affects women. However, what is less understood and mostly not acknowledged is the impact of sexism on concepts of masculinity and male culture.

Machismo is generally defined as a set of persistent sexist attitudes that defend and justify the superiority and dominance of men over women (Mosher, 1991). According to Mosher (1991: 199), machismo is defined as “a strong or exaggerated sense of manliness; an assumptive attitude that virility, courage, strength, and entitlement to dominate are attributed or concomitants of masculinity.” Under the term machismo, men are characterized as aggressive, independent and dominant. On the other hand, women are characterized as weak, dependent, and submissive (Ingoldsby, 1985). For instance, machismo ideas encourage men not to express emotion because they reflect weakness. In this regard men are encouraged not to cry or express feelings of joy the same as women (Mosher, 1991). Drawing from Ratele (2014:25) “men are punished or shamed when they do not conform to traditional masculine norms”. Machismo ideologies are closely connected with hegemonic masculinity ideas that exaggerate the role of men in societies (Hamdar, 2004).

Messerchmidt (2005:198) adds “hegemonic masculinity is the culturally idealized form of masculinity in each historical and social setting. It is honoured, glorified such as the boarder societal level (e.g., through mass media) and at the institutional level (e.g., in schools) and is

constructed in relation subordinated masculinities (e.g., homosexuality) and in relation to women”. This study highlights those hegemonic masculinities are prevalent in most South African societies and have been built thought-out history as socially desirable and powerful than other forms of gender identities.

Hegemonic masculinities socialise male as providers, showing dominance over others, physical strength valued over intellect, males portrayed reflecting anger, revenge or as superheroes through media and encourages risk taking behaviours (Wilz, 2019). Unlearning of hegemonic masculinity norms is mostly not reviewed and demonstrated to young men in learning environments. This study seeks to expand knowledge related to unlearning dominant hegemonic masculinity norms to reduce violence among young male students in Durban, South Africa.

### **2.3 South African masculinities**

There many forms of masculinities and are socially constructed by individuals, the society and the environment. Therefore, a version of masculinity that is valued by other societies can be of no value for another society (Talbot & Quayle, 2010). The following is the exploration and presentation of literature on masculinity in the South African context. “Military masculinities have been discussed as present in young men in modern South African societies”. Military masculinities refer to the idea that real men are soldiers and real soldiers are men (Furneaux, 2016). The ideas stem from the idea of courage and devotion of men to protect and die for their families, communities and countries (Furneaux, 2016).

In the South African context military masculinities were more present during the Apartheid era, where young men were encouraged to join resisting liberation movements against the apartheid government participating in liberation campaigns reflected a brave and heroic character in that era. Soldiers who survived were given validation names such as (*Iqhawe lomzabalazo*) (Conway, 2017). The literature points out that militarisation that occurred during the apartheid was instrumental in constructing certain masculinities in present society as young male students are still seen engaging in collective violent protests across the country on a yearly basis. In other words, militarisation influenced men, and violent masculine identities developed as a result.

Gold mines were also part of the fundamental discussion of South African masculinities that represent strength and resilience among men during pre-colonial South Africa (Morrell, 1998). According to Breckenridge, (1998: 669) “The mines are famously difficult and dangerous places to work. Between 1910 and 1990 the gold mines employed between a quarter and half a million men, and almost no women”. Men who were able to serve in these hazardous gold mines managed to stabilize their families and were respected in most black communities who were poverty stricken (Breckenridge, 1998; Moodie, 1992). The literature further points out that gold mines were instrumental in developing an image of men as sole providers or bread winners in most black families. It was instrumental in developing respect for men in communities who can engage in any form of dangerous activity to stabilize their families. This form of masculinity contributes to reasons behind young men committing violent crimes and justifying their actions with the intent to take care of their families.

Furthermore, this study recognised that further research has been explored on ethnic masculinities in the Xhosa Culture. The Xhosa culture has an essential initiation custom that marks the transformation of young men to adulthood. The ritual aim is to instil good moral values and social values (Vincent, 2008). Literature highlights that this assists young men in gaining knowledge on how to be independent, connect with ancestors, personal growth and development and to better understand the importance of family and resist peer pressure (Mshweshwe, 2020). The Xhosa Culture places high value on young men who can follow the culture's values, customs, and responsibilities that align with the traditional expectations. They are referred to *Indoda* meaning real men or an adult man (Mfecane, 2016). The literature further highlights that cultural beliefs shape young men's perceptions of self and the other and are crucial in the development of a masculine character.

In addition, sexual behaviours of men have been further explored by previous studies. Sexual behaviours significantly relate to hegemonic masculinity norms (Smith, et al., 2015). This study highlights the promiscuity of men as another form of dominant masculinity norms in South African societies. In the South African context hegemonic masculinities are largely focused on male domination over women, particularly in sexual terms (Jones, and Paulhus, 2012). There is vast information produced by scholars on young people sexual behaviours related to the spread of HIV/AIDS in the country (Lynch et al., 2010). Using data from Khumalo et al., (2021: 01) “having multiple sexual partners is socially encouraged, hailed, envied, revered, and even praised by other male counterparts given names such as (Umshayi wesinqa) translating to a man with multiple concurrent partners.” This reflects that young men seek to validate their masculine character through engaging with multiple partners. There is also vast information that looked at fights in

schools and corporal punishment with its effect on young men's perception of violence (Mathews, and Benvenuti, 2014).

Other studies looked at homosexuality and rape in South African prisons to understand the effect of humiliating other men as females which also reflect the negative narratives of hegemonic masculinities among males (Moolman, 2015). The culture of gangs in South Africa influenced the construction of certain masculinities as studies reflected that most young men participate in violent criminal gangs to reflect fearlessness to achieve respect and social status among people of society (Morrell et al., 2013). According to Ratele, (2010: 20) "Fearlessness is a compelling stereotype about manhood that a significant number of boys grow up to internalise. This prevalent characterisation of masculinity persuades many young males to actively support the idea that successfully masculine males are always ready for a fight, never show fear, ignore pain, and play it cool". However, these studies do not adequately explain how the construction of masculinities among male students influence violent behaviours. Therefore, to fill in a gap in knowledge this study examines dominant notions of masculinity existing among male students in Durban South Africa that fuel the perpetuation of violent behaviours.

## **2.4 Violence in South Africa**

WHO (2021) reports that "every year, nearly a quarter of a million people under 30 are murdered worldwide". For every person who dies due to violence, many more are injured and suffer from various physical, sexual, reproductive, and mental health issues. In 2015, the projected cost of violence to the global economy was \$13.6 trillion, or 13.3% of the worldwide GDP (Women, 2019). Annually, violence has a massive economic impact, costing countries billions of dollars in health care, law enforcement, and lost productivity (Butchart, 2008). This report makes substantial contributions to understanding the factors influencing violent behaviours and their impacts on young men in South African universities.

South Africa continues to be one of the countries with an alarmingly high prevalence of violence. The country is consistently ranked as having the highest levels of violence (Kerr, 2018). The most recent population estimates equate to 58.4 homicides daily, or 35.8 murders per 100,000 people (Navsaria, 2021). According to the South African Police Services report covering the period from March 2020 to March 2021, 10,006 people were raped between April

and June 2021. This increased by 72.4% over the previous reporting period (SAPS, 2022). The literature suggests that violence is frequently present in South African families, affecting children from an early age. One study found that 53% of young people had frequently seen their families get angry, 24% had seen physical punishment from their parents, and 11% had seen family members physically harm one another (Jones, 2019: 99). The table below presents and confirms the reported statistics of violent cases in South Africa:

Table 2.1: Reported statistics of violent cases in South Africa

Category	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Murder	4 668	4 896	4 589	4 976	<b>6 083</b>
Attempted murder	4 243	4 647	X4 216	4 582	<b>5 717</b>
Assault (GBH)	41 078	<b>43 113</b>	40 168	36 417	42 992
Common assault	39 314	42 262	42 866	38 889	<b>45 746</b>
Rape	9 695	10 792	9 905	9 518	<b>10 818</b>

Source: South African Police Services (2022)

#### 2.4.1 Violence in South African Universities

According to Gordon, and Collins, (2013: 93) “South Africa is characterised by high levels of gender-based violence and its tertiary education institutions are not exempt from this violence or gender inequalities”. A study conducted by Dosekun (2015) with 15 female university students and employees revealed that student rape was prevalent in South Africa and the fear of rape was possibility that most female live with daily. In 2017, students at Walter Sisulu University boycotted classes in response to news of additional reported rapes and killings (Harris, 2021). On March 19, 2019, a young group of female students held a march against campus rapes and stated that there are many rape cases reported at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Shlonsky, 2019).

This study discovered that acts of intimidation, physical violence, vandalism, and destruction of property have spread extensive fear throughout most campuses. The intensity of violence has varied between universities, with many campuses closed or ending in a rampage (Heleta, 2016). UKZN remains violent year after year and several buildings have been burned down. For instance, protesters set fire on the UKZN Howard College's HIV support centre, UKZN Edgewood dining hall, and auditorium building in the beginning of the year 2020. A similar incident occurred in the beginning of the year 2019 when a lecture hall on UKZN Pietermaritzburg campus, Scottville, was burned down (Ntuli, 2019). These incidents highlight an increasing concern of student violent behaviours in the higher education environment. This study explores the motivating factors to this phenomenon.

The city of Durban reported several cases of different forms of violence among university students in 2019. According to Sutton (2019) a final year student, Simukelo Zondi's charred remains were discovered in a rugby field near the university's Westville campus. Police reported that he was murdered by another student who was later charged and arrested (Sutton, 2019). Precious Rambulana, a training college student, and Mlungisi Madonsela, a final-year Durban University of Technology (DUT) student, were reportedly killed on the campus in the beginning of the year 2020 (Moromo, 2022). Xolile Mbatha, a student at the Mangosuthu University of Technology, was stabbed multiple times in the institution's residence (News24, 2022). Five students were also stabbed after clashes erupted outside the Durban University of Technology between the EFF student command (EFFSC) and the SA Student Congress (Sasco) (DUT), and many other cases have made headlines over the previous years (Kubheka, 2022).

According to Mutinta, (2022: 01), large number of students reported experiencing gender-based violence at their colleges. "Of the students who suffered gender-based violence, 216 were physically harmed, 336 were verbally or emotionally abused, and 278 were sexually assaulted". In a study on campus safety at Rhodes University in South Africa, an estimated 12

- 13% of students reported feeling unsafe walking at night. This translates to between 334 and 363 students feeling unsafe. The number of females feeling unsafe walking around campus at night was four times greater than that of males (Macleod, 2017). Another study conducted by (Ward et al, 2022) states "the World Mental Health International College Student Initiative in 2022 at the University of Cape Town and Stellenbosch found that suicide (self-directed violence) is another form of violence affecting students at universities. The report found that 30.6% of students had thoughts of suicide in the past 12 months and 16.6% had made a suicide plan and 2.4% had attempted suicide".

