Exploring boys' perspectives of masculinity and gender inequality before and after participating in the Hero Empathy Programme.

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on exploring boys' perspectives of masculinity and gender inequality before and after participating in the Hero Empathy Bystander Programme for Boys. The purpose of this research was to explore the impact of this programme in facilitating a change in boys' perspectives of masculinity, attitudes to gender inequality and views on gender-based violence. The researcher conducted a qualitative study and used the social learning theoretical framework to gain insight into the boys' perceptions as revealed in the focus-group discussions held with them before and after the intervention. Through thematic analysis the researcher was able to identify boys' perspectives of masculinity, attitudes to gender inequality and views on gender-based violence before the intervention and change in these perceptions after the intervention.

This research formed part of a larger study. The intervention was implemented in 2018 by Action Breaks Silence, a non-profit organisation. Participants in the intervention were Grade 5 boys from ten different primary schools in Soweto and Atteridgeville, South Africa. A research team from the University of Pretoria held focus-group discussions with ten of the Grade 5 boys in each school that participated in the intervention.   The researcher of the present study analysed the focus group data collected before and after the intervention using the thematic analysis method in order to explore, identify and report on emerging patterns (themes).

The results revealed that the boys' communities, families and peers had influenced the development of their perceptions of masculinity, attitudes to gender inequality and views on gender-based violence. Further, the data obtained from the discussions held before the intervention indicated that the boys perceived themselves in a superior position, and having the power to impose their views on girls and demand obedience and compliance from women.

After participation in the intervention, a noticeable shift was observed in their perceptions of gender roles and gender stereotypes and the inappropriateness of violence and aggression towards girls. Some behaviour change was noted in how boys related to girls. However, this change brought challenges; because they deviated from the traditional group norm of masculinity, their peer groups viewed them as outsiders.

This study concluded that the Hero Empathy Bystander Programme for Boys had a significant influence in re-shaping the boys' understanding of what it meant to be a man and changing how the participants related to and interacted with girls. Based on this finding, a number of recommendations for future studies were made.

Keywords: *Gender Based Violence, Masculinity, Gender inequality, Gender Roles, primary school boys*

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DECLARATION OF OWN WORK

I, Sasekile Ntsovelo Beauty Mabunda, declare that this dissertation – Exploring boys' perspectives of masculinity and gender inequality before and after participating in the Hero Empathy Programme, is my original work apart from where I made use of or quoted another source, which has been acknowledged by means of complete references.

I also declare that the work I am submitting has never been submitted before for another degree to any other tertiary institution for examination.

Signature:

Date: October 2020

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research was to explore whether the Hero Empathy Bystander Programme for Boys has accomplished its goals in encouraging boys to participate in the eradication of gender inequality and gender based violence . The study aimed to explore boys' perspectives of masculinity before and after participating in the Hero Empathy programme and further look into boys' attitudes and views related to equitable gender relationships upon participating in the programme. In light of the purpose of this study, the following research question was asked:

Does participation in the Hero Empathy programme in primary schools make a difference in boys' perspectives on masculinity and their attitudes and views related to equitable gender relationships and gender-based violence?

With the aim of addressing the research question, the next sections consider the issues pertinent to the research, i.e. gender-based violence (GBV), masculinity and gender inequality, and the potential of an intervention such as the Hero Empathy Bystander Programme for Boys, to change existing perspectives.

This research explored how community perceptions of masculinity translated into young boys' perceptions of gender inequality, leading to specific behaviours and the perpetuation of forms of GBV. The aim of this study was to explore the potential of interventions to counter the existing process of socialisation by teaching boys to adopt alternative forms of masculinity and to perceive genders as equal. Although this research focused on women and girls as victims of GBV, the intention was not to imply that men and boys were not victims of GBV.

Gender-Based Violence

Violence against women as a form of GBV, is a widespread social, public health and human rights problem that affects millions of women worldwide, and it is also endemic to the South African society (Boonzaier, 2008). South Africa is plagued by GBV—research findings show that the country has the highest rates of GBV in the world (Mpani & Nsibande, 2015). Constant reports of GBV and deaths of women at the hands of their partners are a clear indication of the seriousness of this problem in South Africa (South African Government, n.d.). It is evident that serious attention needs to be given to halting incidences of GBV.

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a term that refers to the violence that takes place between genders as a result of the social norms and role expectations associated with each gender, as well as of the unequal power relationships between the genders within the context of a specific society (Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 2016). According to Connolly (2017), GBV is not limited to physical or sexual violence against girls but includes equally insidious forms

of violence against them such as boys addressing girls in language that undermines girls' self-esteem, and even expecting girls to perform certain roles that boys are not necessarily expected to perform (Wilson, 2006). GBV can be broadly viewed as behaviours that result or manifest in the harm of another; these behaviours can be both explicit (in the form of direct physical bullying and intimidation) or implicit (in the form of sarcasm and/or the use of demeaning language that results in emotional or psychological harm) (Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 2016). Some forms of GBV, especially when used by young boys, are not always recognisable as harassment, abuse or violence as they do not manifest as extreme physical harm (Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 2016). For example, in as much as girls may experience subtle degrading interactions as unwelcome, they may quickly dismiss them as unimportant as they are socialised to view themselves as inferior to boys (Bantjes & Nieuwoudt, 2014). Early in their development, girls learn that "boys will be boys" (Wikström, 2019). Furthermore, the practice of GBV is shaped by how certain privileges associated with notions and/or perspectives of masculinity and gender inequalities in certain cultural systems play out in specific contexts (Müller & Shahrokh, 2016).

The prevention of GBV is complicated owing to communities' social norms and the perpetuation of socially accepted perspectives of masculinity that are ingrained in cultural gender norms and that underlie gender inequality (Abdool Karim & Baxter, 2016; Connolly, 2017). GBV is rooted in socially accepted gender norms that condone inequality and discrimination between genders. The power imbalances between men and women and also between girls and boys—at both societal and individual relationship levels—are typically inculcated during the formative years of childhood and become established during adolescence (Abdool Karim & Baxter, 2016).

Perspectives of Masculinity and Gender Inequality

Perceptions of masculinity are formed based on inequitable gender norms that develop within a cultural patriarchal system (Wood, 2019). Wood (2019) explains that patriarchy is a social system in which men dominate women. Through a process of socialisation, this system is passed on from father to son; therefore boys learn early on in their development that being a man means being a leader and taking care of women. This belief results in the domineering behaviour of men and boys and their exercise of power over women and girls, which have destructive consequences in the form of gender inequality and GBV (Wood, 2019). Furthermore, within a patriarchal social system, men and boys are socialised in such a way that they internalise a sense of superiority over women and girls, and when this sense of superiority is not accepted and is challenged by women and girls, men and boys resort to coercion, intimidation and violence as a way to preserve it (Wikström, 2019; Wood, 2019).

The perception of masculinity within the framework of patriarchy manifests itself in gender inequality, which is displayed in the actual unequal treatment of individuals, specifically women and girls, based on gender (Jewkes, Flood, & Lang, 2015; Kray, Howland, Russell, & Jackman, 2017). Gender can be a socially learned concept; children can adopt this concept at an early age because parents and the community, as well as society at large, interact with children differently based on their biological makeup. Boy children in their early developmental stages learn from their social environment what it means to be a man (Dery & Ganle, 2020).

Perceptions of masculinity constitute attitudes and behaviour that are acquired through social learning and are accepted and practised in a given culture and society. Masculinity comprises behaviours and traits associated with certain traditionally accepted norms and ways of being, which reinforce traditional and societal perceptions of what it means to be a man (Kosakowska-Berezecka et al., 2016). Perceptions of masculinity result in forms of social control (Viitanen & Colvin, 2015).

Interpersonal influences, such as family of origin, peer associations and the larger society which individuals live in, are regarded to be central in the construction and perception of gender attitudes. Boys and girls are socialised differently, which results in their acquiring different identification patterns (Kågesten et al., 2016). Boys are inclined to identify with the traditional notions of dominant masculinity, which later translate into inequitable gender relationships. On the other hand, girls are inclined to identify with the traditional norms of women being required to be submissive. This identification often translates into women and girls becoming involved in gender relationships where the power dynamics are skewed and women and girls are in a one-down position in relation to men and boys. Boys who adopt societal norms that support inequitable gender relationships tend to maintain male controlling behaviour, which may increase the threat of GBV.

In the socialisation process of boys, the perceptions of masculinity that endorse inequitable gender attitudes are not communicated or modelled directly in a way that exposes the underlying and potentially harmful ways of relating to others. For example, young boys can be socialised to shun harmful inequitable practices relating to gender but at the same time to endorse inequitable gender norms such as unequal gender division of labour in the household (Kågesten et al., 2016). These seemingly harmless norms and inequitable gender attitudes shape the way boys interact with girls, form relationships, and engage in other social behaviours.

Such social learning of perceptions of masculinity takes place implicitly, is assimilated by the recipients, and unfolds in a social or cultural context that condones the perceptions. At times, the

destructive/toxic perceptions of masculinity are not perceived to be harmful—they are accepted, normalised and endorsed by society irrespective of how potentially harmful they can be (Jewkes et al., 2015; Viitanen & Colvin, 2015). Masculinity is likely to turn "toxic" and result in violence when male-bodied people perceive that they are not treated properly as "men" in accordance with endorsed cultural and societal norms.

Socialisation or social learning plays a crucial role in the formation and shaping of gender norms and also, in the context and scope of the current study, in the formation of perceptions of masculinity (Kågesten et al., 2016). Children learn early on in their development about their culture's prescriptions as to what it means to be a man or a woman, what behaviours to engage in that are characteristic of boys and/or men and how to view and relate to women and/or girls. Such learning is drawn from various sources, such as the modelling of elders and the responses of people, and it results in both adaptive and maladaptive perceptions of the self, for example, as a man in relation to a woman (Stern, Clarfelt, & Buikema, 2015).

According to Dery (2019), GBV is often reinforced by a dominant notion that a man has the cultural right to secure the obedience of his wife through "appropriate" beating. Furthermore, Dery (2019) states that specific notions of masculinity ascribe value to men's ways of being that promote violence as an acceptable way of resolving interpersonal grievances and conflict. As a result, GBV is often perpetrated to reinforce power and dominance and to maintain socially constructed and learned perceptions of what it means, either directly or implicitly, to be a man in a relationship (Dery, 2019).

When masculinity is viewed as a man's ability to exert power and domination, exhibiting aggressive behaviours is often accepted as marks of masculinity in a society (Dery, 2019; Dery & Ganle, 2020). Such a toxic way of practising masculinity often takes place in a cultural context that legitimises aggressive control of women and/or girls by men and/or boys and perceives such control as a central characteristic of manhood (Stern et al., 2015).

In the light of the above discussion, it seems as though toxic perceptions of masculinity play a role in gender attitudes that endorse norms that perpetuate gender inequality. These attitudes are harmful to both boys and girls and at worst encourage the perpetration of GBV. GBV can be a behaviour used to maintain specific traditional or toxic perceptions of masculinity that promote acts of aggression, control and dominance (Kosakowska-Berezecka et al., 2016). Nevertheless, the toxic perceptions of masculinity of one party cannot exist without the complementary compliance of another party, in this case women's and/or girls' acceptance of these perceptions of masculinity.

Socially learned perspectives of masculinity affect not only how boys and men relate to women and girls but also how they view themselves and place sanctions on their general experience of the world and their ways of experiencing things and expressing emotions (Dery, 2019). For example, boys can learn through social norms that they are not allowed to experience and express emotional states, such as feelings of vulnerability and sadness, that might be perceived as being less masculine (Dery & Ganle, 2020). According to Dery (2019) and Dery and Ganle (2020), there are some cultural norms that ascribe value to men's or boys' use of violence as an emotional outlet in resolving interpersonal conflict. Thus, when men or boys feel threatened and vulnerable, the best possible way of expressing it is through the use of violence in accordance with the prescriptions of their culture (Kosakowska-Berezecka et al., 2016).

Furthermore, when the notion of masculinity that entails the denunciation of vulnerability and a full range of emotional expression and experience is threatened or challenged, men and boys may compensate for this threat by an extreme expression of these attitudes through aggression or the use of violence. They would do so in order to restore and reinforce their cultural perspective of masculinity (Dery, 2019; Dery & Ganle, 2020; Kosakowska-Berezecka et al., 2016). Violence therefore functions as an essential mechanism of communication to validate and ascribe value to specific models of masculinity within a particular context.

Although violence may not be a dominant part of masculinity, it may be used by young men as a "shortcut" to reaffirm masculine power, control and dominance in a context where the main routes to credible masculinity is unattainable (Dery & Ganle (2020).

According to Abdool Karim and Baxter (2016), harmful gender norms can be changed through some kind of intervention that addresses these norms. Viitanen and Colvin (2015) assert that participatory workshops that involve men and boys provide "safe" spaces for the discussion of and critical reflection on the topics of gender inequality and masculinities. These safe spaces could foster a shift in strongly upheld attitudes of inequality between men and women or between boys and girls, which could result in behaviour change. Since the root cause of GBV is perceived to be centred in destructive perceptions of masculinity (Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 2016), gender equality needs to be promoted (Bhatla, 2012) in an effort to reduce GBV. According to Amin, Kågesten, Adebayo, and Chandra-Mouli (2018), it is possible to facilitate a change in toxic perceptions of masculinity and build equitable gender attitudes within short time frames. Small group participatory interventions hold promise in building equitable gender attitudes (Amin et al., 2018).

