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The influence of masculinity on help-seeking behaviour(s) of male police officers in the Royal Eswatini Police Service

by

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving husband Nkosinathi Khumalo whose undivided support kept me going, no words could ever express how grateful I am to you for holding everything together as I pursued this dream. My two daughters, Ayabonga and Anathi, I love you and thank you for your patience. Ayabonga our play time was taken up by my traveling and lots of reading but as young as you are you were understanding. To Anathi, you came 2 months before your due date while I was in the middle of this project, although I was scared to death, not sure if you would make it or not, your fighting spirit whilst you were in ICU gave me even more energy and drive to achieve this goal in your honour. I am grateful for all the love and support during my academic endeavour. The three of you were my motivation to conquer whatever challenges came my way. I thank God for you.

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DECLARATION

I, **Thandiwe Portia Khumalo** student number **24049507**, hereby declare that this dissertation (**The influence of masculinity on help-seeking behaviour(s) of male police officers in the Royal Eswatini Police Service**) is my own work except where I used or quoted another source, which has been acknowledged and referenced. I further declare that the work that I am submitting has not previously been submitted before for another degree or to any other university or tertiary institution for examination.



Thandiwe Portia Khumalo

On the 10th day of July 2021

ETHICS STATEMENT

I, **Thandiwe Portia Khumalo**, student number **24049507**, have obtained the applicable research ethics approval for the research titled **The influence of masculinity on help-seeking behaviour(s) of male police officers in the Royal Eswatini Police Service** on the 18 September 2020 (reference number: **HUM046/0620**) from Prof Innocent Pikirayi, the Deputy Dean of Postgraduate Studies and Research Ethics, in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria.

ABSTRACT

The Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) has gone to great lengths to ensure mental health assistance is available to all police officers in the REPS in an effort to counter mental health issues associated with the policing profession. Amid these efforts, it has been noted that male police officers in the REPS are reluctant to utilise services provided to them. This study employed a qualitative methodology. It used social constructionism as a theoretical framework to explore the influences of masculinity on the help-seeking behaviours of male police officers, from the perspective of male police officers currently serving in the REPS. To date, no research has been conducted within the REPS centered on male police officer's experiences of gender, generally, and masculinity, in particular, as well as how these experiences influence their help-seeking behaviours, especially in regard to seeking mental health services. To this effect, ten male police officers from two police stations in the Kingdom of Eswatini were recruited to participate in the study using a purposive sampling technique. One-on-one and in-depth unstructured interviews were conducted with each of the participants. Each interview was audio recorded and analysed using thematic analysis (TA). From the data collected, five major themes emerged, namely: (1) *views on what masculinity is*; (2) *how masculinity ideologies are constructed and constituted by males in the REPS*; (3) *how male police officers in the REPS understand and view help-seeking behaviour*; (4) *factors that have an effect on the help-seeking behaviours of male police officers in the REPS*; and (5) *how the construction of masculinity/ies amongst male police officers in the REPS influences their help-seeking behaviour*. Subthemes also emerged during the data analysis. Raewyn Connell's (1995) work on a pluralised typology of masculinities and, in particular, the concept of hegemonic masculinity was used as the theoretical and analytical lens for this study. The findings of this study highlighted how REPS male police officers' views and constructions of masculinity/ies inform their help-seeking behaviours. From the findings of

this study, the REPS and police trauma counsellors (PTC) in the REPS could use these insights to enhance mental health service utilisation by male police officers so as to meet the evolving societal and organisational demands faced by police personnel by equipping current and future practising PTC's with innovative and gender responsive techniques.

Key terms: gender, masculinity/ies, help-seeking behaviour (s), male police officers, Royal Eswatini Police Service, Kingdom of Eswatini

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CID	Crime investigation department
DCS	Domestic violence and child protection services
GD	General duty
NATCOM	National commissioner of police
PICO	Police information and communications officer
PTC	Police trauma counsellor
REPS	Royal Eswatini Police Service
TA	Thematic analysis

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LIST OF TERMS

For the purpose of attaining clarity, the following concepts which are central to the theoretical and analytical work of this study are defined: masculinity/ies, help-seeking behaviour(s), hegemonic masculinity, and gender.

Masculinity/ies

Masculinity can be described as comprising gendered sets of culturally specific values and behaviours ascribed to, as well as performed by, people classified in a given society or social community as biologically male (Edwards-Jauch, 2016). For the purposes of this study, masculinity will be viewed as those values, behaviours and practices which exist in specific social locations which are commonly associated with biological males and biologically sexed male bodies (Itulua-Abumere, 2013). The term masculinity/ies, also written as masculinities, recognises the inherent plurality of masculinity. Masculinity is not homogenous or static across person, culture, location, or history, but, rather, there are always multiple masculinities which are available to and performed by men as masculinity intersects with, for example, class status, race or ethnicity, as well as sexuality. (Edwards-Jauch, 2016).

Help-seeking behaviour(s)

Help-seeking behaviour(s) can be defined as any action engaged in attaining professional help from health care services (Rickwood & Thomas, 2012).

Hegemonic masculinity/ies

Is a particular pattern and practice of masculinity that exists amongst multiple masculinities as well as femininities that obtain a more dominant position and status in a particular state of gender relations and practices (Connell, 2005).

Gender

Gender, distinct from ‘sex’, refers to the psychological, behavioural, social, and cultural aspects typically associated with a particular biological sex and is also often articulated terms of ‘masculinity’ or ‘femininity’ (American Psychological Association [APA], 2015).

Sex

Refers to a person’s biological sex status and is typically categorized as ‘male’, ‘female’ or ‘intersex’. There are a number of indicators of biological sex, including sex chromosomes, gonads, internal reproductive organs and external genitalia (APA, 2012).

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This research study qualitatively explored how masculinity influences the help-seeking behaviours of male¹ police officers in the Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS). The study set out to understand the peculiar construction and constitution of masculinity/ies amongst male police officers of the REPS, to explore how male police officers of the REPS understand help-seeking behaviour in gendered terms as well as understand how the peculiar construction of masculinity/ies amongst male police officers in the REPS influences their help-seeking behaviour(s). This section of the dissertation outlines: (1) the background of the study; (2) the research problem and rationale; (3) research objectives; (4) research questions; (5) significance of the study; (6) assumptions of the study; (7) limitations of the study; (8) important delimitations of the study which narrow both the conceptual and empirical focus of the study and, thereafter, a brief definition of key terms. Each of these elements is presented below.

1.2 Background

The occupationally unique stress and risk factors of policing and police work have been highlighted to negatively affect the mental health status of police officers (Fox et al., 2012). Mental health² amongst members of police services, similar to that of members of other such state security as well as law and order agencies, such as, correctional services or the military, forms an integral part of their individual and professional wellbeing (Edwards & Kotera,

¹ This study's use of the term 'male' throughout this dissertation should not be seen as an endorsement of a biologically based definition of sex or gender. Rather, it is used to highlight how the biologically orientated language of sexual differentiation still organises the understanding, experience, and treatment of gender in the Kingdom of Eswatini, broadly, and the REPS, specifically.

² Read, for the purpose of this study, the terms 'mental' and 'psychological' interchangeably.

2020), especially given that the mental health and wellbeing of police personnel often directly impacts their ability to perform and discharge their law enforcement functions optimally. This has impelled police organisations around the world to increasingly take-up the employment of mental health professionals on a full-time or consultative basis, in order to address the pressing mental health needs of their service personnel (Kurk & Scrivner, 2013).

Despite this important development, it remains apparent that mental health and other well-being services being afforded to police officers are often met with reluctance by police officers (Tucker, 2015). In a study conducted by the National Institute of Justice in the United States of America where 70% of police officers in the state of Alabama were surveyed, it was found that only a small percentage (12%) of the surveyed police officers had ever used stress intervention services available to them (Carlan & Nored, 2008; Delprino et al., 1995). Similarly, the same was found amongst police personnel in Norway, where less than 10% of officers with mental health problems reported having sought psychological help (Berg et al., 2006).

In the Kenyan police service, Nyingi (2016) established that due to the high levels of mental health problems amongst police personnel there was a significant need for counselling services, however, there were a lot of barriers inhibiting Kenyan police from seeking mental health care services. These barriers could be understood as creating an image of reluctance towards counselling service utilisation. Similarly, police officers in the South African Police Service (SAPS) were reportedly also likely to experience traumatic incidents in their line of duty, yet studies conducted within the SAPS proved that officers often demonstrate reluctance to deal with trauma symptoms, and display hesitancy in utilising trauma counselling services (Boshoff et al., 2015).

1.3 Context

Similar to other police organisations and law enforcement agencies, the REPS is mandated by section 189 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Eswatini, Act No 1 of 2005 and the Police Service Act No 22 of 2018 to maintain law and order, prevent and detect crime as well as strengthen state security (Royal Eswatini Police Service [REPS], 2018). It is, however, often the immensely demanding and stressful duties and functions which police are charged with on a daily basis in satisfying their broader legal mandates that police officers become subject to amplified rates of illness, post-traumatic stress, alcohol abuse, burnout and suicides as per police health reports and media coverage (Dlamini, 2020; Khoza, 2018; REPS, 2019; Sibiyi, 2019). Although there are no studies on mental health issues amongst police in the Kingdom of Eswatini (hereafter referred to in its abridged form as Eswatini), mounting evidence of increasing suicide rates have been reported in the media and the most reported incidents being those where police officers appear to turn their service firearms on themselves (Khoza, 2018).

In 2017, the REPS through the office of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) in Eswatini began introducing mental health professionals in the capacity of full-time Police Trauma Counsellors (PTC), in an effort to deal with growing concerns about the mental health and well-being of REPS officers. Since the introduction of PTC to the REPS in 2017, annual reports officially released by the REPS have highlighted that very few REPS officers in fact utilise the counselling services made available to them. Most recently, in 2019, it was recorded that only 11% (586 of 5186) REPS officers accessed the counselling and psychotherapy services provided by the organisation during the calendar year (REPS, 2019). Of the 586 police personnel who did utilise the counselling and therapeutic services, the majority of services users 66% (386 of 586) were female REPS officers, while only 34% (200 of 586) of these service users were male REPS officers (REPS, 2019). Within the

REPS, the majority of personnel are male police officers with female police officers only occupying about 33% of the total population of the organisation (I.S. Nhlengethwa, personal communication, February 10, 2020). With males forming the overwhelming majority of the occupational workforce within the REPS, the expectation would be to have a relatively congruent number of police officers accessing services. It is because of the current incongruences in counselling service utilisation by male members of the REPS that concerns have been raised in the REPS around the factors which may influence the apparent reluctance of male police officers to fully utilise the counselling and psychotherapeutic services available to them (Dlamini, 2019).

Within the field of masculinity studies, there already exists a large body of research literature which explores patterns of men's help-seeking behaviour that points to men being less likely than women to seek help from mental health professionals, in particular for psycho-social stressors and other stressful life events (Lindinger-Sternart, 2014; Papazoglou & Tuttle, 2018; Wendt & Shafer, 2015). In this regard, the reluctance on the part of men to seek help is often theorised to be attributed to the gender(ed) ideologies of emotional stoicism within which boys and men are socialised (Wall & Kristjanson, 2005), and which typically constitutes one of the foundational dimensions of more traditional, dominant, and socially acceptable masculinity/ies (Jewkes et al., 2015).

The perception that, in varying forms, only 'weak', 'less masculine', 'more effeminate' men seek help, has been found to form part of the complex sociologies and social psychologies of sex and gender (roles) (Little, 2014). In this regard, traditional ideologies of masculinity render men's styles of help-seeking behaviour as well as how their help-seeking behaviour is interpreted (by themselves, by other men and women) and gendered an attribute of contextually and culturally peculiar patterns of male socialisation (Seidler et al., 2016).

According to Collinson and Hearn (2005), occupational organisations do not emerge in a social vacuum free of the broader gender politics in which they are embedded. Rather, organisations, in all their various configurations, are often both gendered and gendering arrangements (Collinson & Hearn, 2005). That is to say that the structures, cultures, and psychologies of organisations are not only imbued with gendered power dynamics (for example, explicit and implicit forms of patriarchy or sexism in the workplace), but, also, that they socialise and acculturate organisational members into particular ways of being gendered. Being gendered, which is the state of being male/masculine/man or female/feminine/women, ultimately goes on to inform ones (gendered) ways of thinking, feeling and behaving (Collinson & Hearn, 2005; Lewis, 2014).

For the purposes of this study, a look at occupational environments in the construction of masculinities can be useful in that specific organisations to some degree, tend to foster specific kinds of gender(ed) relations and, with this, peculiar patterns and typologies of masculinity/ies (as well as femininity/ies) that can facilitate the reproduction of men's power and more dominant modes of masculinity in those organisations (Collinson & Hearn, 2005). Probably one of the more explicit examples of this can be seen in military organisations, where traditional ideologies of masculinity and manhood are often intimately interwoven with gendered tropes of dominance, aggression, violence, physical toughness, emotional restrictedness and ultimately, soldiering (Martin & Van Wijk, 2020). Thus, it can be that the organisational 'production' of a 'better soldier' ultimately becomes bound up in making a soldier (be they a man or woman) both more masculine and more aggressive³ (Maringira, 2021).

³ This is not to say that all military men (or women) are violent or endorse violence, but, rather, that military organisations have traditionally encouraged modes of masculinity that are often predicated on the use of violence or physical force.