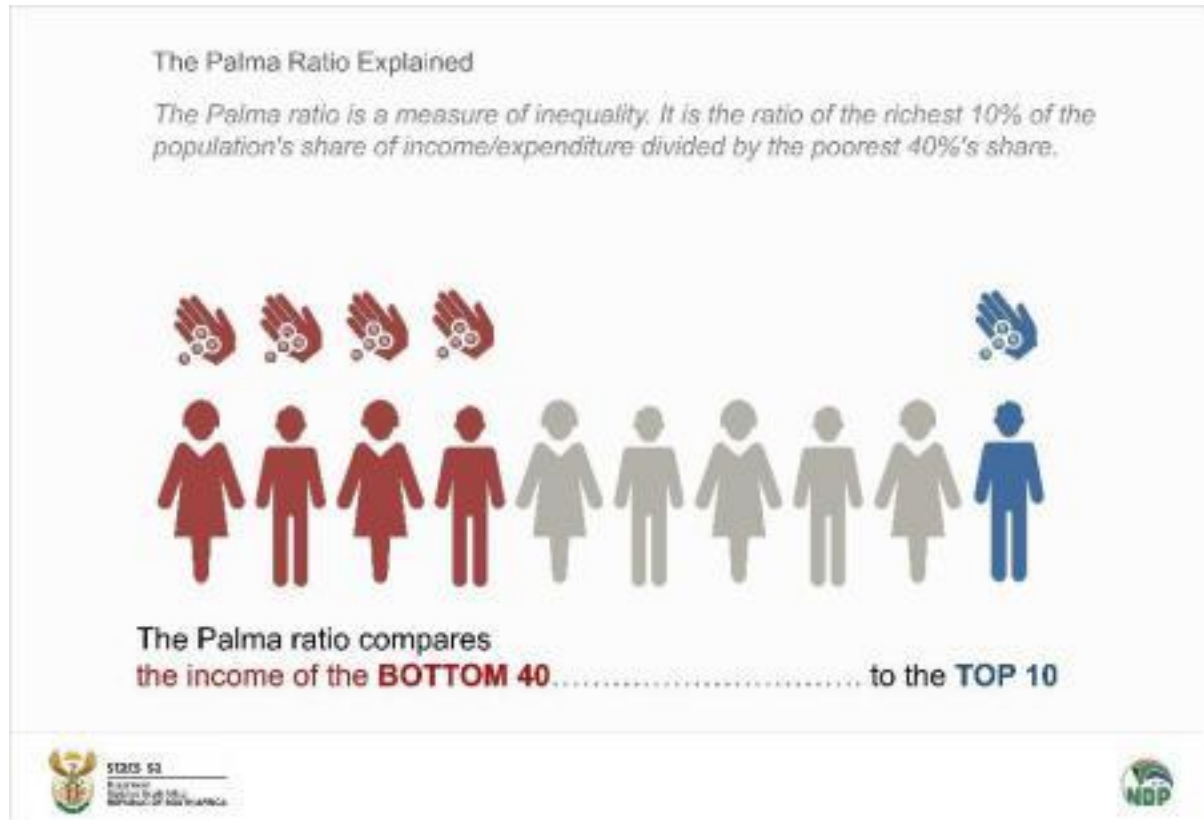


However, the literature acknowledges that there are several studies that reflect that institutions of higher learning contribute a great body of knowledge in fighting against the epidemic of violence and gender-based violence in South African learning spaces (Mahabeer, 2021). This study recognises that South African universities have contributed significantly to the implementation of policies that are committed to providing learning that is free of violence, unfair discrimination or harassment and understanding of the impact of violence in societies. However, the issue of violence continues to prevail in the country (Mahabeer, 2021).

## **2.5 Inequality, Violence, and Masculinity**

The impact of income inequality has piqued the interest of many researchers and policy analysts, who have sought empirical evidence to explain the relationship between income and violence in various countries. According to some researchers and policymakers, inequality significantly and positively affects violent crime (Kerr & Wittenberg, 2021). South Africa is continuously classified as one of the most unequal countries in the world, according to the 2018 World Bank report. Income inequality and low economic development are strong positive predictors of rates of violence. For quite some time, inequalities in South Africa have been perceived as perhaps the most striking highlight of society (Seedat et al., 2009). Only 10% of the population controls 90% of the wealth, meaning the remaining 90% have only 10% of South Africa's wealth (World Bank, 2022). This feature of socioeconomic imbalance causes numerous negative repercussions on societies. The following diagram supports the findings of the literature about inequality in South Africa:

Figure 2.2: Demonstrating inequality in South Africa



Source: Statistics South Africa (2022)

Most of the gender-based violence cases in South Africa stem from people living in poor communities (Bower, 2014). Researchers and scholars specified and justified that the impact of this income inequality on men's achievement of masculinity is often seen as a factor that contributes to their perpetration of violence. Turton, (2017) state that “an inability to meet social expectations of successful manhood may trigger a crisis of male identity, rape and intimate partner violence”. The literature highlights those men who are unable to achieve masculinities through economic means can easily diverge to using violence against others as an alternative method of attaining masculinities (Mshweshwe, 2020).

Researchers explain that men are given higher positions in society, making them feel entitled to women (Adisa, Abdulraheem, and Isiaka, 2019). Moreover, researchers clarify that in gender-unequal societies, women are less important than men or are seen as men's possessions, they believe that their satisfaction is more important than that of women's. The enlightenment

of this matter justified that violence occurs in societies because of the traditional norms about women's position in society. further elaborate on sexual interaction based on societal norms. Researchers explain that gender-unequal societies allow women little agency in controlling their sexual interactions. This is because men's pleasure and sexual desires are prioritized, meaning that women feel unable to refuse sex when expected or to use condoms or negotiate for safer sex if their male partner does not want to (Rubin et al., 2019).

Scholars also explain that risky sexual behaviour is associated with manliness. At the same time, health-seeking behaviour is seen as unmanly in many other societies worldwide (Skovdal et al., 2011). Gender-based violence is a global phenomenon committed in all countries, social groupings, and it is not absent in developed countries. Thus, even those who objectively are not facing poverty or income inequality are still committing GBV, suggesting that the link between poverty and violence is less direct (Rubin et al., 2019). Thus, gender inequality is still widespread for women in all population groups in South Africa, even though there has been a concentrated focus on addressing this challenge. It has been suggested that gender inequality is more common in certain communities in South Africa than in others.

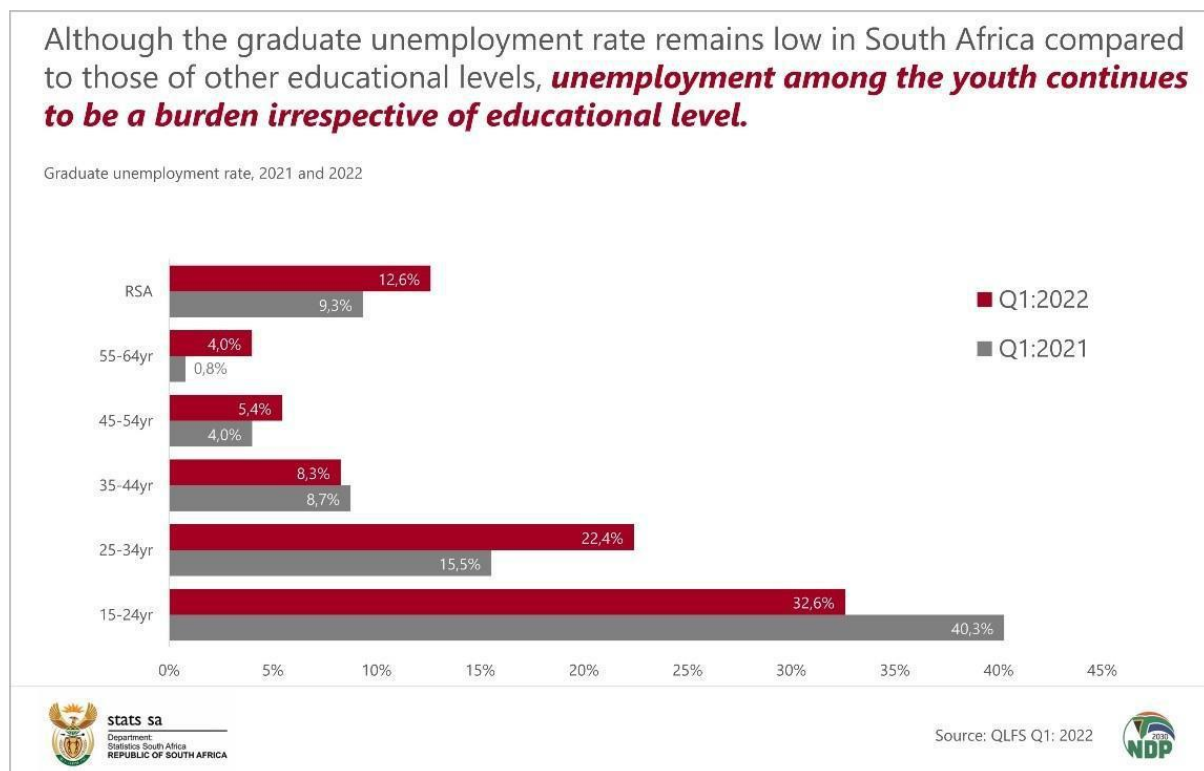
However, numerous writers have noted that gender inequality seems to be the case across cultural and racial lines in South Africa (Kashyap et al., Fatehkia, Tamime, and Weber, 2020). Therefore, scholars argue that the high rate of violence in South Africa is influenced by both gender inequalities and some of the legislation that favours men over women. However, scholars reflect little on the factors that influence young men growing to manhood to engage in violence in South Africa; instead, they reflect on a broad category that affects not only South Africa but the rest of the world as gender inequalities are an authenticity to a different part of the world.

## **2.6 Unemployment, Violence, and Masculinity**

Studies reveal that there is a causal link between unemployment and violence among youth in South Africa. The perception is that without jobs young people are prone to engage in criminal behaviours and are a threat to society (Cramer, 2011). According to Statistics South Africa (2022:03) “Youth in South Africa continue to be disadvantaged in the labour market with an unemployment rate higher than the national average”. Furthermore, Statistics South Africa reports (2022:05) “unemployment among the youth continues to be a burden, irrespective of educational attainment”. Studies reveal that South Africa’s graduate unemployment is rising

over the employment rate however the country is experiencing growth in its graduate labour force. Evidence from Statistics South Africa (2022: 06) states “unemployment among young graduates (aged- 15- 24 years) decreased from 40,3% to 32,6% while it rose by 6,9% to 22,4% for those aged 25-34 years”. Thus, this study seeks to explore and understand the relationship between unemployment and the construction of masculine identities in influencing violent behaviours among male students.

Figure 2.3: Demonstrating graduate unemployment rate, 2021 and 2022



Source: Statistics South Africa 2022

Drawing from Andrews, Gabat, Jolink, and Klugman, (2021, 04) “during COVID-19 lockdown there was a surge in GBV cases in South Africa. Evidence reports that at the start of lockdown in March 2020, 87000 cases of interpersonal violence and GBV cases were reported, a significant increase from pre-COVID-19”. Literature conducted by Dlamini (2021) reflected that multiple factors contributed to the surge of GBV cases including job losses, financial dependence and other factors such as psychological and emotional imbalances significantly impacted men who were unable to provide for their families. The author highlights that the inability of men to sustain their families when unemployed essentially emasculate them,

affecting their self-image as a man, resulting in them feeling like failures and expressing themselves with violence by venting their frustration on their partners at home.