This study focuses on exploring change in boys' perspectives of masculinity and gender inequality after participating in the Hero Empathy Bystander Programme for Boys (hereafter the hero empathy programme) in primary schools.

The Hero Empathy Programme

Because of the various negative consequences of unequal gender relationships for both men and women, there are different interventions aimed at changing gender norms in an effort to change gender relationships (South African Government, n.d.). One such intervention is the hero empathy programme developed and implemented by Action Breaks Silence, a non-profit organisation (NPO) functioning in Great Britain, India and South Africa.

The hero empathy programme was implemented in primary schools in South Africa in 2018 amidst community outrage about high levels of GBV (Action Breaks Silence, 2020). The programme is seen as a primary prevention intervention that aims to change boys' perception of what it means to be a man, which could eventually reduce incidences of GBV. The goal of the current research study was to explore whether the hero empathy programme implemented in South Africa had accomplished its goal of facilitating changes in young boys' perspectives of masculinity, their attitudes to gender equality, and their views on GBV. A research team from the University of Pretoria conducted focus-group discussions with boys from ten primary schools in South Africa before and after the intervention. The researcher of the current study analysed the data obtained from these discussions in an attempt to discern whether the hero empathy programme had been successful in influencing boys to embrace changed perspectives of masculinity that accepted and condoned equitable gender relationships, adaptable perspectives of masculinity and the view that women and girls were equal to men and boys.

Description of the hero empathy programme

The hero empathy programme aims to address the root of the problem of abusive and violent behaviours in gender relationships. It is designed to assist primary school boys in being exposed and exploring various forms of masculinity. Another goal of the programme is to break down gender stereotypes to promote equal gender relationships. If this is done from an early age, it is possible to change destructive perceptions of masculinity and eventually change emerging patterns of violence against women. In response to the high levels of GBV in South Africa, the hero empathy programme was implemented in the country by Action Breaks Silence, a non-profit organisation, in August/September 2018. In its effort to eradicate GBV, the programme got primary school boys involved in workshops that exposed them to multiple models of masculinity.

Characteristically these models appreciated the notion that boys and girls were equal (Action Breaks Silence, 2020).

The hero empathy programme exposed boys to alternative forms of masculinity, in that way facilitating a social learning process. The programme intended to promote an acceptance of alternative masculinity which normalised healthier and more adaptable ways of expressing emotions and embraced gender equality which could influence behaviour change. Importantly, the programme was aimed at helping boys learn to embrace or be open to diverse perceptions of masculinities that acknowledged gender equality in order that they could eventually play a role in halting GBV. Researchers argue that early intervention could contribute to adopting alternative perspectives of masculinity that are based on the beliefs that gender equality and respect for women are important. Changed perspectives could eventually change communities' behaviour patterns (Bano et al., 2009; Bhana, 2005).

The hero empathy programme ran behaviour-focused interactive workshops for boys in primary schools and endeavoured to achieve its aims by enabling the boys to focus on their patterns of thought, feelings and behaviours.

1. Think

a. Think about girls and women and boys and men as equals.

b. Understand what GBV is and how all forms of violence and abuse against women and children are unacceptable.

c. Understand that boys are allowed to experience and express a range of emotions without harming others.

2. Feel

a. Feel empathy towards women and girls.

b. Feel empowered to express emotions in adaptive ways.

c. Feel confident and have a positive self-esteem.

3. Behave

a. Behave in respectful and empathic ways towards girls and women.

b. Communicate in positive and adaptive ways.

c. Become active bystanders and part of the solution to end GBV by reporting any acts of violence that are witnessed. (Action Breaks Silence, 2020)

The full schedule and content of the school programme are set out in the enclosed Appendix A.

Goal of the Research

This research explored the question whether primary school boys' participation in the hero empathy programme had made a difference in their perspectives of masculinity and attitudes about equitable gender relationships and gender-based violence before and after they had participated in this programme. The purpose was to determine how this programme had contributed to addressing the social norms underlying the formation of gender perceptions. Using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), the researcher analysed the data obtained from focus-group discussions with a sample of primary school boys so as to identify young boys' perceptions of masculinity and gender relationships and to explore possible changes that could be observed after they had participated in the programme.

Conclusion

Chapter 1 presented an overview of GBV, highligting the seriousness of the issue. The chapter also focused on perceptions of masculinity and gender inequality and the fact that these perceptions were learned in a social context. The discussion further highlighted how toxic perceptions of masculinity could possibly be changed, for example by way of implementing an intervention programme for primary school boys. In this regard, the intervention programme presented by Action Breaks Silence was outlined and the link between this intervention and the current research was described. The following chapter covers a discussion of the literature pertaining to this study.

To summarise, the dissertation presents the research in the following chapters:

Chapter 2 focuses on existing literature that addresses issues of masculinity, gender inequality and GBV. Furthermore, the study's theoretical framework is discussed in this chapter. In Chapter 3, the research methodology used in this study is set out, followed by an outline of the results of the study's data analysis in Chapter 4. A discussion of these results is presented in Chapter 5. This final chapter concludes the research study and makes recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

The current study sought to explore boys' perspectives of their masculinity and their attitudes about gender equality and gender-based violence (GBV) before and after they had participated in the hero empathy programme for boys in primary schools. By analysing the focus-group discussions held with the boys before and after participating in the programme, the researcher intended to gain knowledge and an understanding about boys' views on and perceptions of what it meant to be a man and how to relate to women. It is through social learning (Jackson, 1999) that men acquire the traditional beliefs that masculinity means to be dominant and tough and that men should have the attitude that violence is an acceptable means of demonstrating dominance over women (Graaff & Heinecken, 2017; Jackson, 1999). To understand boys' gender perceptions one needs to understand culturally rooted social norms of masculinity.

Masculinity

Masculinity is a complicated social construct and is understood to refer to a culturally based set of norms, values, attitudes and behaviours that a particular culture requires men and boys to adhere to (Omar, 2011; Segal, 2004). There are a number of theories that discuss masculinity, and what it means to be a man (Connell, 2016; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). One of the concepts widely used is Hegemonic masculinity (Hunter, Riggs, & Augoustinos, 2017). Hegemonic Masculinity is defined as the most honoured or desired form of masculinity, and it drives understandings and expectations of what it means to be a man (Hunter et al., 2017). Hunter et al., 2017 states that Hegemonic masculinity is an interpretation and understanding of what masculinity should be, and thus dominates over other expressions of masculinity. The Hegemonic male ideal, traditionally embodies qualities such as being strong, successful, capable, unemotional, and in control (Donaldson, 1993). According to Donaldson (1993); Hunter et al. (2017), values such as courage, and considerable amounts of toughness in mind and body from part of the Hegemonic masculinity ideal, furthermore, it is based on the practice that permits men's dominance over women. And according to Mfecane (2018) in some contexts, hegemonic masculinity refers to men's engagement in toxic practices including physical violence that stabilise gender dominance over other men and women.

Mfecane (2018) asserts that Hegemonic masculinity is understood as the pattern of practice (i.e., things done, not just a set of role expectations or an identity) that allows men's dominance over

women to continue. Furthermore, Mfecane (2018) argues that such concepts as Hegemonic masculinity offer narrow definitions of masculinity, which are unable to fully account for the complex life experiences of African men. This is because men do not live up to the cultural ideal of hegemonic masculinity and not all men conform to the attributes of Hegemonic masculinity (Hunter et al., 2017; Mfecane, 2018). As Donaldson (1993) noted, Hegemonic masculinity can be analysed, distanced from, negated, challenged and separated from. The shift from hegemonic forms masculinity has resulted in a masculinity which is termed caring masculinity (Hunter et al., 2017). The concept of a caring masculinity proposes that men are able to adopt what is viewed as traditionally feminine characteristics (i.e., emotional expression, sensitivity, domestication, interdependence, caring, etc.) without departing from or rejecting masculinity (Donaldson, 1993; Gibbs, Jewkes, & Sikweyiya, 2018; Hunter et al., 2017). And this reflects the complex cultural constructions of masculinity that is continuously negotiated and reconstructed (Hunter et al., 2017; Mfecane, 2018). Msiza (2019) also acknowledges the emergence of caring masculinities which are perceived as an alternative and desirable form of masculinity. This form of masculinity is perceived to build an egalitarian society (Msiza, 2019). This highlights the complex nature of masculinity in different social contexts. Furthermore, the ever changing nature, definition and expression of what it means to be a man. The preceding literature highlights that there is no one form of masculinity, however, masculinity can take different forms of expression in different times in history, different social, economic and cultural contexts.

According to Sakallı and Türkoğlu (2019), masculinity reflects a cultural perspective and a set of values that shape the way men and women or boys and girls relate to each other and behave. Furthermore, according to this perspective, men and boys are expected to fulfil overemphasised and idealised expectations of being a man, such as having physical strength and displaying aggressiveness. These societal perceptions, values and expectations become internalised over time. Wikström (2019) asserts that boys and girls are sensitised from early on in their development to certain physical and mental ideals, which are predominantly shaped by their cultures. This manifests in girls being drawn to nurturing and caretaking roles and boys to competitive and domineering roles. Furthermore, according to Sakallı and Türkoğlu (2019), women are assigned communal roles (e.g. caring for, relating to, and expressing themselves to others) whereas men are assigned agentic goals (e.g. imposing themselves on others, achieving self-improvement, being confident and success-oriented). Women's supposed communality originates from cultural views that they are fundamentally homemakers and should fulfil related roles, and men's presumed agency stems from cultural views that they are fundamentally responsible for providing for and protecting their homes and families (Sakallı & Türkoğlu, 2019; Wood, 2019). These gender

roles are taught and learned through socialisation; they are not innate qualities belonging exclusively to men or women (Kray et al., 2017). Kray et al. (2017) highlight the element of gender roles that emanates from traditional perceptions of masculinity. The manifestation of gender roles can be observed in the division of household labour, job exclusion, and gender differences in status and authority. According to traditional gender roles, females should fulfil "caretaker" roles and males "breadwinner" roles (Kray et al., 2017). Individuals who endorse the fixed belief that certain attributes or tasks are inherently associated exclusively with men or women tend to strongly believe that the role of caretaker cannot be disentangled from the female gender (women). These individuals might shun men who take on caretaker roles (Kray et al., 2017). Assigning specific roles to men and women or associating certain attributes with masculinity and femininity becomes problematic when it results in inequality and violence against individuals, for example, women and girls. The use of violence and coercion to maintain specific views leads to destructive behaviour. Prescriptive and rigid views passed down by society not only disadvantages women and girls but are also harmful to boys and men in that they are expected to subscribe to a very linear view of masculinity.

Wikström (2019) draws attention to the behavioural aspect of masculinity by asserting that men display various behaviours which society nonchalantly defines as characteristics of being a man and as behaviours through which men enact masculine power and coercion. Behaviours such as men's intimidation and street harassment of women, and boys' aggressive playing in school grounds are rationalised by society, especially in a patriarchal society (Wikström, 2019; Wood, 2019). From this perspective, violence against women is understood as an appropriate display of masculinity (Jewkes et al., 2015; Omar, 2011). According to Jewkes et al. (2015), violent behaviours are rooted in expected practices or entitlements that flow from ideas that men should be strong, tough, in control over women and their bodies, heterosexual, and sexually dominant. As a result, aggression and violence may even be a way of acting out or "doing" masculinity (Omar, 2011). Wikström (2019) posits that men feel intimidated when the traditional perceptions of masculinity are threatened, either through a reversal of what is commonly attributed to masculinity or femininity or through a reversal of gender roles. As a result, in order to re-establish the dominance they feel entitled to have, men resort to harassment and violence. Violence becomes a way "to prove, perform or maintain" socially learnt perspectives of masculinity (Omar, 2011; Wikström, 2019).

Traditional Perspectives of Masculinity

Traditional perspectives of masculinity are not always negative but they often cause men to disregard women and girls and treat them in an unequal and unfair manner by virtue of their

biological makeup (Fulu et al., 2013). Such unequal and unfair treatment can further manifest in the form of GBV. Mathur (2019) asserts that traditional perceptions of masculinity can also be harmful to men and boys as these perceptions place men and boys in a position of having to be emotionally stoic and having to negate their need for help; as a result, anger is the only legitimate expression of emotion they have available. Consequently, men and boys could develop a low self-esteem, suffer from depression and be inclined towards aggressive outbursts (Mathur, 2019).

Cultural norms are seen as key factors underlying violence against women (Maluleke, 2018). Attitudes towards women, driven by cultural and religious beliefs, determine how women are treated in a society (Maluleke, 2018). Lichter and McCloskey (2004) confirm that traditional attitudes relating to male–female relationships and the justification of relationship violence are associated with higher levels of GBV perpetration in dating. It is estimated that 3,3% of men and 2,3% of women in South Africa think it is acceptable for a man to hit a woman (Maluleke, 2018). This must be understood against the background of the South African context that is predominantly characterised by a traditional patriarchal system (History of South African Women, 2020). Growing up with gender stereotyping perpetuates gender inequality, and inequitable gender roles and attitudes may result in GBV in some contexts (Richter, Mathews, Kagura, & Nonterah, 2018).