While the focus of the present study is on a police organisation, namely, the REPS, military organisations nonetheless make for a good comparative environment in this research study. This is because studies on organisations of those security forces charged with enforcing law, order, and defence have similar cultures which encourage, elevate, and normalise male dominance and further uphold hegemonic masculinities which often entails the repression or expulsion of characteristics or behaviours typically considered ‘feminine’, in a given place and at a particular point in time (Connell, 2000).

Studies on the construction of masculinities within the militaries have shown how, for instance, social and physical training puts soldiers through a gendered/ing process of producing so-called ‘manly’ qualities, such as, aggression, excessive physical strength, and adventurism (Morgan, 1990; Whitworth, 2004). In this regard, parallels between military organizations and policing agencies become even more acute in the African context where the training, organisation, and employment/deployment of police forces has often been highly militarised and inflected various markers of military culture and strategy (Berning & Masiloane, 2011; Lamb, 2018). Research on gender and policing points out how a particular type of masculinity develops in a similar way to how militarised masculinities are constructed (Bevan, 2011). Similar to the military, the hegemonic, that is, more dominant and desired forms of masculinity, are introduced to police officers while they are police recruits in training, maintaining the perceptions that these two professions are masculine and dangerous in nature associating them with aggression, use of force, physicality and the subordination of feminine characteristics (Messerschmidt, 1993; Rabe-Hemp, 2009). Both the military and police members are socialised and acculturated into occupationally specific patterns or modes of masculinity, these socialisations largely shape the way in which male police officers perceive their gendered roles as police, their lifestyle choices and eventually shape their attitudes and their help-seeking behaviours which often discourage the

expression of particular kinds of emotions, such as, vulnerability, and, subsequently help-seeking (Abraham et al., 2017).

The police institution can be viewed as one that is constructed through sexist views and practices rendering it one of the world's most masculinised professions (Yalley & Olutayo, 2020). Silvestri (2017) recognises that masculinity dominates the police occupation such that police work is almost tantamount to masculine performance. Masculine traits that researchers identify in male police officers include but are not limited to: stoicism, firmness, decisiveness, lack of emotion, and controlling behaviours (Rabe-Hemp, 2009). The persistent emphasis on 'machoness' as the ideal police officer trait is a hegemonic tool for maintaining male power and dominance inspiring male police officers to degrade female officers as a means of enhancing their own masculinity, and that of the organisation (Yalley & Olutayo, 2020). According to research, the masculine culture of policing has negative consequences on officer behaviour and can affect how police perceive and behave towards certain situations (Rabe-Hemp, 2009).

While there may be a significant amount of research on men's help-seeking behaviour(s) and masculinity/ies in a number of countries both around the world (Berg et al., 2006; Carlan & Nored, 2008; Delprino et al., 1995) and in other parts of the African continent (Boshoff et al., 2015; Nyingi, 2016) there is no published research specifically on the help-seeking behaviours of male police officers in the REPS and how this is potentially influenced by beliefs and values concerning gender and, in particular, masculinity. It is within this context that this study set out to qualitatively explore the ways in which masculinity comes to inform and underwrite the help-seeking behaviour(s) of male police officers in the REPS. This was done by exploring masculinity, how it is constructed, and the interlink between masculinity and help-seeking behaviours. In doing so, the present study drew directly from REPS male police officers' views, experiences, and constructions of

masculinity and their understanding of how masculinity influences both their own and other male police officers' help-seeking behaviours.

1.4 Research aim and objectives

The study was guided by the following aim and objectives:

1.4.1 Aim

To explore how masculinity influences the help-seeking behaviours of male police officers in the REPS.

1.4.2 Objectives

1. To understand the peculiar construction and constitution of masculinity/ies amongst male police officers of the REPS,
2. To explore how male police officers of the REPS understand help-seeking behaviour in gendered terms, and
3. To understand how the peculiar construction of masculinity/ies amongst male police officers in the REPS influence their help-seeking behaviour

1.5 Research questions

The study guided by the objectives intended to answer the following research questions

1.5.1 Main question

How does masculinity influence the help-seeking behaviours of male police officers in the Royal Eswatini Police Service?

1.5.2 Sub-questions

1. How are masculinity/ies amongst male police officers in the REPS constructed and constituted?
2. How do male police officers of the REPS understand help-seeking behaviour in gendered terms?
3. How does the peculiar construction of masculinity/ies amongst male police officers in the REPS influence their help-seeking behaviour?

1.6 Theoretical point of departure

The present study is principally informed and oriented by the concept of hegemonic masculinity as originally developed in the work of Raewyn Connell⁴ (Connell, 2005). Researchers trace the origin of the concept of hegemonic masculinity to the early 1980's arising from critical studies of men (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). According to Aboim et al., (2007) different theoretical studies, influences and traditions informed these studies namely: marxism, patriarchy theory, socialist feminism, practice theory and social constructionism. In definition, "hegemonic masculinity is the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (Connell, 1995, p. 77). Analytically, the concept helps draw attention to how and why (some) men maintain dominant social roles over other subordinated men, women, and other gender identities which are perceived as feminine in a given society.

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) emphasise that masculinity is not a stable but fluid biologically based phenomenon consisting of several hierarchies of socially constructed discourses or narratives of masculine identity. Hegemonic masculinity is thus a

⁴ Formerly Robert Connell, and sometimes identified as R.W. Connell.

constituent concept within a theoretical model of multiple masculinities namely: complicit, subordinate and marginalised masculinities where it emerges as dominant and is sustained in relation to these other masculinities but equally to femininities (Aboim et al., 2007).

With policing being referred to as a masculine profession, the focus of this study is on how masculinity/ies influences the help-seeking behaviours of male police officers in the REPS and to get to that, police officers views on the constructions of masculinity and the understanding of help-seeking from gendered terms are explored. Furthermore, the study considers how the peculiar construction of masculinity/ies amongst male police officers in the REPS influences their help-seeking behaviours. The help-seeking behaviours of male police officers and the constructions of masculinity/ies considered in the study are thus informed by hegemonic masculinity as a concept of masculinity understood by scholars to shape the socialisation and aspirations of some men (Kupers, 2005).

In today's world, hegemonic masculinity includes a high degree of competitiveness, an inability to express emotions other than anger, an unwillingness to admit weakness or even dependency, depreciation of women and all feminine attributes in and by men (Kupers, 2005). As such, this ideology of hegemonic masculinity/ies can be characterised by physical toughness, emotional regulation, aggression, sexual assertiveness and heterosexuality which are often features closely linked to those more dominant or hegemonic forms of masculinity within police forces (Connell, 1995; McCartney & Parent, 2015). Therefore, from this approach it is hoped that the research question set out in this study will be answered through exploring the views of male police officers in the REPS on masculinity.

1.7 Methodology

This research study qualitatively explored how masculinity influences the help-seeking behaviours of male police officers in the REPS. Data was collected from 10 male police officers fully employed by the REPS using in-depth unstructured interviews. Interviews were conducted in English and time duration for interviews was 45 to 60 minutes. Participants for the study were recruited from two police stations namely Matsapha and Lobamba police stations. A request was sent to the national commissioner of police (see Appendix A). For access into the organisation organisational permissions and security clearances were a pre-requisite.

1.8 Data analysis

This research employed a social constructionist thematic analysis (TA) as its method of analysing the data. TA is ideal for analysing rich data as I chose in-depth unstructured interviews for data collection in the study (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The assumption in this study was that masculinity/ies are socially constructed, therefore there can be many social constructions and realities that male police officers subscribe to. Therefore, identifying common themes and analysing them would ensure a deep and insightful exploration of how male police officers in the REPS understand masculinity/ies to influence their help-seeking behaviours. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), TA is a method used for identifying, analysing, and reporting themes within the data. This approach allowed the researcher to describe and interpret the data for meaning. Through focusing on meaning across a dataset, TA allows the researcher to appreciate and make sense of shared meanings and experiences about the subject matter.

1.9 Research problem and rationale

Police organisations worldwide share values that allow officers to survive what at times can be both a difficult and emotionally challenging profession (McCartney & Parent, 2015). The REPS being no exception, has had reports of increasing suicide rates in the media and in most of the reports police officers take their lives through the use of their service pistols (Dlamini, 2020; Khoza, 2018). These reports raised concerns about the mental health issues and well-being of REPS officers. To address these concerns, the REPS introduced PTC's employed by the Eswatini Government to provide mental health services to police personnel in the REPS. Despite this effort by the REPS, to ensure that all police officers obtain the necessary psychological support in promoting their mental health and safeguarding against the occupational stressors of police work, it has been noted that male police officers in the REPS continue to remain reluctant to utilise the services provided to them, as earlier noted that during the 2019 calendar year only 34% of officers who utilised counselling services were male police officers (REPS, 2019).

It is these statistics that motivated the researcher to discover why there is this disparity in the help-seeking behaviours of police officers. The researcher's intention was to conduct a study to explore how masculinity influences the help-seeking behaviours of male police officers in the REPS. As mentioned, the construction of masculinity amongst police officers is largely influenced by socialisation and acculturation into occupationally specific patterns or modes of masculinity (McCartney & Parent, 2015). The constructions of masculinity amongst police officers addressed in academic journals influences a number of factors especially behaviours towards help-seeking (Haecker, 2017). It is from that perspective that this research study explores how the constructions of masculinity/ies in the REPS influence the help-seeking behaviours of male police officers in the REPS.

The research study itself contributes to literature on masculinity with specific focus being on male police officers. The researcher anticipated that the data generated from this study would assist in providing a richer understanding of how gender and masculinity informs the help-seeking behaviours of male police officers and the strategies the REPS could possibly employ in improving service utilisation by male police officers taking gender and masculinity into consideration.

This research study will contribute towards literature on masculinity through focusing specifically on masculinity amongst police officers in Eswatini as there is a lack of such literature. Discursive reading on masculinity amongst police and military in the world and in South Africa specifically might be useful in unpacking the complexities associated with masculinity amongst police officers. Looking at masculinity from the views of male police officers in Eswatini may provide further insight into the direction of future research on masculinity and help-seeking behaviours in not just the police force, specifically, but security forces more broadly in both Eswatini and Africa.

This angle can also provide knowledge on the implications of help-seeking behaviours and future directions for mental health service provision. The study will further provide a platform for the research participants to express their views freely regarding their views on masculinity and its influence on help-seeking behaviours and also allow them the opportunity to make recommendations on strategies that can be used to improve service uptake amongst male REPS officers. The REPS will also benefit as this study will allow them to equip their PTC accordingly in order to increase service utilization, thus improving service delivery and decreasing the negative effects of mental health resulting from poor help-seeking behaviours. Finally the dissertation document will serve as a reference material for future researchers because it will be made available at the REPS Police Academy library as well as the University of Pretoria library.

1.10 Summary

This chapter is an introductory chapter and it aimed to provide the reader with the background and rationale. It also offered a brief preliminary account of the methodology that has been adopted. The dissertations subsequent chapters will be as follows, Chapter 2 presents a literature review of the study covering literature related to gender and masculinity, masculinity in policing as well as mental health and help-seeking behaviours. Chapter 3 outlines a discussion of the theoretical framework underpinning the study, this will be an overview of hegemonic masculinity. Chapter 4 will cover the study's research methodology expanding on the design of the study, data collection and further addresses ethical considerations and the limitations of the study. Chapter 5 presents the findings from the study and the analysis of the findings. Finally, Chapter 6 contains the conclusion, limitations of the study and further provides space for reflection on the study and also provides recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

Chapter 2 introduces masculinity and help-seeking behaviour as well as discusses definitions of the concepts. A brief overview of how masculinity and gender was and is conceptualised historically is presented with a review of biological and social theories of gender and masculinity. The chapter will also review literature on how masculinity is understood in relation to policing. Men's health and men's help-seeking behaviour in general and in policing is also explored. These discussions drew primarily on Connell's works, providing a context for the research problem underlined in this study.

2.2 Gender and Masculinity

2.2.1 From biological to social theories of masculinity

According to Waling (2019), in the past decades masculinity studies have been on the upsurge, with frameworks like hegemonic masculinity dominating the study of men. From the 1950's social sciences' focus was on the subject of gender. To understand how gender develops, biological theories of gender development emphasised that psychological and behavioural gender differences of men and women were due to the inherent and intrinsic biological differences between males and females (Miller, 2016; Waling, 2019). From this perspective, the differences between men and women were understood as being rooted in biology, and mediated by genetics, hormones, and physiology (Ngun et al., 2011). Evidently so, the different social, legal and political statuses of men and women in Western culture were explained by biological models (Fausto-Sterling, 2005). In the biological approach, sexual anatomy could be understood as the basis of manhood or womanhood (Moynihan, 1998).

To understand the definition of masculinity, an understanding of the concepts of ‘gender’ and ‘sex’ was necessary. In chapter 1, it has already been established that sex relates to the physical or physiological differences between biological males and females, while gender refers to the social or cultural distinctions, behavioural traits and sex typed dispositions associated with being male or female. For example, biological differences in sex can be understood as chromosomes (female XX and male XY), reproductive organs (ovaries in females and testicles in males), hormones (oestrogen in females, testosterone in males). (Diamond, 2002; McLeod, 2014; Money & Ehrhardt, 1972). This distinction framed the foundation for early social scientific work on masculinity, largely through the cross-disciplinary popularity of male sex (or gender) role theory (Harrison, 1978).