The research indicates that most dropouts believed that those who get the opportunities to go to universities in South Africa are born into privilege (Brankovic et al., 2020). According to the National Department of Basic Education in the Republic of South Africa (2015:20), the high dropout rate is a national crisis as more than 60% of first graders do not complete their secondary education. In addition, , by Grade 12, only 52% of the age-appropriate population remain enrolled in school. From 2015 to 2020, dropout statistics changed drastically. The Department of Basic Education has set out a new dropout statistic following the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. Research shows that the highest dropout rate contributes to a youthful society that is not employed or employable, who, however, venture out to reach for minimum ways of living. Therefore, they engage in criminal behaviour that involves the use of violence. This way, South Africa's violence rate increases rapidly (Brankovic et al., 2020).

Studies reveal that working and masculine identities closely intersect. As revealed in this study, being a man involves engaging in specific behaviours in specific social contexts that define one as a man (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009). This involves the ability to attain paid work, have buying power or wealth, independence, sexuality, health, and being in spaces where you reflect dominance (Okin, 2015). In understanding the reasons that influence young people to use violence, scholars hypothesized that attaining education is essential to elevating a man's character. Education holds many advantages for people in society. Education enhances people's chances of getting employment and improving their standard of living. It also enhances opportunities. Therefore, restricting access to education harms people's ability to access jobs and opportunities (Brewer, 2013). This study highlights that restricted access to education is one of the most significant socioeconomic factors that affect the development of a male character in young men. As a result, they retaliate in violent behaviours as they tend to engage in substance abuse and crime when they struggle to afford registration fees and tertiary education costs.

## **2.7 Alcohol, Violence and Masculinities**

Researchers explain that an existing relationship between the South African history of colonization and alcohol consumption still influences social issues. Brankovic (2019) argues that the unemployment levels as well as high population density have been shown to fuel the

high demand for alcohol. In addition, the prevalence of informal trading and the abundant supply of criminal supply networks in South Africa makes alcohol production and distribution quite onerous to regulate (Petersen, Charman and Kroll, 2018). Literature highlight that the use of alcohol and drugs, as well problematic gendered norms associated with drinking culture, increase sexual violence (Nyamukamba et al., 2020). This study seeks to explore the dominant notions of masculinity related to alcohol use that fuel violence among male students in Durban South Africa.

Fulde, Smith, and Forster (2015) researched the outcry in Sydney about alcohol-fuelled violence against young men. The research reported that alcohol was not the predominant factor that needs to be examined in the many shocking violence cases of young Australian men. The study found that alcohol could not profoundly be named a fuel of any specific behaviour. Alcohol is a depressant, sometimes a stimulus. In many situations, it is more likely to make one sleepy or ill than encourage them to hit out and act out violently. Instead, the circumstances of drinking, specifically the psychological aspects, need to be understood (Brankovic 2019). Therefore, this study highlights that the prevalence use of alcohol and drugs might contribute to risk factors for violence in universities, however, it provides partial information on how social norms associated with masculinity and alcohol consumption can influence violent behaviours among male students.

## **2.8 Summary**

This chapter has holistically presented the literature review that has been employed in understanding the subject matter from previous studies done in the previous topic. This chapter presented discovered knowledge produced by scholars relative to understanding South African masculinities, history of violence in South Africa, violence in South African universities, inequality, unemployment, and alcohol use in relation to the factors that influence the construction of masculine identities among young men in South Africa. The aim of this study was to further explore how dominant notions of masculinity influence violent behaviour among young male students in Durban South Africa.

## **Chapter 3- Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Being a male increasingly becomes difficult as young boys transition to manhood. To attain power and assert their masculine identity, young men turn to violence to reinforce their dominant position. This study aims to shed insights into the roles of dominant notions of masculinity that fuel violence among young male students in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. This chapter outlines the processes undertaken to collect data on young male students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College campus. This chapter discusses the study context, sample, sampling criteria, data collection instruments, and method of analysis. Additionally, the chapter concludes by presenting the ethical considerations and the limitations encountered during this study.

### **3.2 Research context**

The Howard College Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) serves as the research site for this project. With five locations in Durban and Pietermaritzburg, the University of KwaZulu-Natal houses four colleges (Edgewood Campus, Howard College Campus, Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine, Pietermaritzburg Campus, and Westville Campus) and 19 schools that provide about 2000 academic programs. South African university UKZN is representative of the diverse community in which it is located. The second most productive institution in South Africa in research production, UKZN is ranked among the top 500 universities in the world.

Mazisi Kunene road 269 in the Durban Glenwood suburb serves as the study site. The journey from Durban's downtown to the research site takes about 9 minutes (8 kilometres) (Okelola, 2019). Durban is a thriving coastal city known for its beaches, resorts, and the world-renowned Moses Mabhida Stadium. The researcher identified the Howard College campus as a relevant site to seek information on young men because it has a diverse population with significant ethnicities combined in one location. Regarding race, Durban has 51% of the Black African population. Nearly a quarter of the other population is Indian or Asian, with 15.3% being White and 8.6% being Coloured. The Zulus are the most numerous ethnic groups, accounting for 68% of the population.

The study site (Howard College) is dominated by Black Africans, who constitute 84.57% of the entire population (UKZN @glance 2020). Yearly there are reports of several cases of student violence, burning of buildings, violent protests, student deaths, suicide cases, and enormous cases of sexual violence and HIV/AIDS (Mutinta, 2014). This research strives to understand the reasons behind the increasing violence on this campus by studying young males who have been perpetrators of these violent acts. Therefore, the researcher focuses on young males from the age of 18-35 years who have precisely experienced or perpetrated violence on this site. The researcher seeks to access the prevailing connection between notions of masculinity and violence on this site. A map of the study site is presented below:

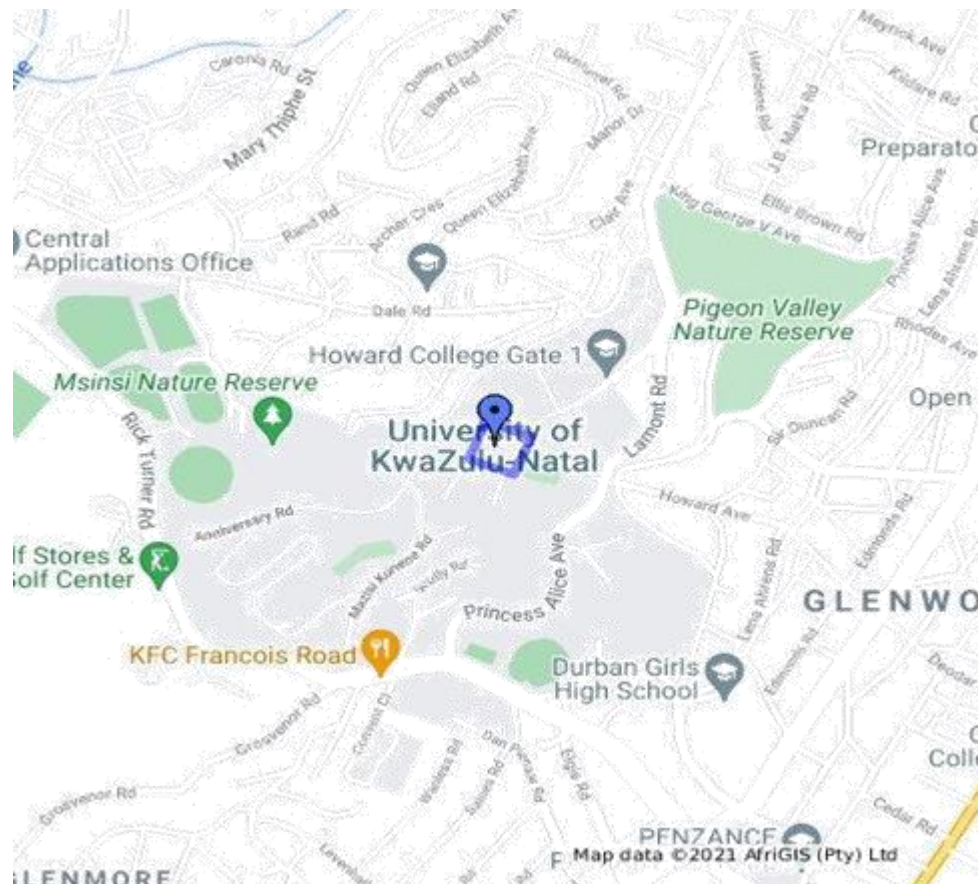
Figure 3.1: Map of Durban City



Source: Loggia, and Govender, (2019)



Figure 3.2: Map of University of KwaZulu-Natal Howard College Campus



### 3.3 Research approach

According to Rahman (2020. 86), “research approaches are plans and the procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation.” This plan involves several decisions taken to make sense of the result concerning the research aim and objectives of the study. This research employed a qualitative research design. A qualitative research design is concerned with establishing answers to the “why” and “how” phenomenon in question. It emphasizes understanding the in-depth experiences of people, concepts, opinions, or social phenomena within their natural settings (Cleland, 2017).

There are different weaknesses and benefits for every research design. Qualitative research does not provide statistical representation. It only relies on providing data from participants' perspectives (Richards, 2020). Therefore, the data collected cannot be measured and only comparisons are possible. It also may not be accepted. The findings of qualitative research can

be classified into two, some will be in support, and some will not be in support of the findings (Richards, 2020). However, in relevance to the concept of this study, the researcher chooses to utilize qualitative research. As this study seeks understanding and presenting a detailed insight into young male students' experiences and perceptions of masculinity.

Qualitative research focuses on obtaining data using open-ended and conversational communication methods. The process involves a setting where the researcher collects data from the participant's settings. The approach is designed in a manner that helps reveal the behaviour and perceptions of the target audience regarding a topic (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). This research method blended well with this study as it has allowed the researcher to explore the challenges and experiences of young male students through expressing meanings and difficulties that young men encounter through their development to manhood and turning to violent behaviours.

By engaging with the participants through open-ended questions that allowed the sample to open up freely about their experiences of manhood, the researcher was able to assess detailed data on young men's perceptions of violence and masculinity norms. The researcher used qualitative methods to gather subjects' views on beliefs, attitudes, perspectives, and experiences of masculinity and violence among young male students on campus. This method allowed the researcher to collect relevant information on participants' experiences through semi-structured telephone interviews (Lambert & Lambert, 2012).

When researching a group of people, collecting data from every person in the group is rarely possible. Instead, there is a need to select a sample and a sampling method. In the context of this study, the researcher used a purposive sampling method in order to select relevant participants. The purposive sampling method falls under non-probability sampling methods. In non-probability sampling, individuals are selected based on non-random criteria, and not every individual has a chance of being included (Etikan et al., 2016). This type of sample is easier and cheaper to access. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to select participants based on their initiation, which was helpful in the development of the study. This simply means the researcher must know about participants that relate to the study's aims and objectives before selecting them to participate (Acharya et al., 2013).

The researcher intentionally selected participants based on their ability to expand on masculinity norms and violence. Masculinity is a broad concept with different definitions from different social backgrounds. The researcher included Campus Security, Campus Clinics,

Student Representative Counsel, Campus Counsellors with psychologists, the Department of Student Residence Affairs, and Residence Assistants as they entailed eligible data supplementary with violent cases at the university. Participants were selected based on the criteria that they could answer research questions accordingly. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to achieve a manageable amount of data. The researcher concentrated on young male university (both undergrad and postgraduate) students. The age of the intended study sample is 18 to 35 years. The sample size consisted of 20 young males. The participants selected were young males who have experienced or perpetrated violence on this site. This study only focuses on males as the researcher's rationale behind selecting these participants is derived from the researcher's interest in understanding different perspectives of masculinity that fuels young males to perpetrate diverse kinds of violence.