According to Yount, Roof, and Naved (2018), the families and communities in which boys grow up and where they live as grown-ups may influence their endorsement and use of control and violence as a means to demonstrate masculinity. Social norms and expectations relating to males play a significant role in how boys view themselves as men. The manner in which masculinity is constructed in the family and broader society influences how boys view themselves and also how they view girls and women. Boys who are raised in a culture where men are associated with control and dominance, grow up endorsing such attitudes, and these attitudes ultimately justify acts of violence against women and girls. It is expected that boys who are raised and educated to subscribe to the traditional stereotype of dominance, control and use of aggression are more likely to become perpetrators of GBV. Furthermore, Ratele, Shefer, Strebel, and Fouten (2010) assert that culturally accepted norms of what behaviours are allowed and endorsed can cause boys to demonstrate their prowess in stereotypically masculine traits and pursuits, such as toughness and interpersonal dominance, as these behaviours would help them gain status among male peers.

According to Bhana and Mayeza (2019) the concept of traditional masculinity characterised by bodily power, emotional stoicism, toughness and strength has been helpful in explaining gender power inequalities as well as the ways in which social and cultural norms produces a particular

form of masculinity. However, Ratele (2017a) argues that traditional masculinity does not always imply an oppressive patriarchal expression of masculinity. Instead Ratele (2017a) asserts that there is no one singular traditional perspective of masculinity but multiple masculinities which differ from one context to another and are changeable historically and comprise of social practices which evolve overtime. Not all men/boys of a given society are the same, in the sense that they conform to, embody or support the prevailing interpretation of traditional masculinity (Bhana & Mayeza, 2019).

The eradication of GBV is thus a complex issue as such violence is ingrained in some community perceptions of masculinity and community norms. The eradication of GBV calls for a closer look into the multiple perspectives of masculinity and how they shape behaviour. A look at social learning theory may shed some light on this issue.

Social Learning Theory: Learning Violent Behaviour through Observation and Exposure

The Social Learning theory was utilised in the current study to gain an understanding on how the perspectives of masculinity and gender inequality are learnt in social contexts and imitated by boys. The Social Learning theory focuses on the learning that occurs within a social context. It asserts that people learn from one another through observational learning, imitation and modelling individuals learn behaviours by adopting what is modelled by their social network (Bandura & Walters, 1977).

Social learning theory applied to perceptions of masculinity centres on cultural and familial factors which impacts and shapes boys' perceptions of what it means to be a man (MacBlain, 2018). Boys who grow up witnessing men who embody an adaptive perspective of masculinity, are more likely to respect women and see them as equals later on. Furthermore, the social learning theory recognised that by rewarding children for engaging in gender-typed behaviours that is consistent with their assigned gender category as outlined by their social environment, gender socialisation occurs (Jackson, 1999; MacBlain, 2018). The Social learning theory also recognises the role of socialisation agents such as parents, teachers, and friends. According to the social learning theory identification with the socialisation agent is required for learning to take place. This means that children are more likely to model observed behaviour from same-sex parents or opposite sex parents (MacBlain, 2018), meaning that, they are most likely to model the socialisation agent, they identify with the most. This depends on the bond or level of identification with that particular socialisation agent (Bandura & Walters, 1977; MacBlain, 2018). In light of this, it is possible for boys to identify with any socialisation agent within their environment, as thus acquiring and embodying either a toxic or adaptive perception of what it means to be a man.

Through the process of social learning, both boys and girls learn what is right and wrong for them as set out by the social context in which they find themselves. The identification with role models increases individuals' self-efficacy in enacting the observed behaviours, especially when these behaviours are positively reinforced (Christine Sylva et al., 2016). Powers, Cochran, Maskaly, and Sellers (2017) posit that social learning plays a significant role in passing on norms, perspectives and values that contribute to GBV. This highlights how the expectations set by society form an intricate part of learning and adopting gender identity by boys and girls, which then influence the roles they assume. Therefore, individuals are impacted by the culture in which they live—they learn social behaviours by direct observation, but sometimes they learn in indirect ways. An example of the implicit learning of social behaviours is when children witness violence in the home, school or community environment. These children are more likely to endorse violent attitudes and accept such social behaviours as the norm. Furthermore, children who have been exposed to marital or domestic violence in their childhood are at risk of engaging in violence in their relationships as adolescents or young adults (Lichter & McCloskey, 2004). Research findings have shown a significant link between children growing up in communities where violence against women is the norm and later perpetration of violence by men against women (Richter et al., 2018). Youths who have been assaulted, who have witnessed assaults or have been raised in families where there are inequitable gender stereotypes may learn to resolve interpersonal conflict using aggression, and they are more likely to behave aggressively in their own interpersonal relationships (Usta et al., 2016). According to Jackson (1999), social learning theory has a potentially significant contribution to make toward an explanation and understanding of how perceptions of masculinity develop. It is through social learning that males acquire traditional beliefs about masculinity (e.g. that men should be domineering and tough) and attitudes endorsing violence as an acceptable means of demonstrating dominance over women (Graaff & Heinecken, 2017; Jackson, 1999).

Social learning theorists believe that the behaviour of a person is shaped in childhood through observing well-known others (Bandura & Walters, 1977). In other words, social learning theory suggests that behaviours are based on beliefs and attitudes acquired through observational learning and modelling of behaviours (Stoddard, Heinze, Choe, & Zimmerman, 2015). Individuals are also socialised via vicarious experiences, where observing the experiences of others can be a substitute for their own direct experiences (Usta et al., 2016). Exposure to violence has been identified as a risk factor for violent behaviour because such exposure influences children's attitudes and beliefs about violence (Stoddard et al., 2015).

Perpetration of violence appears to begin at home and extends outside the home into the community. Children who have suffered violence are more likely to perpetrate violence against others (Mathews, Govender, & Lamb, 2016). These authors further maintain that emotional, physical and sexual abuse suffered by men as children is a significant base determinant of violence perpetration. In most instances, childhood abuse is the most significant risk factor for violence perpetration. The most frequently cited long-term effects of having witnessed domestic violence as children is a tendency toward violence in adult relationships (Steen, 1997). According to Usta et al. (2016), education, parents' expectations relating to gender-typed behaviour, school discipline and exposure to community violence predict men's attitudes toward inequitable gender relationships. Similarly, adolescents exposed to community violence are more likely than those who witnessed less community violence to report attitudes of favouring the use of violence to solve interpersonal problems and to use violent behaviour (Stoddard et al., 2015). These authors have further found that beliefs and attitudes that support the use of violence are associated with violence perpetration and aggressive behaviour and that these beliefs and attitudes can produce stable aggressive tendencies across an individual's life span. According to Mathews et al. (2016), personal norms that endorse unequal gender relationships are significant direct and indirect predictors of increased violence perpetration. Exposure to violence has severe consequences for children, including extended periods of stress and feelings of powerlessness and depression, all of which affect their school and social adjustment. Children who are exposed to violence are at risk of becoming insensitive to future violence exposures, becoming uncaring towards others, and becoming violent themselves (Richter et al., 2018).

As much as the Social Learning theory was adopted in understanding the development of perspectives of masculinity in boys. It important to note that individuals possess agency (Bandura, 2008). Agency refers to the human capability to influence one's functioning and the course of events by one's actions. According to Bandura (2008) humans can order preferences, choose personal values, construct, evaluate, and modify alternative courses of action to secure valued outcomes, and override environmental influences (Bandura, 2008).To exercise agency is to intentionally influence one's functioning and the course of environmental events, furthermore, Bandura (2008) asserts that people are contributors to their life circumstances not just products of them. This theory applied to the social learning processes of masculinity highlights boys' ability to use their agency to conform or resist social norms on what it means to be a man. Through their agency, they are able to resist environmental influences, that even though they may be exposed to socialisation agents that model toxic masculinity, they may not imitate these behaviours.

Schudson, Manley, Diamond, and van Anders (2018) highlighted heterogeneities within gender groups. Heterogeneity refers to the attraction to specific gender configurations, for example men exhibiting feminine traits and masculine traits (Schudson et al., 2018). This concept further emphasises the literature which highlighted that men and boys constantly redefine and renegotiate masculinity.

Gender-Based Violence

According to Mpani and Nsibande (2015), GBV in South Africa is a widespread and common problem which is increasingly normalised and under-reported. Global studies suggest that Africa has the highest rates of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence in the world, with 45,6% of women experiencing one or more episodes of violence in their lifetime compared to a global average of 35% (Mpani & Nsibande, 2015).

Violence against women, which occurs in different forms in families, communities, schools and the workplace, seems to be often condoned by the public. Enactments of toxic perceptions of masculinity may manifest in different subtle ways in children's interaction, and these can be missed or interpreted as innocent child play (Mayeza & Bhana, 2017). These authors assert that the notion that children are innocent is dominant in society. Because an understanding of children as gendered beings who exercise power through violence is often obscured, their aggressive manner of play may be taken lightly and considered as normal (Mayeza & Bhana, 2017).

Interventions to Prevent GBV

According to Jewkes et al. (2015), commonly upheld perspectives of masculinity, characterised by dominance over women and girls, the use of violence as a means to an end, and unequal gender relationships are constituent elements of GBV. Interventions that aim to address GBV by facilitating an appreciation of an alternative perspective of masculinity—a perspective which does not endorse violence—ought to change the way men see themselves (Jewkes et al., 2015).

A programme such as the Hero empathy programme is essential in the South African context because of the country's high levels of GBV (Mpani & Nsibande, 2015). The aim of this programme is to counter harmful perspectives of masculinity by giving young boys exposure to an alternative perception of what masculinity means, a perception that is based on respecting women. It is believed that such a programme, which teaches young boys to relate in a positive way to girls, can counter destructive social norms and attitudes learned through socialisation (García, 2014). Change in harmful perceptions of masculinity, gender norms and practices can

only be achieved through the engagement of men and boys. By gaining insight into boys' own understanding of what it means to be a man in the social context in which they find themselves can aid in understanding underlying drivers of strongly upheld traditional notions of masculinity, attitudes to gender equality and views on GBV (Fulu et al., 2013). In the current study, the researcher facilitated a process of gaining this insight and exploring ways to address possible underlying harmful or toxic views about what it meant to be a man by analysing the data obtained from discussions with boys before and after their participation in an intervention (i.e. the hero empathy programme). The insight gained confirmed that programmes aiming to address the issue of GBV at its root ought to take cognisance of the fact that young men have been found to be particularly vulnerable to male peer group norms and influences (Stern et al., 2015). Peers offer validation for young men who conform to traditional norms of masculinity. Conforming to these norms often leads to peer-group status and approval (Casey, Carlson, Two Bulls, & Yager, 2018; Stern et al., 2015).

It can be assumed that boys are more inclined to accept new perceptions of masculinity when their peers are also receptive of the new perspective as this will ensure that their identity and sense of belonging in a group are maintained.

As much as the family and community in which young men grow up and live may influence their endorsement of toxic perceptions of masculinity (Yount et al., 2018), young men's awareness of and adaptation to social norms related to masculinity are almost exclusively influenced by their peers (Stern et al., 2015). In view of the finding that conforming to social norms leads to peer group acceptance and approval, the hero empathy programme was tailored in such a way that boys of the same peer group were involved, which ensured that peer validation and confirmation were maintained in a different social learning experience/environment.

Within the South African context, being a man is not viewed from an individualistic perspective but is understood and defined from a collective perspective. As a result of the significant collective identity within the South African context, interventions that aim to address toxic perceptions of masculinity should include the collective influence of groups (Jewkes et al., 2015; Ratele, 2017b).

Keller et al. (2017) assert that the promotion of equitable gender relationships between boys and girls is one of the critical components in GBV prevention programmes. In addition, it is important to target boys at a young age before they develop strong negative attitudes that support GBV.

Fulu et al. (2013) posit that preventing violence requires the involvement of socialising institutions at community levels, which could include schools. This has the potential of making a greater impact in addressing underlying factors that influence toxic perceptions of masculinity that could

lead to the perpetration of GBV as boys would be influenced during their formative years. According to Viitanen and Colvin (2015), boys acquire social norms in their formative years, and in the absence of any form of intervention to combat toxic perceptions of masculinity, adolescents may be more likely to endorse practices such as control and dominance over girls and GBV over time (Keller et al., 2017).

Social norms play a critical role in how boys see themselves and relate to others because these norms create strong expectations regarding thinking and behaviour, which are backed up by sanctions and rewards (Haylock, Cornelius, Malunga, & Mbandazayo, 2016). These authors further assert that prevention programmes that introduce an alternative perspective, new ideas and knowledge of what it means to be a man can yield feasible results in the form of an observable shift in thinking and behaviour. Keller et al. (2017) posit that the developmental phase between childhood and adolescence may be a propitious period to intervene in the attitudes and behaviours that may contribute to GBV, as boys during this formative period are more open to changing their views and perceptions of masculinity and equitable gender relationships. This further highlights the issue that, in order to address the problem of GBV, it is crucial to focus on its root cause (i.e. toxic perceptions of masculinity which stem from social norms) and tailor prevention interventions or programmes to involve boys in their formative years. An example of such an intervention is the hero empathy programme.