According to Moynihan (1998), some of the ‘natural’ attributes considered part of being a man included aggression, reasoning, a need for control, being highly competitive, and emotional stoicism. Biological theorists found themselves under much scrutiny because according to researchers the biological perspective left little room for sexual expression and gender because its claim was that both gender and sex were dependent on biological makeup (McLeod, 2014). Another criticism of such biological approaches was their ability to only acknowledge ambiguity in anatomical states, disregarding the issue of gender (Moynihan, 1998).

Liberal feminists on the study of masculinity also made important contributions where they highlighted the distinction between sex and the socially learned behaviours of gender. This was done in order to demonstrate that “gender roles could be socially transformed through conscious social and political action to foster a more egalitarian society” (Mann & Patterson, 2016, p. 49). The sex-role theoretical approach describes the oppression of women as a consequence of socialised gender role expectations which place

men in dominant positions thus emphasising the power of gender socialising over the previously held biological bases of masculinity (Brown & Ismail, 2019; Pease, 2000).

Gender socialisation can be explained from the perspective of social learning theorists who speak of sex-typed behaviours when referring to behaviours that are seen as appropriate when performed by one sex and not the other (Little, 2014). In this context classical conditioning best explains the relation between social learning and sex-typed behaviours. Males and females were conditioned to behave in certain ways, boys were expected to act 'tough' while it was acceptable for girls to act 'submissive'. If either sex acted contrary to what was expected, they were subject to ridicule which would trigger feelings of shame. Each sex was expected to model same-sex individuals, promoting a process of identification where one behaviour copied rather than taught or rewarded (Grusec & Mischel, 1966).

Like other theories, the social learning theory had its short falls since research later suggested that social learning does not always follow the same sex modelling perspective as it was earlier suggested (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974; Williams, 1989). Another critique by Schilling (2011) on the social learning theory is that children are seen playing a more passive role rather than being active participants in the social learning of their own behaviours. With these criticisms the concept of gender began to be employed in the social sciences from the late 1960's (Unger, 1979). This drove interest towards a second wave where the question of gender became central to discussions of social life, inspiring feminists to develop alternate theories to understand the differences between males and females (Hameed & Shukri, 2014).

In this vein, Judith Butler, a renowned feminist, argued that one was not 'born' with a gender, but that gender was produced and re-produced through one's social life, learning, and behaviour (Butler, 1990). Butler further used the idea of 'gender performance' to claim that sexed bodies, like gender, were created and regulated by social and discursive norms

making them simultaneously gendered and gendering. This then made gender and sex appear as something that one continually did rather than something one had (Butler, 1990).

The study of men's and boy's sexism was inspired by feminist perspectives which placed emphasis on the need for research and practice of masculinity (Hearn & Morgan, 1990). Failure to conceptualise the link between men, masculinity and power led to modern feminists criticising early feminist work (Hearn & Morgan, 1990). An alternative way of looking at masculinity was through the social concept of gender, which was arguably understood to be an influence of historical, social and cultural factors (Moynihan, 1998). To fill the gap where men were seen as generic subjects and not gendered subjects, Connell (2005) and Hearn et al. (2012) were of the view that for men to be seen as gendered subjects their identities should be seen as fluid constructs, creating the notion that there isn't a singular masculinity but a range of masculinities. With that shift, emphasis on the conceptualisation of gender as 'a system of power' was of importance (Brod & Kaufman, 1990).

The contributions of biological theories, gender theorists, feminists and social theorists in previous theorising of masculinity further inspired the exploration of how men accessed differential power through the examination of race, class, sexuality, and other social identities (Ramazanoglu, 1992). Carrington et al. (1985), ensured that gender was continually conceptualised as a system of power through the development of the theory of hegemonic and subordinate masculinities.

From the early 1980s the concept of hegemonic masculinity came to the fore in gender studies. Hegemonic masculinity describes dominant gendered practices that embody the legitimacy of patriarchy and the privileging of different men (Jourian, 2018; Smirnova, 2018). Connell examined the power hierarchies between men through the concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 2005). By positioning hegemonic masculinity as

dominant and ascendant, Connell described a model where failure to act in a characteristically acceptable manner as a man, led to subordination and marginalisation associated with femininity (Connell, 2005). For a clear picture on hegemonic masculinity/ies in policing, reviewed literature on uniformed forces masculinities revealed that, both police and military have control on the use of force as authorised by different governments or states. The use of force in organisational processes in the different states is crafted by hegemonic masculinities and it is tied to the physique of officers as well as the subversion of feminine characteristics (Connell, 2000; Stiehm, 1989).

Power, being the central point around which gender is ordered in society, created a system of patriarchy where men dominated and still dominate over women (Connell, 2005). Patriarchy refers to the male domination both in public and private spheres. In the civilised world patriarchal institutions and social relations are largely responsible for the inferior or secondary statuses of women. Men are given absolute priority which to some extent limits women's human rights also (Sultana, 2012). Certain jobs and tasks have been traditionally allocated as per gender divisions and the police are no exception as will be later discussed.

Connell (1995) also reflected on the gendered aspects of institutions, of note was the substantive and not just metaphorical gendered nature of the police institution making it a masculine organisation. According to Alexander and Andersen (1993), definitions of gender encompass dualistic opposites where the feminine is associated with emotional, maternal, caring and submissive characteristics while the masculine is associated with leadership, assertiveness, domination, emotional stoicism and being physically strong. In terms of the institution of the police, the day-to-day workings of the organisation are considered as the space in which gender is not only performed but created, experienced and accepted (Potgieter, 2012).

2.3 Masculinity in policing

Police work is one of the professions in which models of more conservative, traditional and patriarchally inflected masculinity/ies are deeply embedded (Chan et al., 2010; Potgieter, 2012). Qualities like boldness, dominance, fortitude, emotional composure and aggressiveness are usually associated with policing making the police profession one that favours males (Ménard & Arter, 2014; Viljoen, 2015). These findings are supported by a study of the New Zealand Police where females still represented a minority of the police (Chan et al., 2010). Although contemporary policing supports the inclusion of feminist traits amongst police organisations, researchers like Yalley (2019) recognise that masculinity still takes the central preference in most police organisations. Data gathered in one study at a police station in South Africa showed that some female employees recognised the importance of masculine ideals within the police and also subscribed to them presenting that masculinity is not confined to the male body (Potgieter, 2012). In the same study, Potgieter (2012) discovered that both males and females in the SAPS ascribed to the police service being one that promotes and emphasises masculinity through their identification with ‘toughness’ both physically and emotionally as an essential trait. ‘Toughness’ can thus be associated with more masculine than feminine characteristics (Fowler & Geers, 2016).

In a research study conducted in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), it was found that police officers displayed remarkable unity in defence of traditional understandings of masculinity (Gripp & Zaluar, 2017). In the same study by Gripp and Zaluar (2017), the police organisational culture was found to informally institutionalise practices that served to disempower women and delegitimise alternative masculinities, consequently strengthening the dominant masculine discourse. Thereby conveying how police officers understand and adhere to masculinity as determined by the police culture and gender norm socialisations.

Addis and Mahalik (2003) assert that social construction speculates that men actively develop masculinity, characterising them as unwilling to seek help when they need it.

Traditionally, policing organisations and police officers tend to see themselves differently from the general civilian public (Tankebe, 2013). In doing so, police men tend to make distinctions with regards to their life and work wherein they see themselves as waging a ‘war against crime’ and regarding their work as a mission: enforcing the borders between order and chaos, often at the cost of one’s own life (Wakefield & Fleming, 2009). What this means is that police populations and communities have tended to both foster and reproduce much more aggressive, conservative, and traditionally-inflected forms of masculinity and masculine culture, at the heart of which are gendered values and practices which reinforce stoicism, aggression, dominance, and the use of force (Silvestri, 2017).

Alston (2019) found that police trainings taught trainees that masculinity is essential for successful policing. This could be attributed to the nature of police work because police are exposed to horrible crime scenes, they work in contact with hardened criminals and they often have to use force to ensure success in their work. The masculine culture of policing can thus be problematic because it can lead to negative outcomes, not just for the police officer but for police organisations as well. Research shows that this can be manifested in the form of harassment, discrimination, stress and post-traumatic stress and social problems for individual police officers while on the other hand policing organisations can be subjected to lawsuits, poor turnover and negative publicity (Rawski & Workman-Stark, 2018).

This has led a number of scholars within gender studies of policing and police culture to characterise the occupational culture of policing organisations as a “cult of masculinity” (Brown, 2007, p. 190). This is created by the differentiation between women and men in the police profession, informally making it easy to understand how women are viewed as ‘outsiders’, are deemed ‘deficient’ and ‘unsuited’ for the job of policing (Silvestri, 2017).

The perceived lack of physical strength and the ensuing problems in violent situations in policing remains a consistent justification offered by policemen globally for deploying women differently from their male counterparts and the negative views held against women police over the past century (Heidensohn, 1994). The reality that women are now fully integrated into policing and can be found working across a range of police roles, where they too handle roles associated with masculinity creates the assumption that justifications for women's exclusion based on the physical disposition no longer holds validity in the twenty first century (Silvestri, 2017). Even with the new reality it is rather unfortunate that the traditional cult of masculinity within policing remains intact.

It is on that same note that, it is unsurprising that police men have tended to report viewing their own sense and valuation of their masculinity as superior over police women and men in the general public, since their profession gives them both a legal mandate and authoritative role over other men (Gripp & Zaluar, 2017). To support this notion, a study done in the SAPS asserted that the threat of violence was commonly used to teach members of the public whenever a police officer spoke to them, reiterating the social dominance, power and authority of the police (Faull, 2016).

While my research is focused on the police organisation, understandings of militarised masculinities was useful in developing an approach to investigate the influences of masculinities in the REPS. Due to differences in training, mandate, and activities the look at militarised masculinities can only be minimally and cautiously considered in policing (Bevan, 2011). Military masculinities because of their complexity and processes create specific models of hegemonic masculinity equating itself with such qualities as aggression, physical strength and courage under siege (Enloe, 1993; Morgan, 1990; Whitworth, 2004). Hypermasculinity defining models of militarised masculinity refer to behaviours associated with aggressiveness, toughness, and physical strength (Duncanson, 2015; Myrntinen, 2004).

Most research on gender and policing outlines how the hegemonic hypermasculine image in policing develops in ways similar to how militarised masculinities are constructed. Policing is seen as a dangerous masculine profession associated with aggressive nature, use of force and weapons (Herbert, 2001; McElhinny, 1994; Rabe-Hemp, 2009). This image is introduced to police officers while they are in training creating links between men and aggression, force and authority thus creating and maintaining hegemonic masculinity in policing through authority and the use of patriarchy (Prokos & Padavic, 2002; Rabe-Hemp, 2009). My research will therefore explore the different constructions of masculinity/ies in the REPS in an attempt to understand how they influence help-seeking behaviours.

2.4 Masculinity in context

The concept of masculinity varies across studies and can be understood differently historically and across different contexts. Edwards-Jauch (2016) in his literature on gender and masculinities, states that masculinity can be described as comprising gendered sets of culturally specific values and behaviours ascribed to. In this study masculinity can be understood from the view that masculinity in its totality consists of those behaviours, languages and practices existing in specific cultural and organizational locations, which are commonly associated with biological sexed male bodies and thus culturally defined as not feminine (Itulua-Abumere, 2013). Importantly, it is worth noting that 'masculinity' does not exist except in contrast with 'femininity' (Connell, 2005).

Male police officers by virtue of their profession are expected to protect others, they are expected to put the needs of others before their own, which leaves little room for self-care for police. Similarly, scholars such as Courtenay (2000) argue that the social construct of what men should be and how men define manhood has a negative impact on their health and health behaviours. Thus, because of their conformity to masculine norms, men are

expected to act “manly” or “macho” and that makes it less likely for them to seek help when faced with agonising or distressing events (Gennrich, 2013; Seidler et al., 2016). Masculinity can further be viewed as relatively fluid as context dictates how varying masculinities are shaped and evaluated (Everitt-Penhale & Ratele, 2015). This means that masculinity is not a fixed construct, it can change over time depending on the person’s context and identity. Connell (1995) emphasized that although hegemonic masculinity is associated with dominant masculinity, some men may not have access to hegemonic power and may also be confined by and to it (Morrell et al., 2012). Furthermore, there are ways in which men can ‘be’ masculine, ‘do’ masculine or ‘perform’ masculinity, like male police officers being/performing emotional stoicism by refusing or being reluctant to talk about their emotions or emotional distress (De Abreu, 2016).

Drawing upon studies that employed the social constructionist view to explore police officers help-seeking behaviours, such as, in the work of Faulkner (2018), amongst Ontario police officers it was evident that men who conformed to ideals of hegemonic masculinity were largely affected by themes of weakness versus strength, us versus other, safety and suitability for the job, and co-constructed silence which constrained help-seeking behaviours and often delaying help-seeking. Faull (2016) in his study of the South African Police Service (SAPS), looked at constructions of masculinity and concluded that masculinity played a role in the way male police officers behaved during different situations, confirming that if police officers act in ways contradictory to their expected masculine roles, they are likely to feel emasculated.