### **3.4 Data collection techniques**

Data collection is a significant part of a research study. According to Groenland and Dana (2019:10), "Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes." In constructing this qualitative study, social media was used to recruit participants. The researcher shared a link on UKZN Howard Campus Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to provide more details about the study. The inspiration to use social media is based on the notion that the targeted age group mainly uses social media to lessen contact to conform to COVID-19 protocols (Parsi and Elster, 2014). The researcher indicated in the advertisement that participation is voluntary. The researcher also specified the study's purpose and inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure that the correct study sample was obtained.

Telephonic interviews and phone calls were adopted as research tools to collect viable data for this study. According to Johan (2018: 18), "Telephone interview is a data collection method when the interviewer communicates with the respondent on the telephone following the prepared questions". The use of telephonic interviews helped the researcher to triumph over the challenges of the problem of the inability to reply to visual cues and the potential lack of contextual data. The researcher maximized chances of getting quality data as conducting in-depth interviews is a faster, easier way to approach primary research.

The telephone is often the preferred method of interviewing because it takes less time to schedule and conduct than a face-to-face interview. The interviewer gained a deeper insight into the topic by treating the interview questions as a meaningful argument and deducting the validity of each response. In this study, the researcher used two phones to conduct an interview. One was responsible for recording, then one for calling and a phone call recording app was used to ensure that the interview was captured. Phone calls assisted participants in presenting issues with a safe environment to express themselves without fear of face-to-face interviews (McParland & Johnston, 2020).

### **3.5 Data analysis**

The researcher used the thematic analysis method to analyse data to produce meaningful trustworthy, insightful results. The thematic analysis method allows researchers to identify, analyse, organize, describe and report themes within a data set. It is a method for describing data but also involves interpretation in selecting codes and constructing themes. The thematic analysis offers a flexible yet rigorous approach to the researcher in this study to access subjective experiences associated with young men's masculinity and violence. It is a highly useful method for examining the perspectives of different research participants, highlighting similarities and differences and anticipated insight (Lawless & Chen, 2019).

The researcher considered all models of thematic analysis. At first, the researcher familiarised himself with the data set, thoroughly reread transcripts, made notes, wrote down early impressions, and explored the meanings associated with the ideas motivating violence emerging from the participants' testimonies. In the second step, the researcher created or generated initial codes. Codes help identify a feature of the data (semantic content or latent) that appears attractive to the analyst and refer to the essential elements of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the specific phenomenon. In this phase, the researcher used the information from the first phase to create codes. The researcher grouped data elements according to the similarities or perceived patterns (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). This revealed the dominant notions of masculinity that has the most impact in fuelling violence among young men based on the recurring identified issues.

In the third step, the investigator created themes. A theme is an element of a data sequence of words that can serve as a synoptic and accurate representation of the signification that the participant attributed to an object, phenomenon, or situation. These themes were then modified

and created other themes linked to the initial one by copying and pasting using Microsoft NVivo as a manual platform. These themes reflected similarities and differences in the data. These themes included experiences of young male students of manhood and norms that lead them to be violent, and these themes were able to answer the sub-research question and the main question.

### **3.6 Validity, Reliability and Rigour:**

#### **3.6.1 Reliability of the research**

The reliability of the study ensures that the data collected is accurate and trustworthy. Joppe (2000:15) defines reliability as “The extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable”. Hayashi Abib and Hoppen, (2019) further provides the following explanation of what validity is in quantitative research: “Validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are. Since qualitative researchers do not use instruments with established metrics about validity and reliability, the researcher discusses the validity or trustworthiness and reliability or consistency of this study in terms of the credibility, dependability, transferability and conformability to ensure the quality of the result of the study.

#### **3.6.2 Credibility**

This study used credibility as a qualitative reliability method to ensure the accuracy of the data collected. Antoniou and Antoniou, (2020: 50) stipulate “credibility refers to the extent to which a research account is believable and appropriate, with particular reference to the level of agreement between participants and the researcher”. In the context of constructing the reliability of this study, the researcher used the following to ensure credibility: Meticulous records were kept by the researcher, and he demonstrated a clear decision trail and ensured that interpretations of data are consistent and transparent. The researcher established a comparison case/seeking out similarities and differences across accounts to ensure different perspectives are represented. The researcher ensured respondent validation by inviting participants to

comment on the interview transcript and whether the final themes and concepts created adequately reflected the phenomena being investigated.

### **3.6.3 Dependability**

This study further used dependability to ensure the accuracy and trustworthiness of the data collected in this study. Dependability refers to the consistency and reliability of the research findings and the degree to which research procedures are documented, allowing someone outside the research to follow, audit, and critique the research process. To achieve dependability, the researcher ensured that the research process is logical, traceable, and clearly documented (Lemon, and Hayes, 2020).

The researcher ensured that readers could examine the research process; they are better able to judge the dependability of the research. He engaged with his university research supervisor to conduct an inquiry audit on the research study. An inquiry audit involves having a researcher outside of the data collection to examine the data analysis. This is done to confirm the accuracy of the findings and to ensure the findings are supported by the data (Aghazadeh, and Hoang, 2020).

### **3.6.4 Transferability**

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings. From a qualitative perspective, transferability is primarily the responsibility of the one doing the generalizing (Nassaji, 2020). The researcher ensured transferability by doing a thorough job of describing the research context and the assumptions that were central to the research. Through using purposive sampling, the researcher was able to obtain descriptive information from young men.

### **3.6.5 Conformability**

According to Kyngäs, Kääriäinen, and Elo (2020), “Conformability refers to the degree to which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by others.” There are several strategies for enhancing conformability. The researcher in this study documented the procedures for checking and rechecking the data throughout the study. The researcher actively searched for

and described negative instances that contradict prior observations. After the study, the researcher submitted this study to the supervisor to conduct a data audit that examines the data collection and analysis procedures and makes judgments about the potential for bias or distortion.

### **3.6.6 Ethical considerations**

The participants have the right to consent to participate, withdraw from, or refuse to participate in a research project. The researcher sent participants an informed consent via social media inboxes to obtain their verbal or written consent once they had read and understood all terms. The informed consent lets the participant know their rights to withdraw from the study and seek permission for the interviews to be recorded. Participants have the right to seek confidentiality and stop personal information or identifiable data from publishing or sharing. For that reason, by signing informed consent, the researcher was binding himself and the participants so that the data would be protected, and their identities would remain anonymous (Pickles, 2020).

Research is a public trust. Therefore, the researcher produced an ethical clearance letter from UKZN along with the UKZN gatekeeper's letter that enabled the researcher to ensure that the data was collected ethically and would not harm participants. By doing so, the researcher ensured that participants' data was kept secure, and participants were not exposed to unnecessary risks (Hansen, 2020). The researcher used phone calls to avoid contact with participants for well-being and safety reasons. The researcher revealed all the relevant information about the study to the participants and allowed them to identify the things that may be harmful to them or associated with harm. The researcher highlighted the negatives and positives of the study during the consent process. The researcher also avoided asking questions that were deemed unethical by the University.

Confidentiality and anonymity are closely connected with the rights to beneficence, respect for dignity, and fidelity. The researcher ensured that the subject's identity could not be linked with personal responses and clearly explained to the participant that they shall not discuss the matters of this study with people outside of this research (Fernandez Lynch, 2020). The researcher informed the participants that they were only volunteering. They can leave any time they want to (Nosenzo & Tufano, 2017). The author ensured that participants will be referred

to psychologist and social workers from UKZN Maat institute psychosocial support program for free counselling if they required one as a result of violence post-traumatic experience.

### **3.6.7 Limitations of the study**

The researcher encountered challenges in the process of conducting this study. Telephonic interviews are a faster and easier way of approaching primary data. However, the researcher encountered difficulties assessing respondents' behaviour and body language. During telephonic interviews, some of the respondents did not finish the interviews. They hung up because of load-shedding and network problems, and some interviews were shorter than intended. Like other research tools, telephonic interviews have disadvantages and advantages.

By using telephonic interviews, the researcher was at stake that he could not finish his interviews without any network disturbances. The researcher could not be able to observe the body language of participants, and respondents had to answer the call and can hang up at any time. However, by adopting telephonic interviews, the researcher limited contact with members due to the reality of the coronavirus pandemic and provided safety to participants not getting infected with the virus in the process of this study (Chirinda et al., 2021). Furthermore, the researcher ensured that the communication was intact before the interviews, including the respondent encountering difficulty intervening effectively.

The explanation of violence has no exact description and can be influenced by different factors. Therefore, the purposeful selection of participants to reflect on the objectives of this study encountered the challenge of extracting limited data because violence can be broadly deliberated. However, the researcher ensured that purposive sampling works at an advantage of this study as the researcher selected participants with extensive experience and knowledge on the topic of this study to detail information on masculinity norms that influence violence among young men on the researcher site.

### **3.6.8 Summary**

This chapter has been a brief discussion of the methodologies used to gather information to achieve the aim and objectives of this study. This chapter covered the research context, research approach, and the data collection techniques used in the development of this study. The study reproduced added that the data collected will be analysed using thematic data analysis. This chapter deliberated diverse ways the researcher will practice making the study reliable and valid. In conclusion, ethical consideration for participants was explored, along with possible challenges the researcher might encounter in this stud



## **Chapter four- Results**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Male identity and masculine norms have been linked to violence. It is widely assumed that men are more likely to perpetrate violent crimes and have higher mortality rates due to homicide and suicide. This study aimed to shed insights into the role of dominant notions of masculinity that may fuel violence among young men. This chapter presents the main findings from semi-structured interviews with 15 male participants from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College campus, in Durban. This chapter begins by presenting the characteristics of the study sample. After that, young men's perceptions of masculinity are explored. The following section focuses on attitudes and experiences toward violence and the factors that perpetuate violence. The last section focuses on the opportunities for behaviour change to combat violence.

### **4.2 Study sample characteristics**

All the participants in this study were young males from different parts of South Africa who were currently studying at Howard College. Most of the study participants were undergraduate and some postgraduate students. Their ages ranged from 18 to 35 years. Fourteen of the participants were single and one indicated that he was currently married. In addition, most of the participants were unemployed and only one indicated that he is employed. These findings are displayed in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Study sample characteristics

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Level of study</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Employment status</b>
<b>1</b>	Undergraduate	24	Male	Single	Unemployed
<b>2</b>	Postgraduate	29	Male	Single	Unemployed
<b>3</b>	Undergraduate	20	Male	Single	Unemployed
<b>4</b>	Postgraduate	27	Male	Single	Unemployed
<b>5</b>	Undergraduate	26	Male	Single	Unemployed
<b>6</b>	Undergraduate	22	Male	Single	Unemployed
<b>7</b>	Undergraduate	21	Male	Single	Unemployed
<b>8</b>	Undergraduate	23	Male	Single	Unemployed
<b>9</b>	Postgraduate	24	Male	Single	Unemployed
<b>10</b>	Postgraduate	29	Male	Single	Unemployed
<b>11</b>	Undergraduate	20	Male	Single	Unemployed
<b>12</b>	Postgraduate	30	Male	Married	Employed
<b>13</b>	Postgraduate	26	Male	Single	Unemployed
<b>14</b>	Undergraduate	22	Male	Single	Unemployed

15	Undergraduate	24	Male	Single	Unemployed
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### 4.3 Young men's perceptions of masculinity

Students come from diverse backgrounds with different beliefs and ideas of what it means to be a 'man'. The participants mentioned that a man must display certain characteristics. For instance, a man should show respect for people including women, he should possess leadership qualities and be considerate of other people's feelings. A man is recognised as a provider and an individual who can express their personality. Some participants shared that being a man is a journey of self-discovery and creating a legacy for his family and loved ones. The participants in this study have differing views of what it entails to be a 'man'. For most, the environment in which they were raised influenced them and how they would display their masculinity.