The hero empathy programme

The hero empathy programme is a prevention programme that aims to address factors that play a role in GBV. This programme focuses on affording boys a different and more adaptive perspective of masculinity. Firstly, boys are encouraged to learn and think about issues of gender equality; they are taught to see women and girls as equals. Secondly, they are encouraged to feel and show emotions other than just anger. The expression of a range of emotional experiences is emphasised and normalised, thus facilitating a process whereby boys learn to adopt the notion that men and boys are also allowed to feel. Thirdly, participants are encouraged to actively behave in a manner that displays the new adopted perspective of masculinity. This new way would entail behaving in a respectful, empathetic way towards women and girls, expressing a range of emotions and communicating in a positive and healthy way. Furthermore, this new adaptive perspective of masculinity is facilitated in a group context to ensure peer influence and approval, and facilitators are used who can model the acceptable behaviour (Action Breaks Silence, 2020).

Conclusion

As pointed out in Chapter 2, the focus of the current research was to come to an understanding of boys' perceptions of masculinity and gender relationships before and after participating in the hero empathy programme. The aim was to explore the extent to which the intervention had contributed to boys' re-learning of gender perspectives and gender role behaviour. The social learning theory, which was discussed in this chapter, was employed as the study's theoretical framework. This theoretical point of departure supported the chosen methodology of the study as it enabled the researcher to identify in what way the intervention had encouraged social learning to take place to change the participants' perspectives of masculinity and gender relationships.

Chapter 2 reviewed the existing literature relating to the traditional perceptions of masculinity. The information gathered highlighted the significance of adopted traditional perceptions of masculinity and how these perceptions influenced inequitable gender relationships and the resultant perpetration of GBV. The insight that the researcher gained from the literature review was that toxic perceptions of masculinity had an insidious influence in the perpetration of GBV. Furthermore, the literature revealed that preventative interventions could counter harmful perceptions of masculinity and might assist in halting GBV. The following chapter discusses the methodology followed in this study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The current study was carried out as part of a larger study to evaluate the hero empathy programme for boys. To explore boys' perspectives on masculinity and gender inequality before and after the implementation of the programme, the researcher analysed the data that had been collected from focus-group discussions with the participants.

The hero empathy programme that was implemented in South Africa consisted of six one-hour sessions, presented in a workshop format during school hours. Action Breaks Silence, an NPO, introduced the programme to the management of ten primary schools in Soweto and Atteridgeville that showed interest in the programme. A group of facilitators trained by this organisation implemented the programme during August and September 2018. These schools serviced a mainly middle- to low-income black population. In these schools, Grade 5 boys participated in the intervention with the consent of their parents. Action Breaks Silence implemented a programme for girls at the same time, focusing on building girls' self-esteem and skills to prevent their being victims of gender-based violence. However, the current study focused specifically on the evaluation of the programme for boys.

The summative evaluation of the programme, carried out by a team of researchers of the University of Pretoria, consisted of a pre- and post-assessment design, using a mixed methods approach within an utilisation-focused evaluation approach (Patton, 2008). Patton's utilisation-focused evaluation is an approach based on the principle that an evaluation should be judged on its usefulness to its intended users. Therefore, evaluations should be planned and conducted in ways that enhance the likely utilisation of both the findings and the process itself to inform decisions about the intervention and to improve performance.

The goal of the evaluation was to determine the impact of the programme on boys' perspectives of masculinity and their perception of gender inequality in relationships between men and women and between boys and girls. As part of the mixed methods design, quantitative and qualitative research methods were used. The quantitative evaluation consisted of a pre- and post-assessment using a survey administered to all participants of the programme. The quantitative evaluation did not form part of the current study.

In the current study, the researcher used the qualitative data which had been collected from focus-group discussions before and after the intervention, to explore and identify changes in the boys'

perspectives of masculinity and gender relationships. Furthermore, this research adopted the social learning theory (Bandura & Walters, 1977) as its theoretical framework to gain an understanding of and explain the development of gender perspectives and gender-related behaviour in communities.

The methodology used in the current study is discussed in the next section.

Methodology

The current study employed an interpretive research design to explore and identify changes in the boys' perspectives of masculinity and gender relationships before and after participation in the hero empathy programme for boys. According to Christensen, Johnson, and Turner (2015), an interpretative research approach that relies on multiple types of subjective data to explore and understand people's experiences in particular situations.

The interpretive research design focuses on meaning and how people make sense of the world (Willig, 2013), and the data gathered consists of words, pictures or other non-numerical information (Christensen et al., 2015). Using this approach, a researcher derives an understanding of people's experiences from data obtained from participants' subjective perspectives. Most important in a qualitative research approach is to understand a phenomenon from an insider's point of view (Christensen et al., 2015).

The researcher analysed the data obtained from focus-group discussions held with the participating primary school boys before and after the intervention to explore their views and perspectives of masculinity and gender relationships and to discern if and how these had changed. In keeping with the qualitative research design, raw data from the focus-group discussions was analysed and the boys' perspectives of masculinity and gender relationships were interpreted using the social learning framework to explore any possible social learning that had taken place after having received an alternative social learning experience in the hero empathy programme. Social learning theory stresses that exposure to influential role models' endorsements of interpersonal violence results in children learning and adopting such attitudes and later imitating and carrying out violent acts aligned with learned and adopted attitudes (Powers et al., 2020). The main goal of the intervention was to facilitate a re-learning process.

Sampling

The hero empathy programme was implemented during 2018 in ten schools in middle to low social class communities in Soweto and Atteridgeville that were interested in participating in the intervention. In these schools, all the Grade 5 boys whose parents had consented to their

children's participation were involved in the intervention. The programme was implemented by the Action Breaks Silence organisation with the permission of the Gauteng Department of Education.

Participants were recruited using a non-probability, purposive sampling technique. The purposive sampling technique relies on the researcher's judgment regarding the representative sample's characteristics, that they meet the predetermined criterion for the study (Bless, Hugson-Smith & Sithole, 2013).

The teachers responsible for organising the programme in the ten primary schools were asked to select ten Grade 5 boys in each school to participate in the focus-group discussions.

The following criteria were used in selecting the boys for participation:

1) Boys in Grade 5 who agreed to participate in the intervention

2) Boys who the teachers considered to be leaders in their grade group

3) Boys who would be willing to share their opinions in a group discussion.

Ten focus-group discussions were held involving 100 boys. Before the focus-group discussions started, the boys were asked to write their names and ages on a name list so that the same boys could be called again to take part in the focus-group discussions held about one month after the intervention.

Data collection strategies/procedures

Data was collected through focus-group discussions that were facilitated by postgraduate students from the University of Pretoria's department of Psychology and were conducted in the vernacular of the participants. Focus groups are social events consisting of group discussions organised to explore specific topics and to collect participants' opinions in a permissive and non-threatening environment. Focus-group discussions were used to elicit interactions and meaning-making processes to reveal Grade 5 boys' perspectives of masculinity and gender relationships in a situation where they were agents and co-producers of their reality (Carey & Asbury, 2016).

The pre-intervention focus-group discussions focused on gaining an understanding of what it meant for the boys to be a man, how they perceived the relationships between boys and girls and between men and women in their community and how they experienced violence in their community. (Refer to Appendix C for the focus-group discussion guide.)

About a month after the intervention, focus-group discussions were held with the same group of participants to determine what they had learned from the intervention and if and how their

perceptions of gender roles and of relationships between boys and girls had changed. Furthermore, the discussions focused on their evaluation of the intervention and changes in their perspectives of the role of a man and of gender relationships.

The discussions were audio recorded with the permission of the participants. After the data had been collected, the discussions were transcribed and translated into English for analysis.

Data analysis

The transcripts of the focus-group discussions held before and after the implementation of the programme were analysed using the thematic analysis method. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. Thematic analysis organises and describes a data set in rich detail. In addition, thematic analysis can be an essentialist or realist method, which reports experiences, meanings and the reality of participants, or it can be a constructionist method, which examines the ways in which events, realities, meanings and experiences affect a range of discourses operating in society (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The transcriptions were subjected to a thematic data analysis process from which emergent summative themes were drawn. Finally, the themes identified from the data gathered before and after the intervention were interpreted to examine if there were changes in the participating boys' perspectives and views of masculinity.

Analysing data using thematic analysis consists of various phases. The phases identified by Braun and Clarke (2006) are as follows:

Phase 1: Familiarising yourself with your data – This phase involves transcribing data, reading and re-reading the data, and noting down initial ideas.

Phase 2: Generating initial codes – This phase involves coding the important aspects of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set and collecting data relevant to each code.

Phase 3: Searching for themes – This phase is characterised by combining codes into potential themes and gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.

Phase 4: Reviewing themes – This phase involves checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (level 1) and the entire data set (level 2) and generating a thematic map of the entire data set.

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes – This phase involves doing an ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and the overall story the analysis tells and generating clear definitions and names for each theme.

Phase 6: Producing the report – This last phase, which is the final opportunity for analysis, comprises the selection of compelling extract examples, the final analysis of selected extracts relating back to the research question and the literature and the production of a report of the analysis.

Step-by-step application of the study's thematic analysis

Phase 1: Familiarising myself with the data

This phase involved immersing myself in the data by reading, re-reading and engaging with the transcribed focus-group discussions. I picked up themes across the data set and noted down initial ideas. This process aided in searching for meanings and patterns and devising possible codes.

Phase 2: Generating initial codes

Having read and familiarised myself with the data, I generated a list of ideas about what the data contained and what was interesting about it, and I produced initial codes from the data.

Phase 3: Searching for themes

In this phase, I went through the list of codes and identified potential themes. Thereafter I combined the codes that related to the same theme to form part of a potential broad theme.

Phase 4: Reviewing themes

This phase involved the refinement of the identified themes. I anticipated that some themes might turn out not to be themes, that some might collapse into other themes whereas others might be broken up into separate themes, which might result in the emergence of new themes. Upon rigorous checking if the themes worked in relation to the coded extracts (level 1) and the entire data set (level 2), it became apparent that no new themes emerged; therefore the next steps in the analysis process could continue using the already identified codes and themes.

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes

Having reviewed and refined the themes, I named them and determined which aspect of the data each theme captured. I conducted an ongoing analysis in this phase to refine the specifics of each

theme and generate a clear definition and name for each theme. The following main themes and related subthemes emerged from the data:

- Perspectives of masculinity
  - Physiological definition
  - Cultural practices
  - Provider and protector role
  - Emotional toughness; no vulnerability
  - Leadership – unequal power dynamics in relationships
  - Multiple partners
- Inequality in relationships
  - Different gender roles
  - Domineering relationships
  - Gender-based violence
- Challenges for boys to change relationships
  - Peer-group norms
  - Girls disrespect/bully boys
  - Teachers do not support change in gender relationships

Phase 6: Producing the report

In this phase, I did the final analysis and wrote the report. In keeping with the requirements of this stage, I selected compelling extracts from the data as examples to use in presenting an interesting account of the story the data told through the themes that had emerged. Furthermore, the selected extracts were related back to the research question and the literature to aid in the production of a concise and coherent report on the analysis.

Reflexivity

According to Tracy (2013), reflexivity in qualitative research involves careful consideration of the manner in which the past experiences, roles and points of view impact their interactions and interpretation of the research. Qualitative researchers are encouraged to do self-reflexivity through being introspective, assessing their own biases and motivations, and asking whether they are well-suited to examine their chosen research topics even before they start conducting research (Creswell, 2014). It is an ongoing process throughout the research process and it is a significant component of qualitative research. Willig (2013) proposes personal reflexivity which

involves reflecting upon the ways in which the researcher's own values, experiences, interests, beliefs and social identities shaped the research.

The study was conducted by a black woman who was born and raised in a township and was familiar with GBV. At the time of the study there was an uproar in the country about GBV. Since the beginning of the study i.e. 2019, there has been a numerous reports of GBV whereby women died at the hands of their male partners. Furthermore, the researcher was fulfilling a role of an intern clinical psychologist and was thus exposed to subjective reports of trauma resulting from incidences of GBV whereby women and men were victims. The issue of masculinity, GBV and social learning has been an area of interest to the researcher. Taking into account all these factors, the researcher acknowledges her feelings that arose towards the participants' views and discussions on what it means to be a man and how these feelings could have had an impact in how the researcher engaged with the data during the analysis process. The researcher acknowledges experiencing difficulties with accepting the idea that men or boys can become victims of GBV while extending more empathy towards females i.e. women and girls as victims. This required the researcher to constantly become aware of the impact the study had on her, and receive peer supervision. The study thus became a learning experience as through the boys' discussions, the researcher learnt the complex nature of gender perceptions, conceptualisation of masculinity and GBV. The researcher was sensitised that both men and women are victims, furthermore the researcher was sensitised to the complexities of gender roles.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

Reliability and validity of qualitative research are conceptualised as trustworthiness, rigour and quality. In the case of the current study, the quality, trustworthiness and rigour of the findings were enhanced by applying Guba and Lincoln's criteria for trustworthiness (as cited in Anney, 2014; Shenton, 2004).