Since there is no literature on masculinity specifically in Eswatini, reference can be made to a broad range of literature on gender in South Africa (Clarke, 2008). The focus on South African literature was beneficial in this study because Eswatini and South Africa have certain things in common, like the Swati culture. Swati men, like South African men can

thus be expected to act in gender specific ways. According to Morrel (2001) men in the South African context are expected to respond in different ways to societal change hence the same can hold true for Swati men. Hegemonic masculinity reflects a pattern of gender practice within a larger society in the context of policing. According to Fielding (1994), hegemonic masculinity in policing could be attributed to characteristics such as violence, physicality and sexism to describe what he referred to as hyper-masculinity norms. The link between masculinity and violence are part of masculinity related literature in South Africa (Morrell, 2001; Reid & Walker, 2005)

For men, police men included, to endorse masculine values and belief systems, it is implied that they must not violate norms of hegemonic masculinity by performing behaviours which could contrast with gendered expectations like showing and sharing emotions and dependence (Good et al., 1989). From the existing literature on masculinity and help-seeking behaviours of male police officers, seeking help as a male was found to be humiliating, weakening and more feminine. The later discussion on the theoretical framework provided by Connell's work on hegemonic masculinity will thus provide a clear understanding of how masculinity influences the help-seeking behaviours of male police officers within the REPS and how these influences are consequential.

2.5 Masculinity, men's mental health and men's help-seeking behaviours

The concept of help-seeking behaviours has over the past decade grown popular amongst scholars in the understanding of action associated with a variety of health conditions (Cornally & McCarthy, 2011). According to Rickwood and Thomas (2012), there are no agreed upon or common definitions used to define help-seeking behaviours, therefore he describes help-seeking as an "attempt to find (seek) assistance to improve a situation or problem (help)" (p. 174). In a mental health context, help-seeking is an adaptive coping

process that is the attempt to obtain external assistance to deal with a mental health concern (Rickwood et al., 2012). Help-seeking behaviour in the research study was defined as any action of energetically seeking help from the health care services or from trusted people in the community and includes understanding, guidance, treatment and general support when feeling in trouble or encountering stressful circumstance (Rickwood & Thomas, 2012). Research highlights that everyone irrespective of their gender or nationality will experience some form of mental health problem at some point in their lives (Mental Health Foundation [MHF], 2016). Expectantly, high prevalence of mental health problems should be matched by high levels of service use and associated help-seeking behaviour, but there is a marked mismatch between the prevalence of disorder and the level of professional help-seeking (Rickwood et al., 2012).

Despite this, it is evident that help-seeking amongst men in general is comparatively lower. Galdas et al. (2005) found that men consistently ignored health symptoms and avoided seeking help from health services. Similar findings in a number of studies also found that young men are more likely than females to deny or repress problems, or externalise their emotions so that they act out under stress and are therefore more at risk for violence, anger, tension substance use and interpersonal conflict (Barker, 2007; Timlin-Scalera et al., 2003). On that note a number of studies suggest that variables such as occupation, lifestyle choices or traditional masculinity are more important than gender when it comes to help-seeking (Galdas et al., 2005). However the majority of studies do find significant differences in help-seeking behaviour between males and females, and dozens of studies and surveys over the past several decades have shown that men of all ages and ethnicities are less likely than women to seek help for all sorts of problems even though they experience those problems at the same or greater degrees as women (Winerman, 2005).

In an international review on women police, males still form the majority of police officers in organisations around the world (Prenzler & Georgina, 2013). Amongst the police profession, understanding the attitudes and beliefs which expedite, or hinder help-seeking behaviours is of importance to improve the use of available mental health services and deter the potential for psychological issues to develop into serious illnesses if left undiagnosed/untreated (Schomerus et al., 2009), which could adversely have an impact on the service delivery of police officers. Police officers are often acculturated into police culture by being taught that because of their mandate to serve and protect they are supposed to be stronger physically and mentally. The notion of being strong a police officer discourages help-seeking hence the understanding of the police culture is also important as it may be antagonizing in situations when officers need to ask for psychological help. (Papazoglou and Tuttle, 2018).

2.6 Help-seeking behaviours amongst police officers

Police officers are known for being untrusting of outsiders and often unwilling to self-disclose personal and private matters (Gharibian, 2015; Mojtabai, 2007; Violanti & Paton, 1999). These characteristics which are unique to police officers can also play a role in their help-seeking behaviours. Before becoming police officers, each officer is part of a larger community in which there are norms, values, views beliefs and acceptable behaviours. Upon entering the police profession, a new culture is often instilled. That is a culture where officers have concerns regarding appearing weak, undependable, or unable to remain emotionally composed in the eyes of their fellow officers or even the public they police. (Haecker, 2017).

Gendered norms of masculinity, associated with policing, encourage and expect police men (and police women) to act in certain ways when faced with distressing events,

making it difficult for police personnel to discuss such distress openly or seek professional help, that is, without the fear of prejudice, ostracism, or other forms of informal and interpersonal sanction or censure (Gennrich, 2013). Factors of masculinity that influence help seeking-behaviours of male police officers include but are not limited to individual, social and cultural factors (Griffith et al., 2011). On an individual level, Kulesza et al. (2015) associate seeking help with fear and shame of being labelled as crazy or even mentally ill, where such labels could also raise concerns on how careers and other life goals can be affected.

More literature on perceived stigma found that men who needed help were likely to experience feelings of devalue, weakness, status loss, discrimination, shame, loss of self-esteem as well as other personal emotions if they tried to seek help for their mental state or emotions (Hing et al., 2016). According to Lynch et al. (2018), young men tend to have a need for confidentiality and that if they disclose their personal information, it often results in a loss of control. Fear of dependence leads to reluctance to seek help which promotes the use of alternative coping mechanisms in an effort to relieve the emotional and physical pain they experience (Lynch et al., 2018).

Other researchers highlight that one of the most cited reasons by interviewed individuals for their poor help-seeking behaviours was stigma followed by the cost or lack of medical coverage (Carter, 2010; Komrad, 2012). In addition to cost and stigma, gender continues to act as a barrier to seeking care, especially in male dominated career fields such as the police (Haecker, 2017). Several studies have revealed that women on the other hand tend to demonstrate greater levels of openness towards help-seeking for mental health services (Mackenzie et al., 2006). Aligning with these findings, female police officers in the Norwegian police service were reported to have contacted nearly all health professionals

more than their male counterparts, evidently making female police more likely to sought help than their male counterparts did (Berg et al., 2006).

Because of the historically masculine-orientation of police work, and with this, the structural exclusions of women for police work, female police officers still form a minority within the policing profession the world over (Archbold & Schulz, 2012). Male police officers on the other hand still possess negative perceptions towards females in the field (Wilson, 2016). Leading to the conclusion that male police officers' masculinity plays a role in their poor health seeking behaviours. This being because they persistently adopt that policing is a male profession and that showing any kind of weakness towards their female colleagues can be emasculating because police officers are expected to be strong and have the ability to handle anything. Furthermore, those male officers who need help may not want their male colleagues to judge them, making them internalise their emotions, thereby avoiding seeking help (Hing et al., 2016).

Socialisation is also proffered to play a significant role in male police seeking help, as Ali et al. (2017) assert that help-seeking behaviour is affected by beliefs and ideas about masculinity which contribute to men withdrawing from communicating about their feelings because of their social pressures and cultural constrictions of being male. Similarly as Johnson (2016) has argued, police organisations have their own culture of observing and enforcing adherence to culturally peculiar and organisationally specific values, norms and traditions. Karaffa and Tochkov (2013) point out that police officers are expected to adopt a 'warrior' mind-set expecting them to be tough mentally and physically strong. This intense socialisation often leads to the internalisation of the values and beliefs, impacting how male police officers self-identify, and in turn may influence behaviours on and off the job, compromising their help-seeking behaviours in return (Karaffa & Tochkov, 2013).

This preceding literature review provided a basis to understand masculinity in general and masculinity within the police. It further delved on the various factors affecting police officers decision to seek-help for mental health issues. The police and mental health communities could benefit from hearing male police officers' perspectives of how they view masculinity and how it affects their help-seeking behaviours and why available resources are being underutilised.

2.7 Summary

The aim of this chapter was to clearly highlight existing knowledge on masculinity. The review of literature in this study presented an understanding of masculinity from biological perspectives where gender was first understood as a consequence of sex (male/female). Due to gaps in biological theories, social theories of masculinity emerged leading to the conceptualisation of hegemonic masculinity by Connell as being key to understanding masculinity/ies. These theories explained gender as being a result of social constructionism placing emphasis on relational understandings of masculinities, understanding masculinity in relation to femininity, socialisation, patriarchy and subordination. A review of militarised masculinities created a platform to understand masculinity and policing from a hegemonic standpoint. In order to integrate the understanding of men and masculinities into help-seeking behaviours in policing, we need a better understanding of how police officers understand and conceptualise masculinity. The literature review demonstrated the importance of exploring the experiences of police officers to gain a better understanding of the behaviours amongst police. This aided understanding of how masculinity traits act as a barrier to police officers seeking help for mental health purposes. Therefore my research not only explored how male police officers in the REPS conceptualise masculinity/ies but it also explored how these constructions of masculinity influence the help-seeking behaviours of

male police officers in the REPS. In the following chapter the theoretical framework underpinning this study is discussed.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Overview

In this chapter the theoretical framework for the study is discussed. This study adopted social constructionism as the theoretical framework. First social constructionism will be discussed to highlight how realities are constructed, its processes and the different analogies. The next section of the chapter explored the social theory considered relevant for this study, drawing primarily on the works of Connell. A look at the application of this theoretical framework in this study is also discussed. In another section the criticisms of this theory was explored. Whichever angle one took in this study, the importance of understanding masculinity was inevitable because the issue of help-seeking behaviours amongst male police officers was widely embedded in the theoretical framework that the study inhabited thus the importance of delving into the mechanisms of the perspective.

3.2 Social constructionism

3.2.1 Definition of social constructionism

Social constructionism can be traced back to symbolic interactionism where people were viewed as constructing their own and each other's identities through everyday encounters with each other in social interaction (Burr, 1995; LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993). The main focus of social constructionism is to explore how people make sense of experience and in turn translate that experience into individual and shared reality and meaning (Patton, 2002). Postmodernism, as a scholarly paradigm, was a response to positivism which supported the idea that the search for reality was through scientific methods (Burr, 1995). As a postmodern view of reality, social constructionism discarded the positivist view of reality and instead proposed that reality was socially constructed, created through language, organised and

maintained through narrative, and could not be considered in terms of essential truths (Freedman & Combs, 1996).

It is against this background that Freedman and Combs (1996) argued that language could be viewed as that active agent in creating the world that we live in (socially constructing reality) because people only know the world that they share using language. Hence, language abides by specific rules which shape our understanding of the world. Consequently, language cannot be understood as a neutral construct. It is the things that are communicated to us through language that allow us to make sense of our worlds giving us the opportunity to think, talk about the world and experience it the way we do and bring our perceptions to life (Vinney, 2020).

Andrews (2012) argues that meaning and knowledge are socially created. This means that people are actively involved in creating their own lives and meanings. From the postmodern view of reality, social constructionism can thus be described as that point of enquiry concerned with explaining the processes by which people come to describe, explain, or account for the world (including themselves) in which they live (Gergen, 1985). Social constructionists are of the belief that things that are generally viewed as natural or normal in society, such as gender and sex, which are socially constructed concepts, and are therefore not an accurate reflection of reality (Andrews, 2012). Because reality is socially constructed, the sociology of knowledge must focus on social processes by which reality is constructed. Therefore, masculinity from a social constructionist point of view cannot be viewed as a gender role or a set of social norms but it should rather be viewed as socially situated and well-coordinated activities that create meanings of gender (Addis et al, 2016).

3.2.2 The social construction of masculinity

According to Easterbrook (2013) masculinities, which are often understood to be socially constructed, are vital to the construction of gendered identities amongst males⁵ and females⁶. Alongside the natural element of gender identities, males and females have characters attached to their sexes and these characters are learnt through appropriate socialisation (Easterbrook, 2013). Gender specific roles are arguably influenced through language an example would be someone saying you are such a big strong boy (Brown, 2007). This creates the assumption that certain characters are products of socialisation, just as the preceding statement insinuates through language that boys are expected to be strong. The assumption then contributes towards the conceptualisation of strength as a ‘male’ character or trait. It is, therefore, through the sustained discursive, performative, and social, construction of gender, generally, and masculinity/ies, more specifically, that what specific traits or behavioural dimensions of gender come to appear as ‘natural’ features of masculinity or femininity, such as, social expectations around ‘toughness’ determine whether one is male or female.

Masculinity is understood as being actively constructed by men as they interact among themselves and with women (Kimmel, 2004). Galliano (2003) on the other hand states that human beings are not passive recipients of socialisation. Thus, the social construction framework is mostly concerned with the way people understand the world together (Burr, 2003; Galliano, 2003). Social constructionists embrace the perception that gender constructions are purely the result of intersecting historical, social and cultural factors at a certain time (Galliano, 2003). According to Kimmel (2004), masculinity is constructed differently and its constructions depend widely on the social conditions in which people are situated. People are understood as gendered individuals negotiating their identities within gendered institutions and to sustain their knowledge the process of social interaction is very

⁵ Males can refer to boys or men.

⁶ Females can refer to girls or women.

important (Burr, 2003; Kimmel, 2004). Therefore, to understand masculinity and its influences, viewing hegemonic masculinity as part of an effective social construction project which should be explored can be beneficial for this study.