*"A man is inherently responsible for providing. Their upbringing ultimately defines their status as a man. For one to be considered a man, he should respect everyone's lifestyles and choices and learn how to treat women with respect". (P.04)*

*"I was taught that a man is a leader. A person who takes responsibility for his mistakes, who is aware that they are people he needs to support and behave on a basis of protecting other people's feelings and live towards fulfilling his promises". (P.02)*

*"Being a man is about self-discovery, self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and, most importantly, leaving a legacy for myself. To me, being a man entails being yourself without apology. It means not being scared to be yourself in front of the world." (P.06)*

Most participants emphasized that a man demonstrates his value by always focusing on assisting other people. This includes assisting other students to find solutions to some of the challenges that they are encountering within the university environment. The participants mentioned that one of the valued traits that a man can demonstrate is to have a positive attitude and to remain calm under pressure.

*"To be a man of value, you must always concentrate on other people's issues and assist them in finding a solution. In this manner, you may aid others while also learning a lot from the situations that shape your personality and aura. Nowadays, everyone is*

*subjected to stress, and even if they have the skills to combat it, they do not always find someone who can relieve them of their stressful situation”. (P.03)*

*“I personally believe that some of the principles that enable you to be a valuable man include maintaining a positive attitude and remaining calm in the presence of others, as this will give a haven for others. Never be frightened of failing because you will always learn from it. Create your own personal brand. (P.04)*

Other participants suggested that masculinity should come naturally to a male child. They believe that as a male child there are certain norms and expectations that he should adhere to as these are taught and observed when you are young. Men are expected to continue to behave in a certain way that is socially acceptable.

*Well, to be a man comes naturally first. You are born a male child. Then for you to be a man, for me, you must assume the role of being a man. You must exercise your masculinity and you must accept the social norms of being a man because there are some men, that do not want to be men. (P.02)*

Some of the participants mentioned that the definition of a ‘man’ differs in some contexts, and they witnessed this when they came to university. Some of the participants mentioned that when they came to the university, they encountered different experiences of what it entails to be a man and how to display their masculinity. The participants mentioned that the university environment is different from what was experienced in their communities therefore, some young men witness other traits and characteristics than those which were traditionally associated with dominant forms of masculinity. These differences have either positively or negatively influenced their attitudes and beliefs and they influenced them. As a result, they were able to create their own perceptions of what it entails to be a man.

*“For me, the meaning of a man varies from person to person especially here at university. A man is just a human being who happens to have duties and responsibilities because of where or how they are located, historically, geographically and demographically” (P.11).*

Participants reflected on the importance of achieving socially recognised manhood and the importance of continually achieving their status as a man. They highlighted that the process of upholding their social status of ‘being a man’ is through conforming to expected social roles and behaviours. For instance, a man is expected to be physically stronger than a woman. He is

also expected to display bravery and courage. Failure to uphold some of these common expectations destroys the image of a 'real man'.

*"Men in general have greater physical strength than women. Therefore, they automatically inherit the protector role in society. The protector role is associated with a huge responsibility that involves many elements such as leadership, bravery, humility, foresight, courage and empathy. I follow the basis of this principle every day of my life. The failure to maintain these beliefs constantly affiliate with my self-image as a man". (P.13)*

Some of the participants reported that it was important for men to display their aggressiveness.

This allows them to gain respect and shows that they will be able to protect their family.

*"Females pay attention and respect to a man that can physically fight to some extent. The ability to protect males can be measured by how aggressive a male can be. Therefore, it is very important to be strong and be validated by them, after all, I will then be head of my future family". (P.06)*

Others were taught by male family figures, such as a grandfather, that it is important to maintain dominance and power by any means necessary.

*"My grandfather taught me that as an African man I must learn some skills as I am not only a man but a soldier. The importance of not reflecting weakness to people, risk-taking, dominance and winning all the time. I aspire to continually maintain this type of manhood by any means necessary" (P.08)*

This suggests that violence may also be used as a means to enhance masculinity and gain and maintain respect and social status.

#### **4.4 Masculinity and violence: Exploring young men's attitudes and experiences**

One key trait which commonly appeared in the findings was the association between masculinity and violence. Most participants highlighted that they believe that violence is an unjustified action that is inflicted on others who are in vulnerable positions. They believed that violence should not be an option to resolve conflict because it can result in life-threatening circumstances such as injuries and even death. However, when a man is challenged with difficult circumstances then he might be forced to resort to violence to protect himself and maintain the respect that others have for him.

*“Well unfortunately the world is a place with bad people and a lot of bad people are exceptionally good. These people are particularly good at doing terrible things and some of them are extreme. You cannot be a harmless man, and we must grasp reality. There are extreme places where a man must engage in an environment of violence to protect himself.” (P.02)*

Others believed that a man must inflict violence as a means to defend themselves. They highlighted that they were taught from an early age to be violent as this is important to display dominance. They also highlighted that being harmless and less violent will expose them to danger as some of the participants mentioned that they grew up in communities where gangsterism and high levels of crime were serious challenges. Therefore, they needed to be violent to protect themselves against some of these social ills.

*“The role of manhood in influencing violence mostly goes with peer pressure, however, a man is sometimes groomed to be aggressive to show how powerful they are as a man. Manhood differs from one place to another especially in places with gangs, young boys are more likely to end up in prison cells as they believe that being a member of gangs shows that you are a man enough”. (P.04)*

Others believed that displaying violence to prove their masculinity and dominance was a choice however, in certain circumstances, violence is necessary especially when there is a need to protect themselves.

*“Personally, this is going to be very subjective, sorry. I would rather be a warrior in a garden than a garden in their war so that means that violence is necessary sometimes and sometimes you cannot avoid but it should never be used in a way that is reckless. Meaning I know how to defend myself and physically impose myself, but I choose to live a peaceful life whereas I am always capable of protecting. (P.09)*

Social status and recognition are gained from being part of a wealthy, popular family. For instance, one participant mentions that if an individual is part of a prestigious, well-known family then they use their popularity to demand respect and power from others. Some of the participants reported that they encountered threats against them from other students at the university. They mentioned that some of the disputes are a result of status and power because their peers are part of families that have high prestige and wealth.

*“Some students’ families hold power and history in society. Where I come from a person with wealth holds prestige in society. His children hold social privilege, they are well-known and respected because of their family history. They believe that they are ‘the man’ amongst men. In their eyes everyone is beneath them, they can do whatever they want, and everyone should praise them in some way” (P.10).*

One participant shares his experience of having a confrontation with a fellow student because of access to a computer. This participant mentioned that he was threatened because of his peer’s desire to establish his dominance and power.

*“I was insulted by a fellow mate here at Shepstone fishbowl LAN [computer room] because I used a computer, he claimed it was his and, he kept mentioning that he comes from a powerful family, and they will come for me. I mean how can you have your own computer at the LAN? I sensed that he felt unseen here on campus given the social status perception he holds where he comes from.” (P.6).*

Most participants reflected that they cannot understand and manage their emotions. As a result, they are constantly challenged with violent reactions. For instance, one participant mentions that he feels that female students are argumentative and disrespectful and do not acknowledge their male peers. Others feel verbally abused on social media and as a result, they find it, very challenging to refrain from retaliating or responding aggressively.

*“Girls feel that when they are angry or engage in an argument, they can talk in whatever way they want, forgetting that we are men. Being a male student is not easy, we ended up engaging in heated verbal exchanges every time, and most of the male students do not do well in group assignments because of this. Even I cannot stand a group with females, they push you to the edge to be violent” (P.03).*

*“The level of violence which comes from cyberbullying as you all know once you assume the position of being in SRC, students have a tendency of saying whatever they wish to say on social media platforms and we do not have control over that, they have a right to a freedom of speech so there is that level of cyberbullying that I have experienced a lot, so I ended up losing it, responded in a very aggressive threatening manner to some of the students on social media” (P.04)*

It is not common for a man to express his feelings and emotions. He is expected to suppress these and display that he is fearless, aggressive, and powerful. Most participants mentioned

that many young males at university are struggling to express their emotional frustration and because they cannot communicate with others they resort to violence.

*“Violence makes emotional sense to the offender at the time since it seems ‘right’. Because societal restrictions are removed, it also seems ‘free’. It also feels good to give in to the furious desire, which is the most prevalent reason for violence” (P.14)*

*I honestly fail to communicate sense when I am frustrated. When a student who stole my laptop was found, I felt that there was nothing to talk about rather me putting my hands on him” (P.11)*

Navigating emotions is very difficult for some young men. They feel that their values and beliefs are challenged especially in a new environment with different norms and expectations.

#### **4.5 Violence at the university**

The majority of the participants in this study reported that they have been victims and perpetrators of violence around the university. They shared different experiences and their own perspectives on the reasons for this. One participant mentions that protesting is a means for students to have their demands met by the university. Generally, most of these protests turn violent. Others reported that when they were part of the protests they have been injured and were even at the risk of having legal action taken against them.

*“I have been a part of massive protests and got bad injuries even my eyes were affected on Howard College before Covid. Fortunately, I was never part of those whom the university took legal action for. However, the fact that whenever we engage in any violent act suddenly all our queries start to be resolved and our voices start to be heard indicates that violence has an impact and can get us attention”. (P.3)*

Others participants indicated that some of the young men felt that they were subject to discrimination and prejudice from university administrators, security personnel resident assistants and other staff employees who were responsible for managing campus facilities. Most participants indicated that they face unfair treatment and are subject to negative attitudes and stereotypes when they seek help. The participants mentioned that they feel unheard whenever they raise issues, and as a result they become frustrated. Others felt that female



students receive better treatment and service in comparison to male students which has a direct impact on them resorting to violence to be heard and acknowledged.

*“While at the LAN, what happened is, well, it is a student, but he is not just a student. He is employed by the university as a LAN perfect. So, there were two girls and one guy and there was me. So, the LAN was supposed to close at 12, but the guy did not close the LAN at 12 until the ladies were out. Just right after the ladies were out, then the guy locked the door and I was locked inside so, I was very angry at him because I believe he did that because I was the man, and he is the man as well. So, I think if I left before the ladies, I think the man would not close the gate. So, I think he locked for me because it is just a guy against another guy” (P.05).*

Some of the participants highlighted that they have been victims of crime. They explained that they experience crime around the university because the university is surrounded by local townships that are well-known for their high rates of crime. They fear that they are unsafe regardless of the safety measures that have been implemented at the university. However, regardless of all placed measures put in place for students’ safety the thugs still find a way within the campus. One student shares his experience of resorting to violence as a means to protect himself from becoming a victim of crime.

*“I was residing in one of the university communes thereby gate 2 entrances, down the road of manor gardens. So, on my way down the road, a car stopped. I was thinking maybe they wanted to ask for directions. In that confusion two guys came out of the car and pointed me with a gun, as I was trying to fight back because I could not give away my belongings like that, they hit me with a gun and took my backpack with a laptop and phone. I went back to report to the RMS” (P.01).*

As a result of the increase in crime that students are experiencing in the university environment some of the participants felt that the university needs to enhance security. They feel that resorting to violence is their only means of protecting themselves if their safety cannot be ensured.