● Credibility of the analysis was confirmed by using the following measures:
  The data was analysed by a co-researcher to avoid distortions and bias in the analysis and to ensure quality work. The co-analyser, who was a consulting research analyst with much experience in data analysis, analysed the data independently. This was followed up by a discussion between the researcher and co-researcher to reach consensus about the themes identified.

● Confirmability was ensured by keeping a data audit trail, detailing the step-by-step process that had been followed. The researcher kept records of every step and phase of the data analysis and reported these in the final report.

- Dependability was ensured by describing in full the planning of the research design and by implementing it (Shenton, 2004).

Ethical Considerations

The data had already been collected as part of the larger study for which ethical clearance (no. GW0180725HS) had been obtained in 2018. The project leader of the larger study granted me permission to analyse the focus-group data for my research study.

The following ethical considerations were in place for the larger study.

- Permission to do research

Permission to do the research was granted by the Gauteng Department of Education and the relevant school management committees.

- Parental consent

Since the participants in the study were under 18 years of age, parental consent was obtained for all the boys to participate in the intervention. Only learners whose parents had given consent for their children's participation in the programme were allowed to participate. Consent was also obtained for the boys' participation in the evaluation of the programme of which the focus-group discussions were part.

- Voluntary participation

The boys who participated in the intervention had to sign assent forms to confirm that they were willing to participate in the intervention voluntarily. Boys who were selected for the focus-group discussions signed an additional assent form, agreeing to participate in the focus-group discussions. Participants were also informed about their right to refuse or discontinue participation should they not feel comfortable with it.

- Confidentiality

In conducting the focus-group discussions and transcription of the data, the names of participants were kept confidential by using pseudonyms; therefore it will not be possible to trace opinions to specific individuals. The data from the focus-group discussions was interpreted as group data; therefore the data remained confidential. As the current research focused on the analysis of the larger study's data, I took the responsibility for keeping the data confidential. Data will be stored for 15 years in the archive of the relevant tertiary institution's Department of Psychology.

Conclusion

Chapter 3 discussed the research methodology followed in the study. The qualitative research methodology was utilised as it enabled the researcher to explore perspectives of masculinity revealed in the focus-group discussions. The thematic data analysis method was used based on its merits of enabling the researcher to explore, identify, organise and understand patterns and themes that emerged from the qualitative data. Furthermore, this method of analysis enabled the researcher to explore and gain an understanding of the perspectives of masculinity of the participating boys before and after the intervention.

The next chapter focuses on the thematic analysis of the data obtained from the focus-group discussions.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the analysis of the data obtained from the focus-group discussions that were held with the participating boys before and after the intervention. The data was analysed using thematic data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) in order to gain an understanding of these boys' perspectives of masculinity and gender inequality before and after participating in the six-week programme offered in their respective schools.

From the analysis, three main themes emerged. These three main themes were common to all the focus-group discussions (i.e. the discussions that were held before and after the intervention) and the themes and their related subthemes which emerged will be commented on in the current chapter.

Themes and Subthemes

The data analysed highlighted the boys' perceptions of masculinity and gender equality. It seemed that they viewed masculinity in line with environmental factors such as social norms and influences from the family and community. These environmental factors appeared to inform cognitive elements (e.g. attitudes and role expectations), which translated into behaviour. Below is an overview of the main themes and related subthemes that emerged from the analysis.

- Perspectives of masculinity
    - Physiological definition
    - Cultural practices
    - Provider and protector role
    - Emotional toughness; no vulnerability
    - Leadership – unequal power dynamics in relationships
    - Multiple partners
- Inequality in relationships
    - Different gender roles
    - Domineering relationships
    - Gender-based violence
- Challenges for boys related to changing relationships
    - Peer group norms
    - Girls disrespect/bully boys
    - Teachers do not support change in gender relationships

The identified themes reflected the boys' perspectives before and after the intervention. The goals of the intervention were to facilitate a process of learning that enabled boys to (a) to think about girls and women and boys and men as equals, (b) to feel empathy towards women and girls, (c) to learn to express their emotions in more adaptive ways, (d) to build their self-confidence and self-esteem, (e) to behave in a respectful and empathic manner towards girls and women, and (f) to become active bystanders by reporting any acts of violence they witnessed. These themes confirmed the assertion of the social learning theory that behaviour is determined by an interaction of cognitive factors (i.e. knowledge from a social context) that influence an individual's beliefs, attitudes and perceptions about masculinity and gender equality. The themes and subthemes are discussed in the next sections.

Perspectives of masculinity

The subthemes under perspectives of masculinity highlighted the boys' understanding of what it meant to be a man. Their discussions provided insights into various aspects ranging from the boys' physiological and biological make-up, the belief that men had to be emotionally strong and the conviction that men had to fulfil the role of provider and protector to the belief that a man possessed power.

- Physiological definition

Participants believed that men and women were different and unequal because of their biological differences (i.e. physical appearance and physiological functions). Among the aspects that were mentioned were that men had beards and women had breasts and that their sexual organs were not the same. These views were held before the intervention was initiated.

For example, the participants (identified through pseudonyms) shared the following views regarding physiological differences:

> Ntuthuko: "Because the body of a woman and a man are not the same, so generally man and woman are not the same."

> Thapelo: "They are not the same because of their erection. Men have a visible sexual erection compared to woman. Men's erection is visible in their penis but for women is more on the breast."

Other views expressed before the intervention were that men and women were not equal because men and boys possessed physical strength and, unlike women, were "strong and brave." These views seemed to be based on the fact that men were often assigned and became engaged in physical labour. For example, one of the participants shared the following view regarding physical strength:

> Vusimuzi: "They are not the same; woman cannot push a car while man can do that."

The participants' remarks indicated that the differences they perceived between men and women were related to the fact that men had physical power and that this resulted in the inequality in relationships. In other words, men's physical strength allowed them to be dominant in relationships.

- Cultural practices

According to the participants, being a man meant that one had attended initiation school and had undergone circumcision. Before participating in the programme, the boys believed that a boy who had not attended initiation school or gone through the rite of passage could not be accepted as a man.

Evidence that cultural practices played a role in defining a boy as a man was captured in the following comments by participants:

> Neo: "Boys attend an initiation school and girls do not do that. Boys do that so that they can become a man. It's all about being brave."

Sipho: "A real man must circumcise; he can only be a real man when he is from the initiation school, not the medical circumcision."

Olwethu: "A real man does not give up and he is also circumcised. All men must be circumcised and they must be circumcised at the mountain, not the medical one."

Rorisang: "When you are not circumcised you become a weak man and you will get many diseases as you will be exposed."

The significance of family and the community at large in teaching boys what it meant to be a man was highlighted in the following comments:

Boitshoko: "The people from the community taught me those things. At times you meet someone who will come and teach you how to become a man."

Molefe: "My family taught me, and teachers at school."

Sediba: "My parents taught me to do things that a great man can do."

The above comments revealed the role of the family, the community and society at large in shaping and influencing boys' perceptions of masculinity.

● Provider and protector role

Participants mentioned that it was the civil responsibility of men to provide for women and children and to protect women from GBV. This theme remained consistent before and after the intervention. The participants had the following views:

Mbongeni: "Men must take care of their wives."

Mboni: "Being a man is very special in the community because we protect woman from abuse and violence as well."

Neo: "Respect people in general, your family, and teach your children good manners as well."

Thabang: "Help your wife in the house to do many things so that your wife does not have to work alone. You also need to become a hero for the family."

● Emotional toughness; no vulnerability

This subtheme illustrated that boys were socialised to shun boys and men who displayed emotions. Boys received harsh treatment while growing up and were required to put up a facade of toughness. One of the participants explained as follows:

Benny: "It means a man should not beat a girl but a boy can be beaten; that is not a problem. Men are irons; they don't really matter that much."

From the above participant's perception that strength was associated with masculinity or being a man, it was clear that vulnerability and emotional sensitivity were denounced. Strength seemed to be signified by developing the ability to contain pain and emotional vulnerability, and strength was associated with toughness and emotional stoicism; hence the association of strong men with iron. Furthermore, before the intervention, boys mentioned that "men do not cry, men are strong." This view indicated the cultural (mis)conception of masculinity in terms of the notion that men were not supposed to show emotion, as showing emotion was considered as being weak. Therefore, men expressed their emotions in indirect ways, as illustrated by the remarks quoted below.

Neo: "When a man is angry he just wants to drink alcohol."

Tumi: "When a man is angry he thinks about things that are not right, like committing suicide and beating up a woman. It's for relieve for a man."

However, it appeared that this perception was challenged by the intervention, which taught participants that expressing emotions was part of being human and that men and boys were allowed to cry and express emotions. The extracts below demonstrated this change.

Tumi: "I learned that a man can cry without any shame, but before, I thought a man cannot cry."

Nathan: "They also taught us that we are the same as woman so we also can cry like them."

Under this theme, reference was made to the skills of managing anger and communicating emotions in more effective and adaptive ways. Participants mentioned that the intervention had taught them how to control their emotions when they were provoked by girls and that they had subsequently changed their way of communicating with girls. Lastly, it appeared that this intervention had helped participants to feel at ease when expressing their emotions. The ability to manage emotions and communicate in adaptive and effective ways can contribute to the reduction of violence toward women. It also seemed the space created by the intervention allowed participants to reflect on how they could treat women and girls differently (e.g. by showing affection and respecting their views).

Jimmy: "When you are hurt as a man you have to cry, because if you do not cry the pain stays inside and you will have stroke."

Jimmy: "They told us that we need to talk about our emotions and express them."

Tumi: "They also taught us that we can tell social workers about our emotions as well."

Neo: "They taught us that we should not hide our emotions."

Nathan: "They told us that we can also tell adults about our feelings."

- Leadership – unequal power dynamics in relationships

The participants associated masculinity with being a leader and decision-maker. The boys were raised in societies that expected men to act as figures of authority. As a result, men or boys enjoyed a higher social status than did women or girls. The expectation to act with authority seemed to be internalised by men and boys and to result in unequal gender relationships in which men dominated and controlled women.

Participants articulated the power dynamics involved in decision-making, explaining that men often imposed their views on women. One participant indicated that men had the freedom to exert control and demand obedience and compliance from women by means of coercion and physical abuse. It seemed as though there was consensus among the boys that because men were considered to be much stronger physically than women they could dominate women by using force in their interaction or relationships with women.

Sam: "Men have the strength to beat women, while women do not have the strength to do that."

James: "So, at times men tell their wives what not to do, when women decide to do what they were told not to do. Then men fight them."

Using force was indicated as especially relevant when it came to sexual and family-planning issues. The power and control imbalances were referred to as follows:

Mpho: "At times women can have affairs with other men, which causes their husbands to be angry and start beating them."

Boitshoko: "Women use prevention methods when their men are not aware. The day men find out they always fight women."

The above comments by participants illustrated that men used their power and strength to dominate women as far as decision-making was concerned. It could result in physical violence if a woman did not comply with the man's ideas and wishes. The comments by participants also illustrated that as much as these behaviours and attitudes were observed by the participants in

their communities, they did not necessarily agree with or endorse them. The participants demonstrated sensitivity to the harmfulness of these acts of manipulation.

The perception of participants changed after the intervention; they believed that men should communicate more effectively with and show more respect to women.

> Thapelo: "I learned that I must respect women. Men must respect women generally."

> Benny: "A real man respects other people."

> Mboni: "A man must have good manners."

> Thendo: "A real man does not insult women; they are nice to them."

- Multiple partners

The concept of masculinity was also seen to figure in men having multiple partners. Before the intervention, participants mentioned that they had been socialised that men often had multiple partners.

> James: "Men, when they want multiple partners in a traditional manner they start off by talking in a wrongful manner with their wives, so that they can start fighting, which will result in phones being broken."

> Thapelo: "Extra-marital affairs are the ones also making men and women not to get along very well."

> Thuto: "Men at most have extra-marital affairs. Also men have rules which women do not respect and men as well do not respect rules set by women."

From the discussions above, it appears that the participants witness men having multiple partners and as thus interpret this, as a way men embody masculinity. However, the participants do not seem to approve of this way of being. There is an acknowledgement of how such behaviours from both genders can contribute to fights between men and women. When reflecting on what it means to be a man, especially the observed violent behaviours by men in their social contexts, the boys acknowledge the behaviours they have observed, but it is not necessarily what they themselves believe or practise.

Boys did not approve of men having affairs and not respecting women:

> Vusimuzi: "Other men can lie and have an affair with a friend of the wife and no one will talk between the men and the friend of the wife. They will keep treating the wife as a stupid person."

However, after having attended the intervention's workshop, participants seemed to believe that men should take responsibility for their actions and that men and women should stop having extra-marital affairs.

> Sam: "At times men can be dating with their colleagues, which makes it difficult for the wife to realise that the man is cheating. Being a real man does not mean having multiple partners all over. Real men take care of their families and also their children."