3.3 Hegemonic masculinity

Raewyn Connell an Australian sociologists' theory of masculinity is the most influential theory in the field of men and masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). This makes the concept of hegemonic masculinity one of the most utilised or rather overemphasised concept within the study of masculinity. It is for that reason that other researchers have misunderstood R. W. Connells' concept and have even suggested that it can be reproduced unproblematically and inevitably (Wedgwood, 2009). Connell (1995) defines masculinity as a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage and the effects that these practices have in bodily practices, in bodily experience, personality and culture. From this view, it becomes evident that there exists a dominant form of masculinity that is accepted as proper for men in every society.

Hegemonic masculinity is not the only form of masculinity, it is rather the masculinity that occupies a dominant position in a given pattern of gender associations (Connell, 2005). The dominance of hegemonic masculinity suggests that there are other subservient forms of masculinity. To better understand the concept of hegemonic masculinity it is important to recognize that multiple masculinities exist. Connell in her work recognises four major categories of masculinity: (1) hegemonic masculinity; (2) complicit masculinity; (3) subordinated masculinity, and (4); marginalised masculinity⁷ (Connell, 1995, pp. 77-80).

⁷ Importantly, when this study refers to hegemonic masculinity and other forms of masculinities it by no means suggests that all men necessarily ascribe to the views and traits described.

Hegemonic masculinity designates what society considers the 'ideal man' enforcing the notion that to be considered this 'ideal man' a male is expected to express certain qualities including aggressiveness, avoidance of weakness, authority and physical strength to name just a few (Brenner, 2016; Cook, 2006; Gennrich, 2013; Morrell, 1998). Complicit masculinity on the other hand includes those males who are aware of both negative and positive traits of hegemonic masculinity and its influences in society but do not contest its presence or advocate for social change (Morrell, 1998). Boys and men who fail to live up to the dominant notion and expectations of what it means to be the 'ideal man' (homosexual men and those men who display more feminine traits fall into this category) are referred to as displaying subordinate masculinity which is another form of masculinity (Morrell, 1998). Lastly, marginal masculinity and hegemonic masculinity share a number of traits that are characteristic of hegemonic masculinity (competitiveness, aggressiveness, avoidance of weakness) except these appear in males who belong to oppressed groups (men who are unemployed, immigrants, and in gangs) (Morrell, 1998).

Worth noting is that traits attributed to hegemonic masculinity are not always negative. Hegemonic traits such as competitiveness, strength, for example, are not always destructive, they can be necessary at certain times (Haenfler, 2004; Nagel, 2003). The problem emerges when these traits interfere with appropriate emotional expression which can affect the psychological wellbeing of males (Gennrich, 2013; Haenfler, 2004; Nagel, 2003). For example in this study it is assumed that the different forms of masculinity have a certain influence on the ways in which male police officers in the REPS behave towards help-seeking for mental health related issues.

Irrespective of the fact that Connell (1995) identifies four basic relations amongst masculinities, this study will only focus on hegemonic masculinity. For purposes of this study, hegemonic masculinity as an analytical framework attempts to conceptualise the ways

in which ideologies of gender generally and masculinity, in particular, come to occupy a more or less superior and dominant position in a given space and time. Thereby creating and maintaining a universal system of gendered/ing relations through which boys and men are expected to accept, adhere to, and reproduce particular norms of masculinity and gendered behaviour such as in the REPS (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). This consequently clarifies why men maintain dominant social roles over women, and other gender identities, which are perceived as 'feminine' in a given society (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). As per this ideology hegemonic masculinity/ies can be characterised by physical toughness, emotional regulation, aggression, sexual assertiveness and heterosexuality (Connell, 1995). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) assert that masculinity is not a stable, biologically based phenomenon and masculinity consists of several hierarchies of socially-constructed discourses or narratives of masculine identity. Furthermore, a dominant masculine discourse which is characterised by being strong and not showing weakness amongst other traits may influence how men view help-seeking (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

This concept of hegemonic masculinity was understood by scholars to shape the socialisation and aspirations of young males in today's world (Kupers, 2005). The several narratives of masculine identity make the gender dynamics of masculinity a rather complex and uncertain concept (Connell, 2000). Connell revealed that individuals constructed themselves such that they reactively operated based on how they were positioned in different gender regimes (Connell, 1995).

The work of Connell on hegemonic masculinity is particularly relevant for this research study in that the idea of multiple masculinities can be valuable in the understanding of police culture within the REPS. Connell is of the notion that men can express themselves through hegemonic masculinity even though it is not all of them, this view may shape how

police officers in the REPS understand their constructions of masculinity, how they understand their help-seeking behaviours in gendered terms and how these constructions of masculinity influence their help-seeking behaviours.

3.3.1 Hegemonic masculinity and its relations to culture

A close link exists between masculinity, culture, ethnicity and tradition. Men and women are actively constructing masculinity and they tend to use culture as a guide (Robinson, 2008). Culturally in Africa gender is understood in reference to roles and functions in the society which further shapes ones opportunities in life (Ngubane, 2010). In Chudacoff (1992) cross-cultural studies reveal that culturally appropriate gender role awareness begins by age 2 and become firmly ingrained by age five. Postulating that from birth we are engaged in a socialisation process, where younger generations come to understand roles that are typically linked to their biological sex.

Some cultures in Southern Africa have been traditionally built on patriarchal forms of organisation. One such example can be viewed in sub-Saharan Africa where male children are often idolised (Tomkiewicz & Adeyemi-Bello, 1995). Such a practise is evident in Igbo state in south eastern Nigeria, where a woman, who gives birth to a male child is highly celebrated and is afforded much respect compared to other women who only bare female offspring (Nwokocha, 2007). Also in Africa, in most cultures, once a woman marries, she is traditionally expected to bear her husband's last surname, dropping her birth surname (Ademiluka, 2018). With these examples the domination over women is reflected making patriarchy normal in Africa. The Kingdom of Eswatini, is no exception to the cultural espousal of patriarchy as 'males' are more often than not highly valued in terms of cultural status, compared to 'females' (Swaziland Royal Women's Assembly [SRWA], 2018). For example, a study conducted in Eswatini on abused women revealed that traditional

patriarchal practices are still rife in Eswatini (Washkansky, 2000), which informs ideologies of masculinity and gender relations amongst males in the country. In this regard, male members of the REPS, like all other men within the Kingdom of Eswatini, would have to navigate the broader socio-cultural dimensions of gender and masculinity within which they are raised, live, and work.

3.3.2 Hegemonic masculinity and help-seeking

Humans irrespective of their gender or nationality will experience some form of mental health problem at some point in their lives (MHF, 2016). Studies reveal that society's expectations of the different gender roles, from men and women, significantly shapes and influences their help-seeking behaviours (Amoo, 2018; Amoo et al., 2017).

Scholars like Garfield et al. (2008) and Winerman (2005) have asserted that the interconnection between masculinity and help-seeking behaviour is evident in men's utilisation of primary health services. It can thus be assumed that men because of their dominant masculine discourse which is characterised by being strong and not showing weakness amongst other traits can influence how men view help-seeking. From this view point hegemonic masculinities cannot be viewed as being entirely coercive but rather consensus-seeking and subject to change (Connell, 1995). Asserting the view that masculinity/ies are socially constructed, it is within that view that ideas about gender operate in social groups and include the distinct social value accorded men over women in many societies (Hearn et al., 2012). Ideally, this then informs us of not just how men think about themselves, but also how social groups relate, access resources and prescribe and proscribe to particular behaviours. In the case of this study being how masculinity influences male police officers help-seeking behaviours in the REPS.

Olanrewaju et al. (2019) stated that in societies where traditional masculinity remains the dominant identity for men, healthcare or help-seeking can be seen as a feminine concept where females who are usually described as being weak, require health services regularly while men are robust and do not need health care services. This research study looked at masculinity from the standpoint of emotional stoicism, physical toughness, anti-femininity, self-sufficiency and risk-taking which are all characteristics defining traditional masculine ideology supporting a culture where police officers have concerns regarding appearing weak, undependable, or unable to remain emotionally neutral in the eyes of their fellow officers or even the public they police (Haecker, 2017).

In this context Connells hegemonic masculinity as a theoretical framework for this particular study was used in a way that not only examined social norms related to masculinity but also the views of individual male police officers or a group of male police officers, their values and attitudes and further provoked a reflection on their help-seeking behaviours. In this study hegemonic masculinity amongst Swati male police officers was viewed as a system that keeps male police in a collectively dominant position over female police and in competitive relations to other laymen coming at a cost for Eswatini male police officers in terms of their help-seeking behaviours and quality of life. Faced with an ideal where masculinity is prioritised, male police officers find it harder to seek mental healthcare and engage in preventive activities (Burns, 2020).

3.4 Criticisms of hegemonic masculinity

Connell's articulation of hegemonic masculinity as widely used as it is, has also found itself subjected to a lot of criticisms over the years. This means the concept has not been without problems. Because of the widespread application of Connell's hegemonic masculinity in many and various ways the term has been subjected to its conceptual and empirical weakness

(Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Other researchers view Connell's description of hegemonic masculinity as "a configuration of gender practice" rather than a type of masculinity as per its use (Hearn, 2004). Additional researchers further point out that the concept of hegemonic masculinity is unclear as it fails to articulate the autonomy of the gender system (Donaldson, 1993).

In their works, Moller (2007) and Wetherell and Edley (1998) proposed that Connell's idea of hegemonic masculinity occurring within broader gender orders negates a detailed account of how 'slippery' masculine identities are. According to these criticisms Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity lacks critical views of contemporary hegemony as the concept has generally been employed in a too restricted way making the focus on masculinity too narrow (Hearn, 2004).

Even with so many criticisms there have been other frameworks for analysing masculinity which support Connell's hegemonic masculinity. One such framework being Courtenay's (2000) relational theory of gender and men's health which postulates that men's health seeking behaviours and philosophies are demonstrations of their masculine identity and dependent on their adherence to contemporary prevailing masculine ideals.

3.5 Summary

In summary, this section highlighted how social constructionism is established on the assumption that there are multiple realities. A further elaboration on the constructions of knowledge and about perceived reality that arises from social interactions and processes entrenched in language was delved into. With this content I was able to bring into perspective the interconnection between social construction and masculinity and how these constructs interwoven together come to play during the formulation of help-seeking behaviours amongst male police officers as influenced culture and other social constructs.

The theoretical framework discussed identified four basic relations amongst masculinities with hegemonic masculinity being the most dominant. Connells's standpoint on hegemonic masculinity looks at the gendered nurture in which males reproduce masculinity norms and gendered behaviour. In understanding the views and honouring the complexity of hegemonic masculinity, a deep sense of understanding why men in the police behave in certain ways can be clarified.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Overview

The research methodology chapter provides a detailed interpretation of how the research was conducted. For this study the strategy of enquiry was qualitative, with the personal views and opinions of police officers in the REPS forming primary sources of data in this study. To begin this chapter, the aim and objectives of this study were outlined. Followed by an overview of the research questions and research design. The specific research methods and designs, including sampling methods, data collection techniques, and analytical methods, were discussed. This included the selection of participants, an outline of how data was collected, analysed and interpreted. The chapter concludes with a further examination of the ethical considerations of the study and a reflexive account of my position as ‘the researcher’ was briefly considered.

4.2 Aim and objectives of the study

This study set out to ascertain the role of masculinity in help-seeking behaviours of male police officers using a sample of 10 English speaking male police officers permanently employed by the REPS. The main objectives of the study were to explore how masculinity influences the help-seeking behaviours of male police officers in the REPS. Furthermore this study aimed to understand the peculiar construction and constitution of masculinity/ies amongst male police officers of the REPS, to explore how male police officers of the REPS understand help-seeking behaviour in gendered terms and finally the study also attempted to understand how the peculiar construction of masculinity/ies amongst male police officers in the REPS influences their help-seeking behaviours.

4.3 Research question and sub-questions

4.3.1 Main research question

To meet the study objectives the following primary question was formulated to guide this study: How does masculinity influence the help-seeking behaviours of male police officers in the REPS? (See Appendix B).

4.3.2 Sub-questions

The following sub-questions were taken into consideration to help answer the main research question

1. How are masculinity/ies amongst male police officers in the REPS constructed and constituted?
2. How do male police officers of the REPS understand help-seeking behaviour in gendered terms?
3. How does the peculiar construction of masculinity/ies amongst male police officers in the REPS influence their help-seeking behaviour?

4.4 Research approach and design

This study adopted a qualitative research approach to explore and understand the influence of masculinity on the help-seeking behaviours of male police officers. According to Creswell (2014) each and every type of social research problem calls for a specific approach. Qualitative research approach is a research approach for exploring and understanding the meanings individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2014). The choice of research approach was informed by the researcher's interest to ascertain the influence that masculinity has on the help-seeking behaviours of male police officers (Creswell, 2014). Thereby, exploring and understanding the meaning

police officers ascribe to masculinity as opposed to the quantitative approach which seeks to quantify the problem or issue (Creswell, 2014).

For a concept of masculinity to emerge, women and men ought to be treated as bearers of polarised character types (Connell, 2000). Attention to historical specificity and historical change illustrated the social construction of masculinity thereby guiding this study (Loseke, 2003). Guided by social constructionism, the research study was able to answer the main research question as outlined in this study. Social constructionism primarily concerns itself with how knowledge is constructed and mainly takes the position that this occurs in social processes (Loseke, 2003).