*“I would say yes, I have encountered violence at this university. I would not say I can walk free on campus at night because we hear a lot of stories of gun shootings and stabbings. I also cannot ignore that our campus is near one of the townships with high*

*crime in Durban with some dark places with no lights. I can never walk alone at night thereby gate 4. I have heard so many stories of cars mugging students". (P.09)*

Others reported that they felt obligated to resort to violence as a means of combatting crime. The participants mentioned that they do not receive the assistance that they require from law enforcement therefore the students have resorted to violence as a means of getting justice.

*"It is true that this university is littered with crimes, cars and computers have frequently been stolen, so it is our obligation to catch those criminals and teach them a lesson because if they get arrested, they will still be free to commit the same crimes. Several students have been mugged and police do not provide any assistance regarding those matters, so students begin to act on their own." (P.10)*

Many of the participants highlighted the prevalence of crime around the university area.

#### **4.6 Factors perpetuating violence among young men**

##### **4.6.1 Widespread violence across the country**

The young men in this study reported that there is widespread violence that occurs in many communities across the media and is widely displayed in the media. Some participants also suggested that the use of violence has been influenced by historical events. One participant explains that he was part of an environment where young boys were encouraged to fight each other as a means to demonstrate their strength. Despite there being initiatives and widespread efforts at the university to combat violence many resorts to violence because of their upbringing.

*"I grew up in an environment where young boys were encouraged to fight each other just to evaluate their strength. Despite policies guiding such actions, violence is still a frequent occurrence around the university grounds, especially among us students who are from rural areas who have grown up in violent environments of KZN". (P.14)*

Others refer to the historical events of the past, such as the apartheid era, where violence was widespread and thus became normal to gain change and attention.

*"Before the beginning of apartheid violence was used by white people to take over black people. Over the past years unfortunately it has been transferred to our black people. Right, so they too understand or use violence for many reasons. Student*

*demands and needs are often unmet, which causes them to use violence to get the management to respond” (P.13).*

Participants highlighted that even though there are occurrences of violence on campus, the university is still a far safer environment for young males compared to other spheres of South Africa. They highlighted that education was an escape for them as young males who grew up in horrendous townships witnessing different kinds of crimes, drugs, and abuse. They revealed that education helps in terms of thinking rationally, helps with the ability to resolve conflict and identifies when to avoid conflict. Therefore, they indicated that the campus is a space with more informed individuals where young males can grow safely compared to other spheres of South Africa.

*“I would say considering the level of violence in South Africa, the violence is not that pervasive, particularly in UKZN, because if we consider our townships, the level of violence. So, I would say students in university do have not as much practice within university settings. (P.15)*

*“Violence, I would like to think, is everywhere, but in this university, I would like to think that we are lucky that we are all academics, in some fashion. And we are not readily engaged in violent behaviour as maybe in other spheres of life. A university is a safe environment when you compare it to other spheres or other, like geo-geographical communities” (P.14).*

These results show that the experience of violence, especially in higher institutions of learning, has influenced students to adopt the same tactics that were used before to resolve their present issues e.g., the occurrence of violent protests and boycotts every year at UKZN-HC. However, the study outcome reflected that HC is one of the safest environments for students.

#### **4.6.2 Academic responsibility**

Many of the participants highlighted the difficulty of managing academic demands and the pressure to excel. The participants mentioned the difficulty of balancing their personal life conditions with their academic workload. They emphasised that the emotional and mental strength required to cope with academia can lead to suicidal and aggressive behaviour. Most

of the participants reflected that some of the disputes that they are involved in are a result of a lack of sleep, academic stress and unhealthy eating patterns.

*“The matter of myself trying to commit suicide was not solely based on my inability to fulfil my academic responsibilities. I personally feel that it had to do with my attachment to my work and how I deal with my internal issues. I struggled very much with handling disappointment after so much effort I gave into my academics while I was still grieving the passing of my mother”. (P.07)*

*“Engineering is an extreme sport. There is no time to rest. My sleeping and eating patterns are not normal, sometimes I barely sleep or eat obviously my emotions will always be up site down. Something so little can lead to a huge argument” (P.14)*

Some participants mentioned that living with people in the student residence who have different personalities, are irresponsible and insensitive can lead to violence and conflict. Sometimes they admit that they get in trouble because of the space that they are inhabiting.

*“I would say sometimes it is not that you want trouble, or you are a bad person. We are inhabiting a college space with people of diverse personalities. That can be very tricky because some people’s courses are not that demanding you see. So, you are caught in moments where you must try and control irresponsible adults distracting you with absurd endless noise which is very difficult for a person who is trying to secure his future. You are now in a situation where you are forced to apply physical force or even intimidate someone to be noiseless”. (P.12)*

#### **4.6.3 Norms and expectations**

Growing up in an environment where violence and aggression is an expression of dominant forms of masculinity is challenging. Some of the participants reported that they believed that it was not necessary to display violence however, it is difficult to remain calm in some situations. This is more challenging if there is no freedom to cannot express feelings especially if you do not want to resort to violence.

*“There is no need to have a violent character at varsity. There is really no space for violence on campus, however, you have years and years in this environment, and somehow you will find yourself in situations where you need to exercise strength. You*

*cannot be just innocent, you will end up committing suicide because this is not your home, people will treat you however they feel about you” (P.12)*

Other participants suggested that growing up in a household where children are exposed to violence which is common and normalised becomes a challenge as they are more likely to struggle with drug and alcohol abuse. They may also suffer from depression and resort to violent behaviour.

*“Exposure to violence and conflict in the family, when children are exposed to violence it may have a negative impact on a child's emotional, psychological, and even physical development. Children who have been exposed to violence are more likely to struggle in school, abuse drugs or alcohol, act violently, suffer from depression or other mental health issues as adults, and participate in criminal conduct”. (P.15)*

#### **4.6.4 Alcohol use**

The study participants reported that most violent cases that occurred in the university were a result of alcohol use. Some participants mentioned that substance abuse was common among young, university men. They added that the university environment can be very dangerous for some young men who engage in alcohol use. When young men become intoxicated, they are more likely to encounter conflict.

*“Alcohol is the main factor that contributes to the use of violence. Some people lose control of themselves once they are drunk which initially creates a lot of drama and serious cases which require the RMS and RA residences intervention”. (P.05)*

Most of the students who were currently studying in the sciences faculties mentioned that their academic workload is demanding and as a result, they resort to alcohol use as a means of alleviating their stress. Other participants indicated that being in an academic environment is very demanding and emotionally stressful, therefore, they resort to excessive alcohol use and this fuels the incidence of violence.

*“University is no joke. Most of the people I know who have been studying here at Howard deregistered their degrees. Once you are here you are in hell, especially in my*

*field. So, whenever you get a chance, you must go drink heavily because the amount of work stress can drive you insane” (P.10)*

Others reported that they became involved in a quarrel with peers whilst he was attempting to resolve a situation. He felt that he had to use violence against a peer who was under the influence of alcohol and threatening him physically. This was done as a means to protect himself and maintain his respect.

*“One of my very close friends, in fact, got into an altercation with another student thereby Skali house residence (gate 4) who accused them of stealing his phone. I stepped in to try being a mediator between the two and, it ended up where I had to physically engage and strike a man because he was aggressively imposing himself physically on the both of us. So, in my mind, my friend was here, and I had to do my part in protecting him and protecting myself. So, we got into a physical fight. A fist fight” (P.08).*

#### **4.6. 5 Emotional wellbeing**

Emotional health is an important aspect of mental well-being. It is the ability to cope with both positive and negative emotions, which includes awareness of them. Emotional well-being was explored as an important factor which perpetuates violence. Some of the participants mentioned that most men struggle to express their emotions and as a result, they become violent and aggressive.

*“Lack of emotional intelligence, most men struggle to speak out and they express their emotions through aggressive and violent behaviour. Such Men are more like to become suicidal when facing difficult situations in life”. (P.11)*

Another participant indicated that when men are discriminatory towards homosexuals and women, they become violent and contribute to the surge of violence in the country.

*“Men who purposefully avoid vulnerability, act on homophobic ideas, neglect personal traumas, or engage in discriminatory behaviours toward women contribute to several wider societal issues, including gender-based violence, sexual assault, and gun violence”. (P.20)*

The findings suggest that young men may be able to avoid violence if they learn how to manage their emotions. Being self-aware of one's own emotional state and feelings may assist in remaining calm.

## **4.7 Opportunities for change and combatting violence**

### **4.7.1 Reporting to authorities**

There were a number of factors that were identified as opportunities for combatting violence and conflict effectively. The participants mentioned that reporting to campus security is one of the measures used by young males at the university when they encounter violent situations or conflict. The participants mentioned that making others aware of the behaviours or intentions of their peers who are engaging in aggressive or violent behaviour is a means of ensuring their safety and security.

*“I think the only way to deal with men who have committed violence is by reporting those men to authorities or by trying to find what led to their actions. Setting a community watch or community patrol, working with police could also reduce violence”. (P.05)*

One participant reported that it is important to report violence to risk management services as students should not feel threatened or bullied in the university space. This would be a step towards mitigating some of the threats of violence that could occur.

*“We have resident assistant, we have the risk management services on campus, we have tutors, lectures, friends and family. Just speak up to the right people you know, you cannot have all of this stress over a person, you cannot be bullied and say nothing my brother this is a big space”. (P.15)*

Some of the participants mentioned that if they are able to communicate with the relevant authorities then timely solutions can be initiated. One participant suggests that communication is key to avoiding conflict as at times young men are unable to communicate or express their feelings and this escalates to violent behaviour.

*“One thing that I think would help is to find people who will intervene with conflict resolution, maybe people who know how to speak better, who will teach us about how*

*to communicate because some arguments are really caused by a slip of a tongue or some unexpressed ideas that you think people have about you and you find yourself in situations where you are using your hands where you should have used your mouth, We should find a way to improve our communication skills to avoid such incidences” (P.18)*

#### **4.7.2 Implementing effective programmes**

The young men suggested that programmes which are directed at addressing gender norms and masculinities will aid in combatting violence. The participants believe that this is an opportunity for young men to refrain from perpetuating violence which is fuelled by toxic social norms. One participant believes that men are key role players who can prevent gender-based violence if initiatives and programmes directly focus on the underlying issues associated with patriarchy and violence.

*“To address the roles men of all ages can play in preventing and reducing gender-based violence, organizations that examine the root causes, such as men's socialization, power and patriarchy, masculinities, gender inequality, and the links to all forms of violence against women, should be established. (P.11)*

*“Some organizations strive to minimize dating violence and sexual abuse among teenagers and young adults by opposing gender attitudes and norms that, for example, allow men to exert authority over women. Many of them work with male peer groups because they recognize the powerful influence that young adults may have on one another's behaviour”. (P.15)*

Participants shared how programmes can help them learn more about what is perceived as violent and aggressive behaviour. They suggested that young men should join organisations that teach them about behavioural management, and this will combat their use of violence towards others.