Inequality in relationships

An analysis of the theme and subthemes of inequality in relationships revealed knowledge about what the participants had learnt implicitly and explicitly about masculinity and how that had translated into inequality in relationships. In terms of equality in relationships, the data provided evidence of a shift in the boys' perceptions after participating in the hero empathy programme.

● Different gender roles

The participants reported that men and boys were required to meet different traditional expectations than women and girls (resulting in gender role stereotypes); consequently these two groups differed and the expectations led to the unequal treatment of women and girls. Before the intervention, the boys held specific perceptions of gender roles, for example that men and women were not equal because women could not fulfil specific roles. These perceptions and attitudes about gender roles changed as a result of what the boys had been taught at the intervention. After the intervention, the boys were more open to accept the notion of equal gender roles and responsibilities, especially with regard to understanding that men could do chores such as cooking, washing dishes and cleaning, and that women could perform work that was usually male-dominated, such as driving a bus. The intervention assisted the boys in changing their views about gender role stereotyping.

> Thabang: "Before, I thought there were jobs at home which were reserved for girls only, but now I know that all of us can do the same things. Now I also do them at home."

> Clement: "It was really nice because we were debating if women and men should be working in the same environment and if they can also do the same kinds of jobs. We had a group that believed in the working of women and men together and we also had a group of those who believed that women and men are equipped differently; therefore different working environments are important."

> James: "At times when you are staying alone you have no choice but to do those duties, but when you have a wife then both of you guys will work together. You will be able to

share duties in the house. For example, when the woman comes back from work tired, then you will be able to help cook for her and wash dishes. The day you come back tired from work as well, she will cook for you and wash dishes as well."

John: "For me I want to emphasise that what a woman can do, also a man can do."

- Domineering relationships

Boys' perspectives that strength and power were associated with masculinity resulted in inequality in gender relationships and in men dominating and controlling women. The participants' seem to acknowledge that women too have rules and expectations in their relationships with men.

Jimmy: "Also, men have rules which women do not respect and men as well do not respect rules set by women."

Thendo: "So, at times, men tell their wives what not to do, when women decide to do what they were told not to do. Then men fight them."

Thapelo: "Women use prevention methods when their men are not aware. The day men finds out they always fights women".

It seems like the participants were demonstrating their awareness of the unequal dynamics between men and women, even though they themselves did not endorse the behaviour. The programme seems to have reinforced the values of respect which upheld even prior to their participation in the programme. They had been taught that men and women should respect each other. The changed perceptions were illustrated by the following remarks:

Neo: "Respect people in general, your family and also teach your children good manners as well."

Tumi: "Being a man means loyalty and trustworthiness."

Benny: "A real man does not insult women and they do not rush in love."

A participant narrated how boys disrespected and misused girls by having sex with them although they did not really care about them and did not want to be in a relationship with them.

Ntuthuko: "The topic made me very uncomfortable because I realised that boys from the get go, they know very well that they do not love the very same girls whom they are giving babies, which is hurtful and very inconsiderate. Also, these boys, they can promise you marriage knowing very well that they will not give you that."

It was clear that this participant did not condone disrespecting girls in this way. The participant's view reveals empathy which seem to have been present before participation in the programme.

- Gender-based violence

Inequality between boys and girls and between men and women was highlighted, especially with regard to men and boys who, by virtue of their physical strength, were able to use this physical strength to enforce rules upon women. Participants narrated their own observations and experiences of gender-based violence in their communities.

> Ntuthuko: "Some men just don't respect their wives. They can decide to beat them in front of other women just to show off."

> Thuto: "Men lose control of themselves and beat up women; hence they do not get along, men and women."

> Bonga: "At times men fight with their wives and start beating them up with bottles and go out and drink."

Some of the participants narrated how they used to tease and fight with girls before they had attended the workshop. Boys felt that girls often provoked them, causing them to abuse these girls physically. After the intervention, the boys' observations demonstrated that their behaviour towards girls had changed and they no longer teased and fought with girls. This provided evidence that the intervention had modified some perceptions of the participants regarding violence towards girls and had affected their behaviour towards women and girls. The change of behaviour can possibly be attributed to the boys' improved emotional awareness and ability to communicate with women. For example, participants mentioned that they were able to contain their anger when they were provoked by girls.

> Benny: "My behaviour changed from beating girls; now I no longer beat girls, I just report them."

> Tumi: "Action Breaks Silence taught me not to bully others and taught me that women in general are strong people as well."

There were participants who seemed to have gained partial awareness of the destructiveness of GBV.

> Mmuso: "Now I no longer beat girls for no reason. The only time I beat them is when I am seriously angry at their provocation."

> Benny: "Before the workshop I also thought it was okay for a man to beat a woman, but now I know that real men do not beat women."

One of the significant changes that came to the fore after the intervention was in relation to the participants' sense of social responsibility and advocacy. Participants had learned that they had a responsibility to create a safe community by reporting incidences of abuse. Furthermore, there was a shift of perception in terms of their role in the community in the sense that they felt the need to advocate the rights of women and children in their communities.

> Jimmy: "We can use television to show that violence against woman is not a good thing."

> Benny: "Action Breaks Silence must be in more schools; then violence will stop."

Challenges for boys related to changing relationships

The participants indicated that they, as boys, also experienced challenges. One of the challenges involved being teased and labelled as "gay" when they deviated from the common norm of being tough and the expectation of being immune to pain. This teasing usually came from their peers. Other challenges were that girls started bullying them and that teachers did not trust them when they reported these incidences of bullying.

● Peer-group norms

The participants discussed the challenges they experienced when they deviated from the peer group norm of being tough and bullying girls. Before the intervention, participants agreed with some of the stereotyping relating to masculinity and what it meant to be a man. However, the intervention equipped the participants with knowledge and tools to deal with stereotyping based on harmful perceptions of masculinity. For example, after the intervention, some of the participants who liked to play with girls and were labelled as homosexual by their peers, were able to deal with such stereotyping because they viewed girls as equal to themselves.

> Mmuso: "Some of my friends said I was stupid because when I am provoked by girls I no longer beat them."

> Thabang: "They say when we are nice to girls and play with them we are homosexual and we are less of men."

> Noah: "It made me feel so sad, because if you tell anyone that they are actually like the stereotype they get mad and your friendship will come to an end."

A significant change was observed in the boys' behaviour after they had learnt more adaptive ways to manage ridicule from peers and manoeuvre social settings with self-confidence. This change of behaviour was illustrated by the following remarks:

James: "Yes, it has changed my behaviour so much because now I no longer feel ashamed to play with girls because I know that we are equal now."

Mpho: "Previously we would feel bad when we were playing with girls, because we would be classified as gays, but now we are no longer scared to play with them. We no longer take serious what they were saying."

Neo: "It has changed a great deal because now I do not mind playing soccer with a girl."

It appeared that the teaching the boys had received at the intervention had facilitated their adoption of effective and adaptive ways of managing peer pressure and dealing with rejection if they deviated from the norm. The intervention fostered the improved self-confidence of the participants because they had been allowed to express their opinions during the workshop and there was understanding of their opinions. Additionally, the workshop facilitators were role models of the newly acquired definition of masculinity and could set an example. Furthermore, when the participants imitated this new way of being, they were encouraged and commended by the facilitators, which served as positive reinforcement. The intervention also taught the participants how to appreciate and love themselves.

Thabang: "They also taught us about self-love; they told us that we need to appreciate ourselves and love us for who we are. We should forget about anyone who tells us that we are ugly or teases us and tells us there is nothing good that will come out of us."

● Girls disrespect/bully boys

The participants discussed the bullying that they experienced from girls. From the discussions, it appeared that when the boys' behaviour changed and they no longer ill-treated girls, the girls took on the role of bullying.

Vusimuzi: "But some girls do not respect us in return."

Themba: "Women also should not beat and abuse men."

Thapelo: "No, it is not right to abuse women, but also, sir, women, they are abusive as well."

Samkelo: "Others said we are not scared of women and they are taking advantage of that."

The lack of consequences of girls' bullying behaviour could pose the risk that boys would revert to their previously learnt ways of relating to girls by being aggressive and bullying them.

● Teachers do not support change in gender relationships

This subtheme was identified from the discussions by the participants about the socialisation of boys that was characterised by harsh and/or violent forms of physical discipline and the expectation to be tough. This treatment sent participants the message that their safety and well-being did not matter as they were made of "iron." In addition, it informed the manner in which boys viewed themselves, leading them to view girls and women as not being equal to them. This perceived inequality became the basis of boys' relationships with girls.

The participants explained that teachers did not listen to them when they reported girls' bullying. For some participants, the lack of support of teachers left them to resort to violence as a way of resolving differences or proving their masculinity. The following extract illustrates this view.

> Samkelo: "I feel angry when they [the teachers] take sides, and that gives me a chance to beat the girl after school. Because she first provoked me and I am trying to do a right thing but she is protected by teachers as well."

This quote shows that it is difficult for boys to implement what they have learned when girls provoke them without the support of their peers and teachers. Both gender groups need to collaborate to establish positive relationships.

Conclusion

This chapter described boys' perceptions of masculinity and gender equality. Participants shared their understanding of what it meant to be a man. The discussions revealed how the community, families and peers influenced the boys' perceptions of masculinity. It appears that the boys viewed masculinity through a biological lens and displayed behaviours such as physical aggression. Power dynamics in relationships between men and women were discussed as well as the view that boys were expected not to show their emotions. The results revealed that the intervention had caused a shift in how boys perceived women, masculinity and gender roles as well as in how they behaved. In addition, the challenges faced by boys as a result of their changed behaviour were highlighted in the discussions. An in-depth interpretation of the themes and subthemes that were identified in Chapter 4 is presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

The preceding chapter described the themes and subthemes derived from an analysis of the data obtained from the focus-group discussions with the participating boys before and after they had attended the hero empathy programme. The purpose of the data analysis was to explore whether the hero empathy programme had accomplished its goals in changing young boys' perspectives of masculinity, attitudes to gender equality and views on gender-based violence. Chapter 5 focuses on a discussion of the current study's findings in relation to the social learning theoretical framework and the literature reviewed. I discuss the applicability of the social learning theory in gaining an understanding of the boy participants' perspectives of masculinity and inequality in the relationships between men and women and between boys and girls. The social learning theoretical framework enabled me not only to gain an insight into the emotional, cognitive and behavioural aspects of the boys' perceptions of masculinity as revealed in the group discussions but also to identify how community influences contributed to the development of the boys' perspectives of masculinity. Moreover, the theory assisted me in understanding the ways in which the intervention had encouraged the participants' changed perspectives of masculinity and gender relationships.

The discussion of the findings in this chapter begins with an in-depth look at and interpretation of each theme and subtheme and their relevance in answering the study's research question relating to whether participation in the hero empathy programme in primary schools made a difference in boys' perspectives of masculinity and their attitudes and views about equitable gender relationships. Thereafter, I present the conclusion of this study, refer to the study's limitations and make a number of recommendations for future studies.

Interpretation of Themes and Subthemes

Perspectives of masculinity

This study's findings indicated that the participating boys' perspectives of masculinity could be understood in terms of six subthemes.

- Physiological definition

The participants identified a man as having a set biological make-up that was different from that of a woman. They defined masculinity within the confines of biological factors, which included

physical strength, and they indicated that the physiological and/or biological differences between men and women and between boys and girls determined their inequality (i.e. they were not the same). The boys seemed to believe that because the biological and physiological make-up of men and women was different, they should be treated differently. Hadebe (2010) posits that many men adopt an essentialist understanding of their masculinity according to which masculinity is perceived to be a natural consequence of the male biology. Therefore, masculinity has a fixed biological definition. Wikström (2019) asserts that, due to this fixed biological definition of masculinity, men's and boys' behaviours are said to be naturally determined. They behave the way they do because of having testosterone, or big muscles, or a male brain (Sakallı & Türkoğlu, 2019; Wikström, 2019). The boys expressed the belief that men's and boys' behaviour was justifiable based on their biological and physiological attributes. Their behaviour towards and relationships with girls seemed to be informed by a knowledge of their different biological make-up and of the way biological factors were commonly understood to influence the behaviour of men and boys (particularly aggressive behaviours) (Sakallı & Türkoğlu, 2019; Wikström, 2019). The participants discussed equality between men and women based on biological factors and by drawing comparisons between the things that men and boys could do as a result of being physically stronger than women and girls.

- Cultural practices

Participants also perceived masculinity through the lens of cultural/traditional practices. Consistent with the assertions of Mfecane (2016) and Siweya, Sodi, and Douglas (2018), boys perceived themselves as becoming men when they had undergone the rites of passage—this made them different from girls. Similarly, boys' subjection to traditional practices, such as their attendance of initiation school, distinguished them from girls. Thus, culture and societal norms shaped the boys' perceptions of masculinity. Judging from the focus-group discussions, it seemed that the participants focused on the differences between boys and girls based on the different traditional and cultural practices they were subjected to while they were growing up. To them, these differences translated into inequality between boys and girls and between men and women. According to Hadebe (2010), cultural practices (e.g. initiation schools) as such do not condone inequitable gender attitudes, but instead encourage integrity in boys who are transitioning to men or manhood. Circumcision signals a transition from boyhood to manhood (Mfecane, 2016; Siweya et al., 2018). From a traditional and/or cultural perspective, boys who have attained manhood through circumcision are associated with discipline and reason, whereas boys or men who are uncircumcised are considered to display irrational behaviour.