4.5 Sampling

4.5.1 Sampling method

For purposes of this study a purposive sampling technique was used. Purposive sampling can be described as a method that selects membership of the sample based on the objective(s) of the research (Willig, 2013). The study's main objective was to explore how masculinity influences the help-seeking behaviours of male police officers in the REPS, therefore inclusion criteria was used. The sample was homogeneous in nature as the research sample shared the same characteristics (Creswell, 2014). The sampling choice provided the researcher with the ability to gain insight and learn about the issue under study more in-depth (Creswell, 2014).

4.5.2 Sampling criteria

The issue of how many participants are enough in qualitative research is a very much debated issue, although a number of research scholars recommend guidance and suggest anywhere from 5 to 50 participants as adequate (Dworkin, 2012), thus the researcher's choice of 10

participants. This sample size was ideal in that it endorsed the collection of rich and in-depth information from the research participants allowing the interpretation of views to be done in great detail without overwhelming the researcher (Smith, 2014).

Interview participants were recruited using criteria specific to the research study. First approach was done through a short presentation during the morning assembly, where only male police officers were requested to remain was conducted. During the assembly the aim and objectives of the study were explained. The criteria for this study included English language proficiency (participants needed to be fluent in English). The inclusion of participants fluent in English was done so as to aid with making the transcription of the unstructured interview process easier. Secondly, the participants had to be of the male sex, because I was only concerned with investigating the views of male police officers in the REPS. Lastly participants needed to be police officers in the REPS who have been confirmed as fully fledged police officers (and not on probation).

The main target for this sampling was not to represent the whole population but to get sufficient information on the influence of masculinity on male police officers help-seeking behaviours. Worth noting is that participant characteristics such as age, rank and years of service were not included in the selection criteria as these were argued to not necessarily impact the overall outcome of the research study. The inclusion criteria for the study ensured homogeneity of the participants thus including only those men who were best suited to answering the research question.

4.5.3 Selection of participants

Participants were recruited from the Matsapha and Mbabane police stations respectively. The choice of stations was motivated by the convenience of police clinics next to these stations which house PTC's who provide mental health services. This was done under the

assumption that police officers in these stations had easy access to PTC's. During the morning assembly in each of the 2 stations where the study objectives were explained officers who volunteered were requested to register their names and contact details. The names were only for the researcher's use, for the sole purpose of reference as it would aid in creating rapport. The sample size for the study included ten (10) male police officers who were chosen on condition they met the inclusion criteria and were readily available. The number of participants also took into account time constraints as well as ongoing logistical challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic because participants were classified 'essential workers' and their time to participate having to be carefully negotiated.

Table 1: Background information about participants

Participant	Race/ Ethnicity	Age	Rank	Years of service	Department
Participant 1	Black/Swati	52	Sergeant	25	Administration
Participant 2	Black/Swati	39	Constable	15	Criminal Investigation department (CID)
Participant 3	Black/Swati	53	Assistant Inspector	31	Police Health
Participant 4	Black/Swati	37	Constable	6	Domestic violence and child protection services (DCS)
Participant 5	Black/Swati	41	Constable	17	Enquiry File
Participant 6	Black/Swati	31	Constable	2	CID
Participant 7	Black/Swati	35	Constable	5	General duty (GD)
Participant 8	Black/Swati	33	Sergeant	9	GD
Participant 9	Black/Swati	28	Constable	2	GD
Participant 10	Black/Swati	46	Assistant Superintendent	16	Support staff

4.5.4 Sampling limitations

While the use of convenience sampling allows the researcher to purposively select participants through non-probability sampling the method proves to be limited in the sense that the sample is not representative of the larger population making findings not to be generalisable (Etikan et al., 2016). Another notable limitation was that of rank and department, even though they were not part of the inclusion criteria, the participants were mostly young police officers with lower ranks⁸. Only one senior ranked⁹ officer was part of the study. With regards to the departments, not all departments were represented in the sample. With that noted, the data collected may not reflect the general views of all male police officers in the different departments and of all ranks across the REPS.

4.6 Data collection

In any research study data collection is very important because if the data is collected wrongly it can lead to invalid results. In this study the researcher used unstructured interviews to collect data. Unstructured in-depth interviews were the most suitable for the study because they allowed the researcher to gather the views and understandings of male police officers on the issue and further allowed the exploration of individual constructions and perceptions in rich detail (Creswell, 2014).

Unstructured interviews were chosen for this study because the researcher's intention was for the participants to be able respond freely, allowing them to express themselves in their own ways and at their own pace (Corbin & Morse, 2003). This is aided by the fact that unstructured interviews, although guided by the central and overarching research question, promote a conversational platform of exchange in the interview space, which

⁸ Lower ranks refer to officers ranking as constable, sergeant and assistant inspector.

⁹ Refers to ranks from inspector and above.

provides research participants the conversational space to bring their own systems of meaning-making and perspective to interview exchange (Gray, 2009).

The study aimed to gather in-depth information without utilising a defined set of research questions, but instead relied on the main research question, sub-questions and study objectives as a guide. This was done so as to ensure that participants fully express themselves without being restricted by a set of questions. Since the researcher and participants were well aware of each other deviating from the research subject was likely, therefore in times of deviating away from the main research interest the interviewer was careful to ensure that participants were refocused on the key subject through the use of gentle prompts orientated by the research question (Gray, 2009).

As the interviews were conducted by a female researcher and participants were male police officers, data distortion could have occurred due to participant's reluctance to share their true feelings and views (Creswell, 2014). To help alleviate the mentioned problem, the study only used face-to-face unstructured interviews because structured interviews would have been restrictive in eliciting and meeting the desired goals especially for this particular group of participants. Unstructured interviews contributed to limiting biasness because they exhibit an almost complete freedom in terms of content and structure which enables the researcher to gather most of the information they need freely (Creswell, 2014).

4.7 Procedure

The interviews started with the researcher introducing herself to the participants. She informed participants of her role during the research process as well as her expectations from them. The researcher then reassured participants of confidentiality after which the researcher informed participants of the contents of the information sheet and confirmed that the participants fully understood it. The information sheet (see Appendix C) was given

to those participants who voluntarily agreed to take part in the research study prior to the interview to afford them time to become familiar with the expectations thus making them feel more relaxed and prepared for the interview. The information sheet did not require participants' names to ensure response anonymity, and encouraged honest answers from participants.

On the day of the interviews, informed consent forms were given to the participants so they could provide signed permission for participation in the study. Interviews were conducted at the participants' respective police stations boardrooms and designated offices to ensure confidentiality, privacy and a relaxed environment. The researcher was careful to also confirm with participants whether they still wanted to take part in the study or not.

The interview process then began with a generic question, and that encouraged the respondents to speak freely about the topic (Almeida et al., 2017). The in-depth interviews provided the researcher with rich information and it offered the opportunity to ask follow-up questions, to probe further, justify previous answers, and establish a connection between several topics (Hashemnezhad, 2015).

Although the interviews were unstructured, a focal theme was employed to initiate and guide the interview discussion so as to ensure it remained largely orientated to the research question and that the research objective(s) were met. To avoid going off track during the interview questions were centred on the research study objectives. All the objectives of the study could be answered through the central research question because gender, masculinity and help-seeking behaviour in the study are intertwined. Thus, interview questions therefore aimed to answer the main research question: *How does masculinity influence the help-seeking behaviours of male police officers in the Royal Eswatini Police Service?*

To ensure that rapport was built during the interviews I was accommodating to the participants, very welcoming and I made sure I smile. Witty conversations and a subtle tone allowed the participants to relax and settle into the interviews. Barriers, such as tables, between the researcher and the participant were removed to create a more intimate environment. During the interviews I dressed appropriately (semi-formal) in a way that was not provocative towards the participants. Since this method involved an extended length of time spent with the interviewees, rapport between the researcher and interviewees was enhanced. The corresponding understanding and confidence between researcher and participant led to in-depth and accurate information (Hashemnezhad, 2015).

Each interview was not expected to last more than 90 minutes and all interviews were conducted in English. Interviews were audio recorded and in addition the researcher made notes of key information from participants. Permission to conduct the interviews had been sought from the REPS National Commissioner of Police (NATCOM) to conduct the study and in case of harm post trauma counselling was available.

4.8 Advantages and disadvantages of unstructured interviews

Unstructured interviews, although a method of choice for this study, has certain disadvantages, one being that unstructured interviews are time-consuming and use more resources when compared to a structured interviews which follow a sequence. Because of the questioning style, which is open ended, unstructured interviews generate large data sets which is often difficult to categorise and analyse. Subsequently, because of lack of standardisation unstructured interviews are considered non-reliable and highly subjective, unlike structured interviews. (Creswell, 2014; Gray, 2009).

Contrary to that, unstructured interviews in the context of this study were advantageous in that were used to gather information on complex issues like masculinity and

help-seeking behaviours. This is because unstructured interviews adopt a conversational approach which promotes rapport between the researcher and the interviewee, allowing the interviewee to reveal and share important information. In addition to that, unstructured interviews are more flexible and comfortable than structured interviews. The researcher, in the case of this study, through unstructured interviews had the ability to formulate and phrase new questions and research hypotheses based on new information provided, which would have not been the case in structured interviews because they follow a strict sequence of pre-planned questions (Creswell, 2014; Gray, 2009).

4.9 Quality of the research

Unlike in quantitative research, in qualitative research no instruments with established metrics about validity and reliability are used. The researcher did not just rely on the notes taken during the in-depth interviews but also relied on audio recordings that were transcribed verbatim by the researcher. The quality of the research therefore became a pertinent issue to be addressed as the researcher was at risk of being biased. To counter being biased, ensuring trustworthiness then became an important step in the research study. Guba's trustworthiness criteria in pursuit of a good quality research was employed in this study (Guba, 1981). It states that a research study should adhere to principles of credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability in order to ensure quality in a narrative study (Guba, 1981; Shenton 2004). Below is how the research ensured trustworthiness:

4.9.1 Credibility

In ensuring credibility, the researcher's motive was to answer the question of 'How congruent the findings were with reality?' To achieve this, the line of questioning pursued was one that was unstructured using open ended-questions which allowed participants to

freely express themselves. During the interview the researcher would probe participants' answers for further clarification of statements. This was done to ensure consistency in what was said by participants and what the researcher understood and transcribed. The use of voluntary participation ensured that only those participants who were willing to take part in the study took part ensuring the receipt of relevant data from willing participants. The researcher further ensured that masculinity as the phenomena under study received detailed description. As per Silverman (2000), I was finally able to relate the findings to an existing body of research.

4.9.2 Transferability

Transferability will be enhanced by doing a thorough job of describing the research context and the assumptions that are central to the research. Ultimately, the results of this study can be understood within the context of the characteristics of the REPS and also the geographical area (Eswatini) in which the fieldwork was carried out (Shenton, 2004). The data base or research participant's demographic information as provided in the study will assist in making transferability judgements of this study.

4.9.3 Confirmability

According to Shenton (2004), the concept of confirmability is the qualitative researcher's comparable concern to objectivity. Steps were taken to ensure that the research findings were the result of the experiences and ideas of the male police officers interviewed, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher. The first thing I did was acknowledge that being biased in this research study was inevitable. With that in mind I was able to identify the possibility of being biased as an interviewer (interviewer bias).

To ensure that the research findings were the result of the experiences and ideas of the participants and not my own I made sure that I plan my study early. I was clear about the aim and goals of the study and how to achieve them. Having been granted all the requisite permissions when collecting the data I made sure that I kept detailed reports of all the interviews. The use of open-ended questions throughout the interviews contributed towards receiving direct answers from the participants. All audio recording and notes taken during the interviews were repeatedly reviewed and transcribed. All data collected, records and recordings will be kept for future reference so as to provide an audit trail ensuring that the researcher did not include personal motivations that could have in turn skewed the interpretation of the participants' accounts (Shenton, 2004). Finally, all limitations of the study were included in the report.

4.9.4 Dependability

To address the issue of dependability, the processes of the study was reported in detail, this will in turn enable future researchers to repeat the work, if not necessarily to gain the same results (Shenton, 2004). The research supervisor's engagement in the reviewing and examination of the research process and data analysis ensured consistency of the findings, consistency of findings informs the dependability of the study (Shenton, 2004).

4.10 Ethical considerations

The research conducted involved human participants therefore the researcher was obliged to observe ethical considerations through respecting the rights of all participants, observing their needs, considering their values and desires as well. Ethical principles were considered during the formulation, conduct, and analysis of research data. The participants were provided with information letters whose aim was to provide information on the purpose and

integrity of the research, the anonymity of participation, right to informed consent, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The researcher also ensured that participants could have access to psychological assistance should they at any time during the research encounter psychological trauma. The University of Pretoria's ethical guidelines were used to ensure that ethical considerations were all met according to standard.

4.10.1 Participant autonomy

Male police officers who participated in the study were presented with a participant information sheet to communicate the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of it, and their right to withdraw at any time during the study as indicated in Appendix C.

4.10.2 Participant anonymity and data confidentiality

Recorded audio responses, signed consent forms and pseudo name coding was used to manage the data results. During the course of the study data was only available to the researcher and supervisor. On completion of the study electronic data was loaded on to a CD which has been stored, along with hard copies of data, in a secure location at the University of Pretoria, Department of Psychology. Any remaining data stored on computer has been destroyed.