*“What I am saying is that men understand that men who inflict violence are not the character of men that they are. So, already their name is being blemished by these few violent guys. Men should be able to hold seminars or go to those places saying we are not condemning the violence. (P.11)*



#### **4.7.3 Availability and use of professional services**

Some of the study participants indicated that they believe that young men need support and guidance, and they lack this. This will aid in assisting them to navigate difficult circumstances and cope with the pressure of adapting to a new environment and difficult circumstances. They outlined that the use of professional services such as psychosocial support, online education programs and organised forums and dialogues relating to violence among young males at the university would be useful.

*“I think the provision of education about forms of violence, psychosocial support and professional assistance will help provide assistance and self-understanding of the physical and emotional person”. (P.14)*

*“I would say organise forums and dialogues which will include both men and women to have talks. Programmes and talks where men will advise each other on what they can do to refrain from being involved in the cases of violence, bring professionals who will deal with people who have been exposed to violence or who are exhibiting characteristics of being violent”. (P.06)*

One participant indicated that there are professional services provided by the university for students to use and these services are free, yet utilisation remains low. This is because men do not want to be perceived as weak and vulnerable.

*“It is not a symbol of being weak, because at the campus they have facilities there are psychologists provided for students. But people do not want to go to psychologists because they have this tendency that as men, we must not be vulnerable, like vent to someone about your feelings”. (P.02)*

Most participants suggested that the use of professional services can help create a safe space for young men to understand masculine beliefs that affect their personal well-being and use it as a measure to combat violence and conflict. The participants suggested that talking to a professional can be useful and helpful and these services that are available should be utilised. The participants also suggested that these services should be more attractive for young men to ensure that they use the resources and attain the support available to them

#### **4.7.4 Education as a tool for change**

Education is an effective tool for learning and the participants suggest that young men could be influenced by what they learn. Some participants highlighted in different spaces such as the church, school, home, communities and social spaces men are exposed to different perceptions of violence and behaviour. The participants indicated that learning about violence is a means of combatting it and living in a safer society. In addition, the university environment is a space where young men can develop their perceptions and values without being influenced by their community or religious affiliations. Thus, education can be used as a tool for change.

*“Even though I come from Mhlabayalingana, raised strongly to embrace my cultural values and so keen to celebrate them wherever I go, the university environment is an education space, it always leaves a room for me to construct questions about some of my traditional beliefs and sentiments that may lead to some of my actions to translate to violent behaviour.” (P.12)*

*“I come from a rustic upbringing into this university, for me to achieve my ultimate goals I must unlearn some of my rural values to learn about the world values. This assists me in understanding and navigating the wonders of this world as I am at the beginning of my career. I must transform my rural character ways to allow myself to find a way in a bigger world where violence is common but not tolerated” (P.15)*

The participants suggested that the university environment is a space for young men to learn but also an opportunity for them to develop their personal values and beliefs.

#### **4.8 Summary**

This chapter has presented the findings gathered from in-depth interviews conducted with the study participants to shed insights into the role of dominant notions of masculinity that may fuel violence among young men. The findings of the research indicate that young men’s construction of masculinity is diverse and influenced by their social environment and upbringing. Masculinity is closely related to violence as the young men suggested that displaying aggressive behaviour and violence is a way of maintaining respect and establishing that you are a real man. There are a number of factors which perpetuate violence such as an unsafe environment, norms and expectations and alcohol use. However, there are also a number

of opportunities for change and combatting violence such as using education as a tool to challenge toxic forms of masculinity.

## **Chapter Five- Conclusion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This study aimed to discover whether ideas about masculinity encourage violence among young male students in Durban. Different topics developed from the researcher's semi-structured interviews were used to present the study's findings. It was crucial to consider the context of identity construction while looking into how males form their behaviours. It can be difficult for some people to go from being a young boy to being a man, especially male university students. The key study findings are analysed and summarized in this chapter. The prospects and strategies for bringing about change and reducing violence are also covered in this chapter.

### **5.2 Discussion of findings**

Researchers have established a direct link between being socialized into the traditional norms of hegemonic masculinity and a higher likelihood of committing violent acts. The first goal at UKZN, Howard College, was to draw attention to young men's varied views toward violence considering this evidence. Drawing from the interviews, male students' priorities are significantly shaped by masculinity. "There is a wealth of evidence that masculinities, the social organization of men's lives and relations, and the meanings given to being male are influential determinants of men's health and wellbeing, their likelihood of perpetrating domestic and sexual violence, their involvement in fathering, their risks of suicide, and a variety of other issues," writes Flood (2020). This was consistent with the study's findings, which suggest that the behaviour of young men at university is primarily influenced by ideas of masculinity that society has already expected them to conform to.

The social constructivism theory offers an analytical analysis and contributes to our understanding of how masculinities are defined through the acquisition of appropriate social behaviour. The social constructivism hypothesis sheds light on and offers an understanding of how notions of what constitutes a "genuine man" are formed through social examples, role models, and communal teachings of behaviour at a young age. When young men move to a new environment, they put the lessons into practice on their own (Lombardo & Kantola, 2021). Most study participants agreed that a man should respect everyone, including women. In addition, guys should be capable of taking charge and sensitive to others' sentiments. Men were also expected to serve as protectors and providers, and men should work to fulfil these roles. The results show that most young men in higher institutions adhere to prevalent conceptions of

masculinity affected by their upbringing. This later influences their choices for how to act and behave masculinely in the new environment.

In higher education institutions, young men believe it is crucial to becoming socially acceptable manhood and are constantly working to maintain their status as a man. The results show that young men adhere to various masculine principles that help them to validate acts that denote masculinity and establish a fully formed masculine character. Participants stressed that a guy exhibits worth, for instance, by constantly putting others' needs first, keeping a good outlook, and remaining composed around others. This involves helping other students discover solutions to problems they face while attending school. Men are typically associated with certain behaviours, languages, and practices in particular cultural and organizational contexts, which are referred to as being "masculine" and hence culturally defined (Iboroma, 2016). The study points out that young men at tertiary institutions strive to continuously achieve and uphold their social status by practising behaviours that align with social values that are perceived to be masculine.

Young men who hold strongly patriarchal values are more likely to engage in interpersonal violence, intimate partner violence, and violent crimes (Mshweshwe, 2020). Some participants stated that men must show their aggressiveness. This allows them to gain respect and demonstrates their ability to protect their family. Participants, for example, stated that the protector role carries a great deal of responsibility and requires many skills, including leadership, bravery, humility, foresight, courage, and empathy. According to some, females pay attention to and respect a man who can physically fight. Others claimed to have learned the value of upholding authority and power no matter what from male family members, such as a grandfather. Because of this, they strive to remain men by taking chances, being dominant and competitive, and never showing anyone any signs of weakness (Mshweshwe, 2020). The interviews show that some young men in tertiary institutions adhere to patriarchal ideals to strengthen their masculinity, earn respect, and uphold their social position, which may impact how often they use violence.

One of the study's main goals was to examine how dominant ideas about masculinity influence violent conduct among young male students at the Howard College Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. "Norms are learned as people interact and internalize the messages they receive from their surroundings," asserts Gross and Vostroknutov (2022. 12). According to the interviews, most people think violence is wrong and cannot be justified. Furthermore, the participants argued that violence should not be used to resolve conflict because it can have many negative and life-threatening consequences, including injuries and even death. However,

the interviews show that young men believe that when confronted with challenges, they may be forced to resort to violence to protect themselves and maintain the respect of others. Participants, for example, stated that a man should not be completely harmless but must recognize the truth of the situation. In extreme cases, a man must resort to violence to protect himself.

An individual uses violence to openly express their feelings, such as anger, frustration, or sadness. At times, violence can be viewed as a form of manipulation used by individuals to obtain what they want or require. According to this study, young men use violence to defend themselves. According to participants, some violent behaviours result from toxic peer relationships. Furthermore, some have stated that they come from backgrounds with high crime levels and, as a result, were exposed to violence at a young age. As a result, they recognize the significance of learning self-defence to protect themselves from some of these social ills. According to the interviews, young men at higher learning institutions believe that witnessing violence at a young age shapes men's violence and drives the need to learn how to defend and protect themselves against harm.

Most young men in tertiary institutions believe that displaying violence and dominance to achieve a masculine character is a choice in certain situations and is only required in situations where violence is required for self-defence (Terrence, 2020). The study discovered that the interaction of students from poor backgrounds and those from wealthier backgrounds contributes to young men's experiences with violence. Peers from middle- and upper-class families clash over the desire for recognition, respect, and power to maintain their social status. Some participant, for example, mentioned that where they come from, a wealthy person is respected in society. His children have social standing. Because of the family's history, they are well-known and respected. As a result, they are likely to clash with peers from prestigious families who believe they are superior and everyone else is beneath them. They believe they have the right to do whatever they want and deserve to be praised for it. Unless circumstances require self-protection, young men believe that using violence at tertiary institutions is merely a choice. However, some campus violence is thought to be influenced by the need to recognize the social status of their peers from wealthier families.

Economic inequality psychologically affects people's perceptions of others and fuels violence in South Africa (Buttrick, and Oishi, 2017). Economic influences on mental health include income inequality, living in poverty or debt, employment status and educational level. Not only can the stress of poverty and debt lead to mental health problems, but they can also make existing mental health problems worse (Browman, Destin, Kearney, and Levine, 2019).. The

study found that among young men from various origins, economic disparity impacts some of the violent incidents that occur in colleges. Literature indicated that being a member of a minority group can not only result in discrimination, it can lead to greater vulnerability to experiences such as bullying, hate crime, domestic violence or abuse (Yule, Houston, and Grych, 2019).. This study shows that some young men with good financial standing need to project their social status due to notions of masculinity from the social environments from which they originate. Due to economic disparities, this study discovered that social standing among young males attending universities affects how other students view and interact with one other, which can lead to aggressive conduct and conflict.

Young men in higher education cannot understand and manage their emotions. As a result, they are frequently confronted with violent responses (Mahlangu et al., 2021). Some students, for example, believed that female students are argumentative and disrespectful and do not acknowledge their male peers. Others feel verbally abused on social media, making it difficult to refrain from retaliating or responding aggressively. Mainstream ideas and dominant notions of masculinity deplete men's emotional reserves and impair their ability to form healthy relationships and express emotions. This stems from social beliefs that boys should emotionally toughen up and not show emotion. Men are urged to hide their weakness, fear, vulnerability, and despair to avoid embarrassment and guilt for expressing their emotions (Wesley, 2015). The results show that young men who internalized these ideals of masculinity at the university struggle to express their emotions and navigate relationships in light of this data. In particular, many feel that living in a new environment with different standards and expectations challenges their values and beliefs. The study emphasizes how these concepts of masculinity prevent kids from developing good relationships with their peers and may lead to conflict, which could lead them to turn to violence or intrapersonal violence, like suicide, as a way to express their frustrations.

Most of the young men in the study have been both victims and perpetrators of violence at university. Some participants stated that their encounters with violence at the university took the form of student protests to express their demands. As cited in chapter two, it has become customary to expect and witness massive student boycotts and protests in universities on an annual basis. Student demands for free education and the fight against academic and financial exclusion fuel the protests. This occurs collectively in all South African universities where students protest yearly (Kujeke, 2016). The study found that the majority of these demonstrations descended into violence as participants admitted to being hurt and running the

possibility of facing legal repercussions. The need to draw attention to unaddressed concerns at the institution, which could lead to mass violence, is what drives the action, nevertheless.