- Provider and protector role

The participating boys defined being a man as being a provider and a protector. They seemed to hold in high esteem a man who worked hard for his wife and children in order to ensure that their basic needs were met. This view confirmed the assertion of Sakallı and Türkoğlu (2019) that men have agentic goals (i.e. they impose themselves on others, aim to achieve self-improvement, and are confident and success-oriented). According to Sakallı and Türkoğlu (2019), men's presumed agency stems from cultural views that they are fundamentally responsible for providing for and protecting their homes and families. Women, on the other hand, are defined in terms of communal goals (i.e. they care for and relate to others and they express themselves to others). From this perspective, women's supposed communality originates from cultural views that they are fundamentally homemakers and should therefore fulfil communal roles (Sakallı & Türkoğlu, 2019). Men are also perceived as having to fulfil the role of protectors in their communities. Thus they have a social responsibility to bring an end to all forms of violence in their communities.

Masculinity as defined by the participants reflected the influence of social and cultural norms in shaping the boys' perspectives. To summarise, the boys defined masculinity as having the ability to protect and provide for family as well as having a set of biological characteristics (Sakallı & Türkoğlu, 2019). However, the role of provider can change, especially in today's world that affords women and men equal employment opportunities (Hadebe, 2010). The boys' perspectives on masculinity were consistent with the descriptions provided above.

- Emotional toughness; no vulnerability

Participants' had different responses to the issue of emotional toughness. Some participants emphasised the importance of being emotionally strong even in the face of evident painful circumstances. Others seemed to withdraw from the discussions, perhaps as an avoidance mechanism because they were confused about how much emotional expression was allowed before they would be put to shame for acting like girls. Still others were open to the idea of being emotionally sensitive and expressive.

Overall, the results suggested that the participants did not believe men should express their emotions. This belief revealed the deeply entrenched perception that boys' emotional experiences were considered insignificant. The participants expressed the belief that boys and men were supposed to be made of iron (i.e. they should be emotionally and physically very strong). McAteer and Gillanders (2019) state that emotional stoicism is traditionally considered to be an admirable characteristic of masculinity and is often associated with self-reliance, which can be used to maintain an appearance of strength in the face of adversity. The discussions with the participants

before and after the intervention revealed that they admired emotional restraint, which indicated that they did not acknowledge their own emotional experiences. McAteer and Gillanders (2019, p. 3) posit that "conforming to the masculine norms of emotional control and self-reliance are correlated with negative health outcomes such as avoiding emotion, poorer communication and reduced health-seeking behaviour." It was clear that the boys struggled to manage emotions, seemingly not knowing how much emotional expression was acceptable in social contexts. According to Pollastri, Raftery-Helmer, Cardemil, and Addis (2018, p. 2), "adolescent males are particularly prone to receiving negative social appraisal in response to a lack of emotional control, and this judgment often comes from other adolescent males." Such negative social appraisal occurs when boys do not embody the aggressive and emotionally stoic image of masculinity.

After participating in the intervention, some of the boys were more comfortable with the idea of experiencing a wide range of emotions and being emotionally sensitive and expressive. This change came about as the boys had learnt ways of communicating effectively. Other boys maintained that being emotionally strong even in the face of evident painful circumstances was associated with being a man. Still others remained withdrawn while emotional expressiveness was being discussed, perhaps because they felt unsure about how much emotional expression would be allowed before they would be put to shame for acting like girls.

- Leadership – unequal power dynamics in relationships

The participants' discussions relating to this subtheme reflected what they had observed in relationships between men and women. They stated that men had more power and control in relationships than women, thus providing evidence that inequality existed between men and women. This theme was more prevalent before the intervention. After the intervention, the participants displayed some insight into and awareness of the negative consequences of unequal power dynamics in relationships between men and women. Some boys acknowledged the problematic issue of the use of coercion by men in their interaction with women. However, some expressed the view that women's provocative behaviour justified men's coercive and intimidating actions. Nevertheless, before the intervention some of the participants related how they would "beat" girls when they provoked them, but after the intervention some boys indicated that they tried to refrain from beating or teasing girls. This finding corroborates the postulation of the social learning theory that individuals imitate the behaviours of well-known others (Bandura & Walters, 1977). Stoddard et al. (2015) refer to the notion put forward by the social learning theory that the witnessing of violent behaviours influences children's and adolescents' beliefs and attitudes toward the use of violence as a form of problem-solving. During the intervention, the facilitators modelled different types of problem-solving behaviour, from which some boys learned. For

example, a number of the participants demonstrated good insight in that they indicated that they were aware of the problematic nature of bullying girls and of making advances especially when girls did not welcome these advances. Looking at facilitation from a social learning theory perspective, Weyns et al. (2017) emphasise the value of facilitators functioning as role models for learners and teaching/modelling effective relational skills. Their behaviour implicitly influences the learners' social behaviour.

The change in participants' perspectives seemed to be characterised by some measure of rigidity in that the boys had to continuously remind themselves of the lessons they had learnt during the intervention. They also kept on reminding themselves and others that they should hold each other accountable to ensure they behaved in a manner that was consistent with what they had learnt during the intervention.

The study findings revealed that the participants maintained the perception that men had a higher status than women. This perception limited the opportunity for men and women to understand each other better and have good romantic relationships.

● Multiple partners

Before the intervention, the participants seemed to passively accept that men had multiple partners. Seemingly, a commonly observed inequitable gender relationship such as this had no moral significance for the participants. The participants' discussion revealed that they observed men engage in multiple relationships, however, they themselves did not approve or conform to this expression of masculinity. The boys stated that masculinity or being a man was characterised by having multiple sexual partners and that this practice was met with approval. According to the participants, it was the norm for men to have multiple partners, whereas similar behaviour by women would not be tolerated. The participants reflected on the cultural or traditional aspect of allowing men to have multiple romantic relationships or partners (which could be described as permissiveness). They explained that men engaged in this behaviour to conform to social pressure and prove their manhood or masculinity. Some of the participants stated that having multiple partners was a traditional/cultural expectation. Others expressed the opinion that if a woman (wife) could not bear children within a marriage, it would justify a man's decision to have another partner. These views seemed to highlight inequality between men and women; women were blamed for men's engagement in multiple relationships, whereas men's behaviour was justified. These explanations by the boys confirm the finding of Sithole (2018) that men engage in multiple relationships to gain acceptance from their peers that they are real men and to avoid social disapproval. According to Fleming, DiClemente, and Barrington (2016), traditional social

norms support the idea of men's hyper sexuality and sexual prowess. For this reason, men have multiple sexual partners.

It appears that participating in the programme reinforced the boys' disapproval of the idea of having multiple partners as it resulted in conflictual relationships. The participants suggested that men should take responsibility for their actions or that they (and women) should stop having extra-marital affairs.

The findings of the research showed that primary school boys demonstrated agency and resistance to environmental influences of what it means to be a man (Bandura, 2008).

Inequality in relationships

The perspectives of boys on masculinity had a notable influence on their relationships with women and girls. Most boys were of the opinion that men were superior to women. Acting on these perspectives can lead to domineering relationships and/or aggressive and violent behaviour towards girls in a variety of ways. It was interesting to see that some of the attitudes and behaviours of some of the boys towards women and girls had changed as a result of participating in the intervention. This theme can be understood in terms of three subthemes.

● Different gender roles

The participants reflected on the different roles assigned to boys and girls or to men and women. Before the intervention, the discussions revealed how the gender roles that promoted gender inequality had been internalised by the boys and had formed a framework for defining relationships. The participants stated that, contrary to girls, boys were assigned physically taxing tasks. Furthermore, men and boys were assigned roles that required leadership whereas women and girls were assigned roles that expected them to be subordinate and submissive. The participants also highlighted their belief that specific professions were meant exclusively for men. The differences in gender roles as discussed by the participants reflected a cultural and societal belief system of what was expected of men and women. This view is exclusivist and results in inequality between men and women and between boys and girls in that it limits both women and men from engaging in other roles, professionally and in the household.

A change in this understanding was demonstrated after participation in the intervention, providing evidence of the effectiveness of the intervention in instilling in the boys new ideas and a new understanding of gender equality. As a result, the boys admitted that men and boys had the capability to engage in communal and nurturing roles, and it seemed they agreed it was normal for women to assume roles and occupy professional positions usually dominated by men.

This change that was observed confirmed the assertion of Hasan, Aggleton, and Persson (2018) that masculinity and gender roles are, in essence, not pre-given nor fixed. One is not born being masculine and assuming certain roles; these roles are shaped and taught in society. These authors further posit that there are multiple characterisations of masculinities that can be shaped by society, given different periods in time and history. For example, men and women can practise the same professions. In their discussions, the participants reflected on the possibility that a woman could practise the same profession as a man, and become competent in it. Participants also acknowledged that they no longer believed that household chores, such as washing dishes, were meant for girls only, and they indicated their willingness to help with household chores.

It was clear that the hero empathy programme for boys had resulted in the participants embracing an alternative perspective of masculinity and gender roles.

● Domineering relationships

As far as this subtheme was concerned, the participants defined inequality between men and women on the basis of men's ability to enforce control over women and get their compliance. The participants highlighted that men were in a position of privilege because their strong physical attributes and the privilege bestowed on them by society gave them the power to control women. In reflecting on their own behaviours, the boys admitted that teachers, specifically female teachers, were sometimes treated in a disrespectful manner. For example, boys would start singing in class while a female teacher was teaching. Furthermore, the boys' discussions revealed that some boys displayed domineering behaviour toward girls, which confirmed a recurring theme of the use of violence, aggression and coercion. The participants seemed to have observed the use of aggression by men and boys in asserting themselves within their interactions with women and girls. Hasan et al. (2018) refer to such behaviour as masculinity enactment, which means that males display behaviour consistent with traditional and cultural ideologies. Therefore, masculinity is shaped by society and governs social interactions between boys and girls. This finding is supported in the literature that maintains that cultural norms that define and shape masculinity manifest in inequality between men and women and that these norms develop in a patriarchal system (Wood, 2019). Wood (2019) defines a cultural patriarchal system as a social system that promotes the domination of women by men. Wikström (2019) expands on this idea by explaining that masculinity becomes toxic when described/defined in terms of socially maladaptive traits that serve to foster the dominance of men and devaluation of women.

It was noted that, before the intervention, participants revealed how some violent behaviours, such as when boys teased and bullied girls at school or while they played in the community, were

common occurrences and were often taken for granted. This display of power and control (i.e. unequal behaviour) was a demonstration of how boys asserted their masculinity in their social interaction with girls. According to Mayeza and Bhana (2017), the view that children are naïve and harmless is dominant in society. This often results in children not being seen and understood as gendered beings who exercise power. Hence, when boys display traditional and toxic characteristics of masculinity it is often viewed as innocent play. Such displays could result in forms of gender-based violence and the perpetuation of unequal gender relationships. Before and after participation in the programme, the participants seem to show insight and awareness about the unjust nature of being domineering in interpersonal relationships. The data does not indicate any identification with the toxic masculinity behaviour, instead they seem to be distancing themselves from this form or expression of masculinity. What can be drawn from this subtheme is that boys in the context of this study are aware of social norms which are lenient towards men and boys when they display hegemonic masculinity behaviours, even though there appears to be a resistance towards it.

- Gender-based violence

Gender-based violence was also described to be a means which men used to assert their authority in their relationship with women. Before the intervention, participants did not recognise bullying and teasing girls as acts of gender-based violence. They described these acts as showing off to reinforce their status as men. From the boys' comments it appeared that the display of physical strength and the use of force and aggression were meant to prove masculinity. These types of behaviour were observed among men in the community and boys in the school context. Some of the participants admitted that they had been violent towards girls.

According to Boonzaier (2008), some men perceive their violent behaviour towards women as a way to uphold and enforce the traditional perception of masculinity. Also indicated in the participants' discussions was that the community viewed men who allowed themselves to be "disrespected" by women as weak and "soft." Boonzaier (2008) states that men's violent actions can be understood to be expressive, instrumental and functional (i.e. as a means of expressing male power, control and authority). This idea is deeply rooted in culture, thus making it difficult to change. Usta et al. (2016) assert that a violent social environment is a predisposing factor for aggressive behaviour. This finding confirms the notion of the social learning theory that individuals who observe the use of violence can subsequently display violent and/or aggressive behaviour. Notably, the boys stated that they had observed the violent behaviour of men in their communities. According to Boonzaier (2008), men's violence has been described as a gendered practice

whereby men "accomplish" or "do" gender. Many men discuss their violent actions as an enforcement of the patriarchal masculinity narrative (Boonzaier, 2008).

After the intervention, it was evident that the boys were enlightened about gender-based violence; they acknowledged the problematic nature of bullying and teasing others, in particular girls. This change in the boys' attitude applied to different social contexts. They seemed to have become aware that even bullying and teasing girls was a form of gender-based violence and they decided to change their behaviour. Some explained that when they were playing with girls and were provoked by them, they did not resort to violence because they had learnt about more adaptive ways of dealing with and managing conflict. For example, instead of physically assaulting girls who provoked them, they reported the matter to their teacher.