4.10.3 Informed consent

Informed consent forms were supplied to participants. Only participants who had returned their forms and signed to confirm their participation and understanding participated in the study (see Appendix D).

4.10.4 Protection from harm

If research interviews caused distress to participants, a post-interview counselling or debriefing platform was offered to the participant, without charge through the assistance of the REPS Director of Health and Wellness (see Appendix E).

4.10.5 Ethical clearance

Prior to data collection the study was respectively vetted and approved by the University of Pretoria Human Research Ethics Committee before collecting any data and ethical clearance obtained from the University of Pretoria Human Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix F).

4.10.6 Organisational and security clearance

As a researcher, it was a prerequisite that I obtain all the necessary permissions to conduct the research study within the REPS. Without permission from the NATCOM, station commanders and heads of departments would have denied me access to police officers. Having sent a request to conduct the study within the organisation the NATCOM granted me permission to conduct the study on condition that I submit a full research report on completion of the study (see Appendix G).

4.10.7 Research dissemination

The researcher will provide a full research report with findings to the REPS. There is also the possibility for the results to be published, but this will be subject to further approvals being granted by the REPS.

4.11 Data analysis

According to Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis can either be realist, essentialist or it can be constructionist. This study was conducted within a constructionist framework as earlier mentioned (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Kimmel, 2004). Using TA within a constructionist framework theorised the socio-cultural contexts and structural conditions that enabled the exploration of individual perceptions of male police officers in the REPS (Braun & Clarke, 2013). To analyse the data the method of TA was utilised. The reason for using this method was that it provided an easy path for identifying commonalities in the subject field. Data analysis was done following guidelines provided by Braun and Clarke in his six phase approach (2013).

4.11.1 Thematic analysis six phase approach

According to Braun and Clarke (2006) the six-phase approach includes: (a) familiarising oneself with the data through reading and re-reading and listening to the interview recordings; (b) generating initial codes; (c) searching for themes; (d) reviewing themes by checking the participants' themes against data set; (e) defining and naming themes through identifying significant key features; and (f) producing a scholarly report of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

4.11.1.1 Step 1: Familiarity with the data

To familiarise myself with the data I had to spend time understanding the content of the data from the interview audio recordings. Data was collected in the months of September and October 2020 after obtaining ethical clearance from the University of Pretoria. The research interviews where data was collected consisted of 10 one-on-one interviews with participants representing male police officers in the REPS. The interviews were structured in such a way

that the researcher was able to extract rich information from participants through the use of open-ended questions which allowed the researcher to probe and clarify questions and answers during the interview.

To ensure the researcher was familiar and accurate with the content, the researcher listened to audio recordings more than once. The short field notes done by the researcher were also reviewed and compared with the audio recordings. Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim. The transcriptions initially took about two months because each interview required that it be listened to more than once in order to ensure that participants are accurately transcribed. An additional month for listening to the interviews was added to ensure I thoroughly understood the data content.

4.11.1.2 Step 2: Generating the initial codes

Initial codes were generated through identifying extracts of data to code. The data was coded using inductive and deductive methods (Patton, 2002). I then wrote down the codes and marked the text associated with it. Having generated the initial codes I then had to search for themes. During the transcription process, in the event that material was omitted from the transcript an ellipsis (...) was used. Direct quotations from participants are indicated with italics and participant names are indicated by participant numbers 'participant 1'. To ensure that all transcriptions were not polluted an additional software application called Otter, was used to directly translate voice to text as extra assistance.

4.11.1.3 Step 3: Searching for themes

A theme "captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). During the primary review of the data collected, an initial set of codes

and themes was generated based on the literature and the preliminary review of the data. During this process, I had to carefully review the coded data to extract similar and overlapping codes so that they reflect meaningful patterns in the data. A single theme was constructed using all the codes relating to the research question.

4.11.1.4 Step 4: Reviewing themes

In the fourth phase I had to review the developing themes in relation to the coded data. I read all the data once again in an attempt to ensure that my themes captured the important elements of the data. During this process codes and themes were reviewed for prevalent patterns the participants expressed. These common themes were translated into major findings and were categorised accordingly.

4.11.1.5 Step 5: Defining and naming the themes

Next, I had to define and name themes, during this process I interpreted the data and ultimately connected the themes to the research questions as well as my research framework. Each theme was given a name. During this stage I came up with five themes.

4.11.1.6 Step 6: Generating a report

Finally, in stage six I had to produce the report, which in my case was a dissertation. In the dissertation the content was not just about describing what I found amongst the police officers, but I had to go beyond and illustrate how the views of police officers about masculinity relate to their help-seeking behaviours thus also answering the research questions in the study.

4.12 Reflexivity

According to Alase (2017) as well as Smith and Osborn (2003), reflexivity in a research study involves acknowledging the role of the researcher's personal values, assumptions, biographical influences and experiences throughout the research process. Reflexivity is utmost important because the researcher's views and assumptions inform the analysis process and interpretations of findings (Harper & Thompson, 2012). It was therefore important for me as a researcher to reflect on my own assumptions about why male police officers are reluctant to use mental health services provided to them by the organisation. As a female police trauma counsellor in a male dominated organisation myself, I was cognisant of the help-seeking trends in the organisation.

At times I felt emotional and my own assumptions attempted to distort the male police officers views during the interviews. As a result I had to reflexively remind myself that my role here was not that of a trauma counsellor, but researcher. This was not an easy task as I was not an experienced researcher. Since reflexivity involves keeping an introspective and critical account the dialogue that occurs throughout the research process, it was important for me to do some reflection before each interview and after every interview. I had to remind myself of my role and purpose of the interview as suggested by Tobin & Begley (2004).

My reasons for choosing this topic were motivated by my profession as a PTC in the REPS. I chose this topic, because it would allow me to pursue my academic interest as well as contribute towards improving mental health services in the REPS through contributions from male police officers views. My own professional journey allowed me to have better access to organisational records relevant to the research topic. Because I was familiar with the participant's line of work, being a former police officer myself, it was easier to build rapport with the participants. However I had to keep reflecting on my role as a researcher

and further be cautious not to impose my views on the participant's as well as be careful not to create a negative image of the department I am a part of. At times this proved very challenging because I would occasionally be tempted to correct misconceptions that participants had about the mental health services hence I had to exercise a lot of self-restraint. This made the data collection and analysis emotionally exhausting.

Even though my perceptions and experiences may have affected how I interacted with the participants, throughout the research process I attempted to not let my demographics (especially my gender) affect the interview process or the rapport I had with the participants. There were also instances through the interviews where the participants would refer to males as being superior and not trusting mental health professionals and it was during these instances that I would find myself doing self-introspection. To the effect that the comments by participants gave me the sense that participants were sending a message directly to me as a female mental health professional, although my perceptions have no credibility. I had to concentrate on the information I was being given by the participants and respect their views as they contributed to the success of the study. With each interview I was able to reflect and appreciate my motivation behind conducting the study.

Culture played a huge role during the research study. From the researcher's personal experience of the police culture, the police organisation ascribes to the masculine culture which venerates men over women. There was also the risk of resistance as the police organisation is a closed unit and anyone ununiformed is likely to be considered an outsider. This was particularly difficult for me as a female, non-uniformed employee, turned researcher as I anticipated resistance from the participants. To counter resistance I had to regress my role from being the female PTC they know to that of an ordinary research student in need of their expert experiences.

All the participants in the study were black Swati men. The participants shared homogeneous cultural beliefs where a man is regarded as being superior to a woman in socio-cultural and familial roles and responsibilities. Being a Swati woman myself and understanding the dynamics of culture in my country, it was my responsibility to balance the situation in order to ensure that I receive the best results. In this regard, I often found myself having to delicately navigate the interviews as gendered interactions in which power relations and dynamics were always already present and operating. I found the use of open-ended questions a very useful approach in helping balance, on one hand, my need for open and honest data from participants while, on the other hand, participants' gendered needs to subtly assert some form of control or authority within the interaction. These open-ended questions allowed the participants to feel that they were in control and were able to largely direct the interview as they assumed expert roles in the research study, thus participation was encouraged.

The research process has helped me grow and understand my own influences on the mental health profession. I have been able to explore and evaluate my own input during counselling sessions with clients. I am now more gender sensitive and this has helped me develop my counselling skills. As highlighted by Cutcliffe (2003) the researcher's reflections are rather important to articulate.

4.13 Summary

Given the complex nature of masculinity and help-seeking behaviour investigating them has been methodologically challenging. The design of the study itself, gaining permissions, the actual interviews during data collection and the lengthy analysis was justly challenging in the context of the REPS. As discussed, the researcher ensured that the research study was trustworthy. During the interviews ethical considerations were taken into account and all

necessary permissions were sought. Having collected and analysed all the data the following chapter 5 presents and discusses the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Overview

This chapter represents the research findings and further discusses the findings as obtained from the in-depth interviews. In chapter 1, I stated that the study aims to answer the main research question of how masculinity influences the help seeking behaviours of male police officers in the REPS. In order to best address the research question during the interviews I focused on sub-objectives where I attempted to understand the peculiar construction and constitution of masculinity/ies amongst male police officers of the REPS. Secondly, I explored how male police officers of the REPS understand help-seeking behaviour in gendered terms. An assessment of how the peculiar construction of masculinity/ies amongst male police officers in the REPS influences their help-seeking behaviours was also done. Finally I explored other factors that have an effect on the help-seeking behaviours of male police officers in the REPS. The purpose of this chapter therefore, was to provide an illustration and understanding of each participants perceptions on how the social constructions of masculinity (especially hegemonic masculinity) influences the help-seeking behaviours of male police officers in the REPS.

Participants were encouraged to respond to unstructured open-ended questions in one-on-one interviews conducted at the police officers respective work stations. Interviews were audio recorded having received each participant's written and verbal consent. Once the data was collected through the in-depth interviews, data analysis was done following guidelines provided by Braun and Clarke (2013). During the data analysis process, five main themes were revealed with particular reference to personal views and perceptions as influenced by participants' socialisation, culture and ethnicity. The reliance on masculinity ideologies worked as both a personal and methodological tool used in structuring, clarifying

and supporting the findings of this study. Furthermore, data was linked to existing literature in an effort to extend existing knowledge as well as confirm or disconfirm the presented findings. Finally, this chapter will conclude by providing a brief summative overview of the discussed findings and summarise the identified main themes and subthemes.

5.2 Emerging themes and discussion

In this section an analysis and discussion of five primary themes alongside subthemes will be explored. A tabulated representation depicting a summary of the themes is illustrated. Table 2 represents the themes as they will be discussed. Each of the five themes represents the participant's views of experiencing masculinity. The data analysis generated five primary themes to represent participant's individual views: (1) *male police officers' views of masculinity*; (2) *male police officers' understanding of policing*; (3) *constructions of masculinity ideologies*; (4) *male police officers' perceptions on help-seeking* and (5) *masculinity and help-seeking*. Subthemes emerged from primary themes and were mentioned by participants at least once during the interviews. Below is a tabulated presentation of the themes in no particular order from the responses.

Table 2: Codes, subthemes and themes generated from the data

Codes	Subthemes	Main themes
<p>1. Being born male or having male genitals</p> <p>2. Being strong</p> <p>3. Being in control</p> <p>4. Has to do with being responsible,</p> <p>5. You can take care of your family, you are a leader, be able to give directions and ensure that the purpose of being together as a family is met.</p> <p>6. Being an 'alpha' male</p>	<p>1. Sex</p> <p>2. Physique</p> <p>3. Social roles</p>	<p><i>1. Male police officers' views of masculinity</i></p>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Everything to human kind 2. Problem solver 3. Being a protector 4. Ability to solve problems 5. Having confidence 6. Being in control 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sense of responsibility and purpose 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. <i>Male police officers' understanding of policing</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Men don't cry 2. Experience of gender in the family 3. Expectations by society 4. Influences from police culture 5. Male police are strong 6. To command respect you have to be aggressive 7. Men are superior to women 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family socialisation 2. Ethnic culture 3. Police culture 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. <i>Constructions of masculinity ideologies</i>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Weakness 2. Stigma & discrimination 3. Trust 4. Lack of information 5. Education 6. Improves wellbeing 7. Important 8. Self-esteem 9. Degrading 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sign of weakness 2. Degrading 3. Self-esteem 4. Importance of mental health 	<p><i>5. Male police officers' perceptions on help-seeking</i></p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Would rather die than seek help 2. Difficult to talk about emotions 3. Cannot be seen seeking help 4. Men don't talk about emotions 5. Can do it alone 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal values 2. Men and psychotherapy 3. Emotional stoicism 	<p><i>5. Masculinity and help-seeking</i></p>

The data was collected using unstructured one-on-one in-depth individual interviews. This part of the data presentation presents the responses of the participants alongside themes that were generated during the analysis of data collected. Only recurring ideas and themes will be presented. The five major themes that were generated during the data analysis and subthemes will be explored. Each of these themes are presented below.

5.2.1 Male police officers views of masculinity

There exists a number of views with regards to the perceptions police officers have of masculinity. Responding to questions regarding their views and understanding of what masculinity is, a large number of the participants reflected that masculinity has to do with biological sex, which is, being born 'male'. This can be supported by literature that ascertains that police work was a means whereby men differentiated masculinity from femininity. With that said, policing was viewed as a 'natural' preserve for men, implying the importance of biological sex, physique, and physical ability in masculinity and police work. This then explains the inference that masculinity, biological sex, and physique according to police are associated. (Silvestri, 2017).