The Howard College campus is surrounded by townships known for their high crime rates. Despite the university's safety measures, most young men have been victims of crime and fear for their lives. Participants feel compelled to resort to violence to protect themselves from crime because law enforcement does not provide them with the required assistance. They resort to violence in order to obtain justice. For example, the study discovered that several students had been mugged, and the police provided no assistance in these cases. As a result, students begin to act on their own. Hence, this study suggests that some of acts of collective violence by young male students such as protest and boycotts stem from the need to protect themselves against harm imposed by the surrounding environment.

Most participants highlighted the difficulty of managing academic demands and the pressure to excel. Balancing academic workload intersects with balancing personal life conditions and requires emotional and mental strength. Participants expressed that their unsuccessful endeavours to balance academic life may lead to suicidal and aggressive behaviour. It was expressed that there is no time to rest and sleeping and eating patterns are not normal. The study unveiled that some disputes come from sharing space in LANs and student residences with individuals with different personalities who, as mentioned by other participants, are irresponsible and insensitive which can lead to violence and conflict.

Growing up in an environment where violence and aggression are dominant forms of masculinity is challenging. Students reported that they believed that it was not necessary to display violence. However, it is difficult to remain calm in some situations. It was mentioned that it is more challenging if there is no freedom to express feelings, especially if one does not want to resort to violence. As discussed on the literature that exposure to multiple kinds of violence predicts negative outcomes beyond the effects of any specific type of exposure (Artz, et al. 2014). Duke et al. (2010) states that there are a range of outcomes for witnessing violence at home at an early age including psychological trauma, adult relationship adjustments, college adjustment, poor school grades, weak physical health, teenage pregnancy, delinquency, bullying, self-directed violence, fighting, dating violence perpetration, and adult intimate partner violence victimization and perpetration. The study found that some young males in tertiary education were exposed to violence as youngsters, which is frequent and accepted and presents a problem because these individuals are more likely to battle with drug and alcohol usage. They may also suffer from depression and resort to violent behaviour. Young people are



more likely to engage in violence if they have often seen their families lose their tempers, are physically punished by their parents, and have seen family members hurting one another.

While this study claims that violence is linked to drug use, the researcher cannot claim that drug use perpetuates violence or is the primary cause. Because doing so implies that everyone who consumes alcohol or drugs becomes violent. In cited in the literature by Rich, Nkosi, and Morojele, (2015) that “alcohol cannot profoundly be named a fuel of any specific behaviour”. The author explained that this is because alcohol is both a depressant and a stimulant. However, the data gathered for this study shows a clear link between alcohol consumption and violent, aggressive mental impulses. Most violent incidents at the university were the result of alcohol use. When young men get drunk, they are more likely to engage in violence. Students currently enrolled in science faculties reported that their academic workload is demanding, so they turn to alcohol to relieve stress. Most participants stated that being in an academic environment is very demanding and emotionally stressful, so they resort to excessive alcohol consumption, which fuels the incidence of violence.

Emotional health is an essential aspect of mental well-being. It is the ability to cope with positive and negative emotions, including awareness (Modrakovic et al., 2021). The lack of emotional well-being was explored as an essential factor perpetuating violence. It was found that most men struggle to express their emotions, and as a result, they become violent and aggressive. The participant indicated that when men hold discriminatory attitudes towards homosexuals and women, they sometimes act on their beliefs and become violent, which contributes to the country's surge of violence. The findings suggest that young men can avoid violence if they learn how to manage their emotions. Being self-aware of one's own emotional state and feelings may assist in remaining calm.

One of the main objectives of this study was to discover opportunities and constraints for changing behaviour among male students in Durban. The interviews suggest that many factors are identified as opportunities for effectively combatting violence and conflict among young male university students. Reporting violent situations or conflicts to relevant authorities such as campus security, residence assistants, and house committees is one of the measures that can be used by young males at the university when they encounter violent situations or conflicts. This will help resolve conflict and assist with identifying trends, developing intervention program plans for the year, or everyday operational situations where violence and aggression are likely to occur on the Howard College campus. Reporting violence to risk management services was essential as students should not feel threatened or bullied in the university space. If they can communicate with the relevant authorities, timely solutions can be initiated.

Communication is key to avoiding conflict, as young men cannot communicate or express their feelings at times, escalating to violent behaviours.

Implementing more programs that address gender norms and masculinities will aid in combatting violence. This will allow young men to refrain from perpetuating violence fuelled by toxic social norms. The findings identify young men as key role players who can prevent gender-based violence if initiatives and programs focus on the underlying issues associated with patriarchy and violence. Special programs can help them learn more about behaviours that are perceived as violent and aggressive. Young men should join organizations that teach about behaviour management, and this will combat their use of violence toward others. Movements, such as university clubs and societies, webinars, and free online classes that provide moral support and guidance to young men may be helpful, especially in helping them reflect on their vulnerability. This will aid in assisting them in navigating difficult circumstances and coping with the pressure of adapting to a new environment and challenging circumstances (Hughes, 2020).

The study identifies the use of professional services such as psychosocial support, online education programs, and organized forums and dialogues relating to violence among young males at the university would be helpful. The university provides professional services for students to use; these services are free, yet utilization remains low. This is because men do not want to be perceived as weak and vulnerable. The utilization of professional services can assist in establishing a secure environment where young men can learn about prevalent masculinity ideologies that impact their well-being and use that knowledge to prevent violence and conflict. Utilizing the resources offered and speaking with a professional can be beneficial. For young men to use the resources and receive the support provided, these programs need to be more appealing (Chiang, Howard, and Butchart, 2021).

Education is an effective tool for learning, and young men can be influenced by what they learn. Learning about violence is a means of combatting it and living in a safer society. In addition, the university environment is a space where young men can develop their perceptions and values without being influenced by their community or religious affiliations. Thus, education can be used as a tool for change. The university environment is a space for young men to learn and develop their values and beliefs (Duque et al., 2021).

### **5.3 Conclusion**

Using social constructivism theory, the researcher identified that young males learn violent behaviour through society's teachings and learned behaviour. This was later practised at the

individual level in the new environment in which they found themselves. It is demonstrated that young males tend to practice learned masculine notions from their communities at universities which constantly results in them being involved in violent acts. This research revealed that young men find it essential to achieve a socially recognized notion of manhood and to continually achieve the status of a real man. Therefore, they embrace the existing norms of masculinity and live towards fulfilling valued expected behaviours that mirror good qualities of manhood. The study revealed that young men who support dominant patriarchal values commit violence even though participants do not deem violence as a way of solving conflict. This is because the university environment presents challenges that result in most young men resorting to violent behaviour.

The study demonstrates that some disputes simply arise from the inability to cope with academic stress. The pressure to maintain good results requires emotional and mental strength, which can result in intrapersonal violence, such as suicide, as young men struggle with accepting disappointment. Disputes among young men may arise due to resentment about their economic situation. In investigating factors that fuel violence among young males, substance abuse was linked to violent incidences, which demonstrates that drugs have an impact on influencing violent behaviours among young men. In the journey of combatting violence among young men at South African universities, this research points out that the formulation of programs that are based on helping young males to unlearn norms that creates difficulties for them when moving to new environments will be highly effective among tertiary students. Assisting young men to learn better ways of expressing themselves through advanced communication skills and promoting alternative measures will help them avoid conflict. This study emphasized that education effectively creates rational and critical thinking, influencing good decision-making. Therefore, creating and implementing programs that will educate young men on addressing gender norms and masculinities will also aid in combatting violence.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

It is critical to conduct additional research on masculinity concepts that influence young men's behaviour because it may shed light on construction intervention strategies to help reduce violence. This research project is exploratory and delves into various topics concerning the relationship between violence and manhood. These social issues must be investigated further to make sense of the social ills in South African higher education institutions. The development of gender responsive campaigns, policies and legislations that promote positive masculinity norms need to be employed to challenge the universal subject of violence among young men.

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## **Appendix A: Informed Consent**

### **UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)**

#### **APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL For research with human participants**

#### **INFORMED CONSENT**

#### **Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research**

Date:

Dear participants:

My name is Kwanele Mndebele. I am a Master's in Population Studies candidate in the School of Built Environment and Development Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus, South Africa. I can be contacted at 0638557579.

You are invited to consider participating in a study that involves research on the dominate notions of masculinity that fuel violence among young males in South Africa. The aim and purpose of this research are to shed insights into role of dominant notions of masculinity that may fuel violence among young men. The study is expected to enroll 20 participants. To be eligible in the study of only young males between the age of 18 to 35 years will be interviewed telephonically and they must reside in Durban and they must be registered students at UKZN, Howard College. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be 20 to 30 minutes.

Before you decide whether to take part or not to take part in this study, please note that:

Your responses to this interview will be anonymous no identifying information will be disclosed. Every effort will be made by the researcher to preserve your confidentiality including the following:

Assigning code names/numbers for participants that will be used on all research notes and documents.

Keeping notes, interview transcriptions, and any other identifying participant information in a file with password which will only be accessed by the researcher and supervisor.

I must also mention to you that there no compensation for participating in this study, however your participation will contribute meaningful to the society and academia through insights into the role of dominant notions of masculinity that fuel violence among young men which major problem at this present time.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is your decision to participate in this study. If you consider participating in this study you will be asked to sign an informed consent. You may also withdraw at anytime should you wish not taking part anymore in this study and you will be not asked a reason. If you wish to withdraw from the study even data collection process has been started, your data will be destroyed.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number\_\_\_\_\_).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions, you may me on 0784171613 or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:  
0784171613

### **CONSENT (Edit as required)**

I (Name) have been informed about the study entitled Dominant notions of masculinity fuelling violence among young male students in Durban, South Africa by Kwanele Mndebele.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study which is to be telephonically interviewed about questions pertaining to the topic.

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.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher at on 0784171613.

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](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

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

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**Signature of Participant**

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**Date**



## 2. Appendix B: Interview Guide



University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban South Africa

*Topic: Dominant notions of masculinity fueling violence among young male student in Durban South Africa*

Gender	Male			Female			Other		
Age									
Level of study	Undergraduate			Postgraduate					
Number of children									

**Exploring the link between notions of masculinity and violence among male students in South Africa.**

- What is the definition of being a man?
- How do you become a man of value? What factors do you think contribute to the construction of a real man?
- How do you feel about violence? What do you think about the use of violence?
- Is violence prevalent in the university? Please explain
- Should a man be violent? If yes, why?
- Have you experienced violence? If yes, describe the experience?
- Have you been exposed to violence at the university? If yes, please explain.
- What do you think is the role of manhood in influencing violence inside the university?
- Do you think violence resolve problems? Please explain
- Do you think men can resolve their emotional problems with violence? Please explain

- Should men be violent against women or children for any reason? Please explain.
- What are some of the challenges that young male students on this site face when they do not engage in violent behaviors?
- What can men do to take practical action to address student violence? Or any other forms of violence?
- What else can be done to address violence inflicted by men on this site and to communities?
- What are some of the factors that promotes violence among young male students on this site? Please explain and give examples

### 3. Appendix C: Ethical Clearance



05 September 2021

Mr Kwanele Mduduzi Mdebele (216016702)  
School Of Built Env & Dev Stud  
Howard College

Dear Mr Mdebele,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00003243/2021

Project title: Dominant notions of masculinity fueling violence among young male students in Durban, South Africa  
Degree: Masters

#### Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 18 August 2021 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 until 05 September 2022.

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.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

#### Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

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Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 Email: [hssrec@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:hssrec@ukzn.ac.za) Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

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