Credit for this change in the boys' behaviour can be given to the social learning facilitated by the intervention. The boys were exposed to facilitators who modelled adaptive social behaviours and they could imitate them.

Challenges for boys related to changing relationships

The challenges that the boys experienced after participating in the intervention can be understood in terms of the three subthemes discussed below.

● Peer-group norms

The boys who participated in the intervention revealed how deviation from the peer-group norm of traditional masculinity elicited shaming and rejection from peers. Such deviation resulted in boys being viewed as being less than the ideal male figure or traditional boy image that their social context taught them to be. Some of the boys reported being labelled as "gay" for being respectful and kind towards girls. The boys' discussions also revealed that because they had changed their bullying behaviours, they were labelled as being soft. This was an indication of others' reaction to deviation and non-compliance with the expectation to be tough and emotionally strong. Changing their bullying behaviour proved to be a challenge for the boys because they existed in a social context where manhood or masculinity was defined in terms of toxic traits on a daily basis. Their change of perspective and behaviour became a challenge in the sense that they had difficulties navigating their social context. Stern et al. (2015) have found that young men are particularly vulnerable to the influences of male peer groups and the expectation to comply with their norms. At an early developmental stage, peers play a role of offering validation for young men when they conform to the traditional norms of masculinity that are acceptable by a collective (Stern et al., 2015). Conforming to traditional norms of masculinity often leads to peer-group status and approval (Casey et al., 2018; Stern et al., 2015).

- Girls disrespect/bully boys

This study's finding that girls disrespected and bullied boys revealed the extent of toxic behaviours across genders. The boys reported that after they had changed their behaviour and started to be respectful and kind towards girls, girls seemed to become aggressive and started bullying them. This reversal of traditional roles (i.e. girls being the ones to perpetrate violence) highlighted a factor that had previously been neglected. The disregard of this matter could be because of the notion that children are innocent and primary schools are not necessarily spaces where gender-based violence and inequality occur (Mayeza & Bhana, 2017). From the discussions it was clear that individuals used violence as a means to assert themselves in social settings and that girls also, and not only boys, displayed such toxic and problematic behaviours.

A contribution the intervention appears to have made was to empower some of the boy participants to effectively manage and deal with rejection and peer pressure. The intervention fostered improved self-confidence and self-efficacy among the participants, helping them to continue adopting an adaptive and transformed concept of masculinity. An essential feature of social learning is self-efficacy, which involves observing and imitating well-known others' behaviour. Self-efficacy becomes enhanced when the imitated behaviour is positively reinforced (MacBlain, 2018, p. 63; Usta et al., 2016). The participants stated that the facilitators had complimented and encouraged them, had become their role models and had offered them the positive reinforcement they needed to continue adopting adaptive ways of displaying masculinity.

- Teachers do not support change in gender relationships

Another challenge highlighted by the boys was the perceived lack of support from teachers. The participants revealed that when they reported incidences of girls bullying boys, the teachers did not seem to believe them. This became a challenge because the boys had been encouraged to learn effective ways of managing interpersonal conflict and differences. One of the suggestions was to report forms of violence (e.g. teasing and physical bullying) instead of using violence to resolve issues. However, it appeared that the teachers were not supportive of this new learned behaviour. This left the boys feeling helpless, creating the risk that they would revert to their old behavioural patterns of assaulting girls who provoked them and using violence to communicate their needs. This further reveals the complexity of gender roles that even socially positive expressions of masculinity were not socially accepted and reinforced within the boys' social context.

Conclusion

To conclude, this study explored whether the hero empathy programme for boys in primary schools had accomplished its goals in changing young boys' perceptions of masculinity, attitudes to gender equality, and views on gender-based violence. The study findings suggested that the programme had had a significant influence in re-shaping the boys' understanding of what it meant to be a man and changing how the participants related to and interacted with girls. Differences could be observed in the perceptions of gender roles and gender stereotypes and in the perception that girls were subordinates. Changes in behaviour towards girls (i.e. not being violent and/or aggressive) also seemed to be significant. These observed changes point to the programme's achievement of the goal to eradicate gender-based violence, starting from the roots of the problem (dealing with attitudes and stereotypes) and focusing on young boys who will later become men. The literature review and findings highlighted that unequal gender relations and gender-based violence were not uncommon among children at primary school level. As a matter of fact, violence at this level of development (early years of schooling) is multifaceted and complex as its occurrence is symbolic. The symbolic form of violence manifests in verbally teasing and shaming female peers, dominating the school ground and sometimes engaging in actual physical fights (both boys and girls) (Mayeza & Bhana, 2017). In the light of the observed changes in behaviour, it can be surmised that the programme for boys had addressed the issue of gender inequality and gender-based violence.

In keeping with the notions of social learning theory, the study's results indicated that the boys' values, norms and perceptions of masculinity were acquired and learned by observing well-known others (i.e. male figures in their communities). These values, norms and perceptions seemed to have been transmitted through vicarious experience (Christine Sylva et al., 2016), creating a model of what it meant to be a man. Issues such as cultural practices, the provider and protector role, unequal power relations, and having multiple partners pointed to the vicarious socialisation of boys. Furthermore, the discussions revealed how the boys had internalised these maladaptive behaviours that were modelled in their communities.

The change that was observed in the boys' perceptions and ultimately in their behaviours confirmed the notion put forward by Hasan, Aggleton, and Persson (2018) that masculinity can have multiple representations at different periods in time and in different social settings. Therefore, problematic and toxic perceptions of masculinity can shift or change when the subjects, in this case the boys, are exposed to an alternative and different social setting. The results of the current study provided evidence that the intervention programme led to a significant change in the participants' initial (problematic) perspectives of masculinity.

The study highlighted the challenges the participants experienced after adopting the newly learned adaptive ways of relating. These challenges comprised boys being teased by peers, bullied by girls and experiencing the lack of teachers' support. It was evident that these challenging behaviours originated in a social context with specific norms and expectations. Thus, the social environment proved to be a challenge to the sustainability of the intervention. By implication, the social context could lead to the boys reverting to ineffective, maladaptive and toxic behaviours (Wimer, 2020).

The participants' discussions revealed that they have observed problematic patterns in how men and women relate. They further acknowledged that both men and women seem to be playing a role in the perpetration of violence. Despite observing these behaviours as displayed by the socialisation agents i.e. people within the community, the boys did not seem to identify with some of these violent practices. For example, the boys seemed to have empathy towards women who are the victims of GBV. This empathy seem to have been there before and after the participating in the Hero empathy programme for boys. As thus, it appears that the Hero Empathy Programme, reinforced the values of empathy, respect and equality which the boys upheld prior to participating in the programme.

Limitations and Recommendations for Further Studies

A limitation of this study was that the researcher relied heavily on pre-existing data in the form of focus-group transcripts. The fact that the researcher was not involved in interviewing the participants posed a limitation as she was not in a position to follow up some of the comments made by the participants in order to expand her understanding of what the participants meant. It would have assisted the researcher to be able to make personal contact with the participants and clarify some aspects.

This limitation could be mitigated by conducting further research consisting of follow-ups with participants, getting them involved in the interpretation of their discussions and checking whether the information they had provided had been interpreted correctly (Shenton, 2004).

The age of the boys (they were in Grade 5 and around 11 to 14 years old) could have played a role in their willingness to discuss their gender perceptions. Some of them were shy to contribute to the discussions and needed some encouragement from the focus-group facilitators. It is also possible that the boys could have felt an expectation from the group facilitators to hear how they changed their views and behaviour.

The results of this study could be used to stimulate further research aimed at gaining an understanding of how boys develop their perspectives of masculinity. Follow-ups with these boys over time to see how they have implemented what they learned during the intervention would be very meaningful. This could assist researchers to improve the intervention to have more influence on young boys in developing a healthy perspective of masculinity. The challenges that the boys experienced after the intervention show that behaviour takes place in a social context with specific norms and expectations. To focus on changing individual behaviour will therefore not have a major sustainable effect. Any interventions that aim to achieve a significant change in gender relationships that are culturally rooted will have to be targeted at community and familial levels.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: HERO Empathy Programme Outline

AIMS	LEARNING OBJECTIVES
• In long term, to prevent abusive and violent behaviour against women and girls • Break down gender stereotypes and develop a belief in gender equality • Build empathetic attitudes and behaviours towards women and girls • Experience what a day in the life of a women or girl feels like • To create a safe, fun and positive environment where everyone feels valued and welcome and where the boys' voices are heard. • Provide positive role models through both male and female trainers • Give young boys a forum to talk safely about their emotions and feeling • Give young boys a forum to talk safely about sexual violence against young boys and men	By the end of the workshop, boys will be able to: **Think:** • Girls/women and boys/girls are equal • That girls and women are also heroes and positive role models for them as boys • All forms of abuse including sexual violence against women and children is unacceptable • That abuse and sexual violence also affects boys • That boys and men can show other emotions than just anger • They can play a role in ending violence towards women and children **Feel:** • Empathy towards women and girls • Empowered - they feel empowered, they know where to seek help and that they behave in an empowered way, • That boys are active bystanders and part of the solution to end violence against women and girls • Safe and heard should they wish to disclose **Do:** • Behave in a respectful, empathetic way towards women and girls • Express a range of emotions in a positive healthy way • Communicate in a positive and healthy way

Appendix B: The Hero Empathy Programme Activity Outline

SESSION	ACTIVITIES	OBJECTIVES
1	• Welcome & Set-up • Context and intro • Pre Questionnaire • Self-love I DESERVE	- To encourage the boys to start speaking and to give everyone a voice - To explore what it means to be 'my own best friend' - To introduce the Self-Esteem Continuum - To identify and record the aspects of love and a loving relationship - To learn that love is our emotional food - To encourage the boys to take responsibility for having a healthy relationship with themselves - To learn about the Empty Bowl analogy – addiction - To develop an action plan - To know that when I believe I am worthy of love, my thinking is that' I DESERVE' as much success, sunshine and happiness as anyone else
2	• Competence I CAN	- To learn that each boy matters - To introduce the CD analogy and identify influences and messages - To discuss the impact of negative messages – fear, doubt, guilt, shame - To understand the importance of believing that 'I am competent to cope with my day-to-day life' - To learn about the importance of identifying personal strengths – abilities, gifts, talents, personality traits and qualities (physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual) - To give permission to celebrate strengths not in a competitive or comparative way - To learn about the Brick Wall analogy building belief in competence including 'I am, I can, I have' - To encourage to continue to identify and record strengths daily - To know that when I believe I am competent, my thinking is "I CAN' rely on me. I can cope with my life
3	• Introduction to ABS • Who is your HERO • Emotions game	- To learn who their hero/role models are - To establish a safe learning zone and create an environment of mutual respect and confidence - To show men and women feel the same emotions - To high light sometimes it is hard to read other people's emotions
4	• Representation of men and women • Breaking down stereotypes	- Establish a safe learning zone - Create an environment of mutual respect and confidence - To begin to challenge gender stereotypes - Introduce the concept of equality
5	• Developing Empathy	- To feel what it is like being a woman's shoes

			-	To talk about how their behaviour could impact of another person
			-	Taking a step to understanding what a hero is
6		• Acting Role Play • Revisit representation of women and men posters and cards • Post Phase One questionnaire • Speed learning exchange • Hero pledge	-	To get the boys to step into the shoes of a woman (i.e. develop empathy)
			-	To get an insight into the daily lives of the boys
			-	Feel what it's like to be in a woman's shoes
			-	Get them to understand that their behaviour impacts other people
			-	Take a step towards understanding what a hero is
			-	Taking a moment to reflect and acknowledge lesions learnt over past 6 weeks
			-	Publically renounce VAWG

Appendix C: Focus Group Discussion Guide

Focus group questions before the intervention

1. How do you experience relationships between boys and girls? Are boys and girls equal?
2. What does it mean to you to be man in your community?
3. What characteristics are important to a man? *(Probe for the expression of emotions.)*
4. Who taught you about what it means to be a man? (what is the source of this information on being a man)

5. How do men in your community relate to women? What do you observe?

6. What kind of violence do you experience or see where you live?

7. Do you observe acts of violence between men and women? Can you give some examples of what you observed?

8. Why do you think are there acts of violence between men and women in your community? (It seems that men do not act according to what the role of a man is)

9. What effect does the violence in your community have on you?

Focus group questions after the intervention

1) How was the workshop for you? (*allow a few comments just to start the discussion*)
2) What was the most important things you have learned from the workshop?
   Probe: what have you learned about relationships between men and women?
   Probe: What have you learned about how to deal with your emotions?
3) How did the facilitators make you feel? Could you share your opinions during the workshop? Could you share your feelings in the group?

4) Which topics that were discussed made you feel uncomfortable or did you not like?

5) After the workshop, what does it mean for you to be man? How have your perceptions changed?
Probe: How have your behaviour towards girls/women changed?

6) Did you discuss the workshop with other people outside the school? What was there opinion about the workshop?

7) What do you think is needed in your community to stop the violence against women?