A majority of the responses offered by the participants in this study were similar in nature and in line with my definition in this study. All participants indicated that they had been exposed to views congruent with the concept of hegemonic masculinity in that a majority of the participants in the study made reference to traditional masculine traits in their responses. Traditional masculine traits in the study were found to be characteristic of being biologically male. This finding was congruent with findings by O'Neil (2010), who discovered that a man is often defined by his masculinity level just as he is defined by his level of adherence to traditional male roles. In addition Connell (1995) also relays a

hegemonic form of masculinity similar to traditional male traits which are demonstrated through dominance, strength and violence amongst others.

The research participants shared different views on what masculinity is to them. Those views according to participants can be characterised as relating to (1) *sex*, (2) *physique* and (3) *personal or family abilities and responsibilities*. These are discussed in the next subsection.

5.2.1.1 Sex

Masculinity in this research study is associated with those values, behaviours and practices which exist in specific social locations which are commonly associated with biological males and biologically sexed male bodies (Itulua-Abumere, 2013). In light of this association, participants understanding of masculinity was illustrated by conceptualising masculinity the state of being male and having male genitalia and being proud of your sex. Illustrating this point, participant 2 expressed his view of masculinity by stating that:

“Masculinity, I understand is you are talking to a male person, being a male person to me is masculinity”.

Similarly, participant 4 shared his perceptions on masculinity extending his understanding beyond sex:

“In my understanding it has to do with the male gender...it has to describe and distinguish men from women, when I look at the word to me it has to do with power, the pride of being a man”.

Along those same lines participant 8's view of what masculinity was consistent with other participant's views stating that:

“Masculinity is the characteristics of the male sex”.

He later elaborated that masculinity had a lot to do with the way one was born and having male genitalia. His response to what he meant by male characteristics was conveyed in his answer as:

“The fact that I am a male makes it whole, the way you were made by God and not the way you see yourself that is having male organs.”

From this response one was able to deduce that the participant was of the idea that for one to be considered masculine he had to be biologically male. Such perceptions disregarded females who either identify as masculine or those who are transgendered and prefer to be identified as male.

In an attempt to emphasise his views of what masculinity is, participant 9 also made reference to masculinity having to do with being an ‘alpha male’ or ‘the pride of being a man’. The dominant or ‘hegemonic’ masculinity is that which epitomises the ‘patriarch’, or ‘alpha male’, typical of superhero action films (Flemming, 2015).

In the responses about their understanding of masculinity one could deduce that it would be complex to define and understand masculinity as an independent concept which explains why masculinity is best explained as an aspect of a larger entity as Connell once stated (Connell, 2005). The larger entity being gender and sex, wherein gender differentiates between males and females based on the traits they exhibit and sex differentiating according to biological makeup (Little, 2014).

In ascertaining participant’s views of masculinity, it was evident that sex and gender amongst REPS male police officers were used as classifications for distinguishing between masculinity and femininity. Ultimately conceptualising their understanding of masculinity as being rooted in biological theories.

5.2.1.2 Physique

Little (2014) reveals that men and women are not only differentiated by their biological sex, but that they are constantly engaged in a gender socialisation process where they are proxies of sex typed behaviours. In the participants' responses it emerged that police officers tend to explain masculinity as they experience it. As literature displays policing as a masculine profession (Silvestri, 2017), the celebration and valuing of masculine traits was evident in the responses, such as that of participant 4 who stated that:

“As a man I believe that I am strong enough”. He further went on to explain that men are expected to not only be strong enough but to be self- sufficient.

Participant 5 on the same perception expressed masculinity as:

“The ‘strongness’ of a male person, his thinking and everything”

On the other hand participant 7 said that:

“Masculinity is about having strength”. For this participant males were also expected to have the ability to handle anything they are faced with.

Participant 8 goes on to explain that men have power over everything, they give direction.

With these responses masculinity can be seen as being conceptualised as a power system, embedding itself in the realm of hegemonic masculinity which explains the recognition of ‘machismo’ and the cult of masculinity as dominating the occupational culture of policing (Silvestri, 2017). Just as Connell (1995) assigns traits like physical toughness, the same is evident in the views about masculinity amongst male police officers in the REPS.

5.2.1.3 Societal roles

Another aspect in police officers views of what masculinity is, were social roles. That is, views of masculinity were informed by what a person was expected to achieve or how a

person was expected to behave as an individual based on their sex. For example females are expected by society to be submissive towards their male counterparts thus harbouring the notion of patriarchy with men exercising power over women (Sultana, 2010). Originally the word patriarchy was used to refer to the power possessed by a father as the head of the household, which evolved to describe a set of social relations enabling men to dominate women (Asiyanbola, 2005). Within the patriarchy system differentiation on the basis of sex, females become subjected to severe constraints on their roles and activities as a means to ensure conformity to specified gender roles (Asiyanbola, 2005). Ascribing to the same was evident in REPS as officers' explanations of their views of masculinity encompassed social role specifications, wherein they were widely patriarchal in nature.

Some of the descriptors most commonly mentioned were that masculinity had to do with responsibilities, especially towards the family. For participants being a male or masculinity meant being responsible as a protector and provider of the family. A typical response by participant 6 of masculinity was that:

“When it comes to men masculinity has to do with being responsible, you can deal with every situation, you can take care of your family, you are a leader, be able to give directions and ensure that the purpose of being together as a family is met”.

One other response by participant 8 was that:

“Men have responsibilities of working hard, providing, men have power over everything. Men must give direction and men have the final say even in the family”

The findings demonstrated the dominant social roles that males have over females and other genders in society as per police officers views. Female police officers although present in the organisation appeared to be side-lined in the masculinity views expressed by male officers. This was evidenced by the lack of acknowledgement of other forms of masculinities by participants as they made no mention of them in their responses. To support this notion

Malamuth et al. (1991) stated that men are expected to adhere to specific, prescribed masculine gender roles that promote male dominance through a subordination and overall distrust of femininity.

As mentioned earlier REPS male officers disregard the fact that there are other possible sexualities in the police organisation. An example would be the likely presence of gay police officers who are more comfortable acting feminine, yet that does not make them 'females', they too are still categorised under 'male' officers instead of 'other sex'. In summary, male police officers in the REPS view masculinity as a socially constructed impression of what it means to be a man and how a man is expected to act in a given context. Thus creating an interconnection between being a man and masculinity, employing them as a single concept. It can therefore be argued that the men's social roles are closely linked to the attributes of masculinity.

Further explanations by participants often reflected how being in control, having the ability to solve their own and other people's problems and being confident was characteristic of being masculine dismissing any other forms of behaviour as characteristic. Participant 9 emphasised that:

"Masculinity is all about being able to lead, being able to take decisions".

Participant 10 also mentioned that:

"Men are expected to have control over everything".

This statement is related to the findings of Canham (2009) that control is a central aspect of the Western hegemonic masculinity. Levant et al. (2010) further displays the significance of the study's findings through displaying the desire for dominance and power in hegemonic masculinity. He refers to men's need to control others in order to achieve status. Therefore masculinity is expressed through the ability for one to express or display gender role

behaviours characteristic of a male. Males failing to display masculine traits could thus be considered less masculine or even feminine. (Koenig, 2018).

5.2.2 Male police officers views of policing

In their responses, participants also made reference to what a police officer is, namely, the expected traits or qualities of a police officer. Of interest during the interviews was that policing was closely attached to masculinity denoting that masculinity as understood in research dominates the police profession such that police work becomes tantamount or synonymous with masculine performance (Silvestri, 2017). Evidence of such can be seen in the discussion below.

5.2.2.1 Sense of responsibility and purpose

Bedi (2016) stated that the police uniform comes with certain responsibilities. Evidently so, findings in the study revealed that, to perform these responsibilities police were entitled with a certain degree of power irrespective of their gender or their rank. The power vested on police gives them the ability to perform their responsibilities, thereby giving them a sense of purpose which contributes towards them developing a form of superiority complex. This is a case whereby police officers tend to believe that their presence and services surpass those of others rendering them superior. Participants' depictions of what policing is, implicitly acknowledged the personal subjective connection between male officers and the superiority complex caused by the profession. Policing in the responses was not just about it being a profession but it was about the responsibility to serve and about that superior feeling of being needed. According to participant 4:

“Being a police officer to me is like being everything to human kind. When I say everything I mean from problem solver, as a police officer I believe I can solve any

problem...when a person comes to me, I tell myself that this person trusted me and there's nobody else besides me".

This reflected loyalty and commitment to the organisation and to the public they serve, irrespective of their views on what policing was to them.

Police officer responsibilities and duties were constructed to be associated with male capabilities and masculinity more broadly. Participants felt that a police officer was someone who was brave and could easily be regarded as a 'hero' and these were traits that could easily be associated with males rather than females, creating the notion that to be a police officer you need to be male. Being a biological male would then mean that one has to endorse hegemonic forms of masculinity without violating them (Good et al., 1989). This was reflected in participant 1's response where he stated that:

"...being a police officer you have to be brave, you have to show power every time, nowadays our female police officers they are too soft do not show any power and the society itself do not recognise them as police officers rather than ourselves. Because I can go and arrest a suspect as a male officer alone and the suspect will submit but a suspect would never submit to a female officer".

Participant 4 on the one hand shared that according to him female officers were not as strong as their male counterparts hence they always preferred to be partnered with a male colleague when on duty. On a similar note participant 8 when explaining police responsibilities in relation to male and female officers stated that:

"We can be in the same field or get the same field and get the same training but the fact remains women are weak biologically".

He went on to disclose that women had a role in the police organisation but not like male police officers.

These extracts of data therefore dismiss the idea of a gender balanced police organisation. Briefly it can be summarised that policing and masculinity are intertwined based on the shared experiences of the research participant's responses. Male police officers obviously feel that police work is the work of men and that women are not as effective in the profession. A similar finding by Silvestri (2017) supported this study where policing was found to be male dominated even to date, as no evidence was found of an organisation where women represent 50% of the officer police workforce. In conclusion, male police officers were expected to embrace a positive hegemonic view of masculinity which was characterised by courage or bravery and strength which participants assumed their female counterparts did not possess. Hence male police officers evidently defame females in policing, this can easily be attributed to gender roles within policing and the power struggle between males and females in policing.

5.2.3 Constructions of masculinity ideologies

Masculinity ideology in this study described an individual's internalisation of different belief systems regarding gender role norms (Addis & Mahalik, 2003). In this section a comprehensive summary of findings from participants on masculinity ideologies from their responses was conducted.

5.2.3.1 Family socialisation

The way masculinity ideologies are constructed vary across different cultures and historical periods (Kimmel, 2004). In Eswatini there is only one official ethnic culture, namely, the 'Swati culture', to which all Swati people are expected to conform to irrespective of their gender. For a majority of the participants, the messages they received while growing up within Swati culture and Swati households about gender were explicit to what it meant to be

a man, not only within the Swati culture, but, also within the REPS. According to Potgieter (2012) societal expectations inform gender performance. In the same study by Potgieter (2012) it was found that in the SAPS the construction and constitution of masculinity for male police officers was found to be culturally specific based on society's expectations. The same was found to be true in the responses obtained in this study. Participants revealed the role of socialisation in their construction of their masculine identity.

There appeared to be consistent generational endorsement of family socialisation and ethic culture ideologies (Swati culture) of masculinity in a majority of the participants. Participants in their responses revealed that growing up as young boys they were taught to always be physically strong, emotionally in control and to never talk about emotions as that would make them appear as weaklings. Participants referred to a Swati idiom often used in their childhoods *'Indvodza ayikhali'* meaning that a man never cries. Thereby emphasising emotional strength and control as a vital trait for a Swati male.

One example of a dominant response during the interviews was that growing up in the Swati culture the boy child was socialised into internalising the idiom that 'men don't cry' supporting other ideologies about masculinity that emerged during the interviews that portray men as strong, brave, resilient, responsible, and always in charge. One such example would be from participant 4 who stated that:

"It has to do with culture because I believe culture is the way of doing things, the way men believe they are made..."

In addition to this response participant 7 echoed on the socialisation of Swati men where he stated that:

"...when you grow up when you are still young our parents told us that men don't cry", a man is a man, he doesn't feel pain, men are strong..."

The same belief was shared by participant 9 who said:

“There’s this saying that says real men don’t cry...growing up in the family we would get whipped and they would tell you don’t cry”.

Participant 8 in his conversation further mentioned that:

“Culturally men must give direction, a man has the final say even in the family”.

Just as Goodey (1997) acknowledges the existence of a fearless male from childhood onwards, male police officer’s ideologies of how masculinity is constructed is established early in their childhood through socialisation. In the Swati household it is clear that the boy child and the girl child are socialised differently and each is taught particular ways of what is expected of them in relation to their gender. The male child is taught not to show emotion whilst experiencing pain. These gender-differentiated and sex-specific ways of understanding not only oneself in terms of Swati culture, but oneself as gendered (that is male or female) within Swati culture, are brought into the REPS by the men who choose to serve and, thereafter, into their training and work as police officers.

5.2.3.2 Ethnic culture

Men are expected in the Swati culture to be providers and protectors for their families, which is something they learn from their upbringing. Males are expected to contribute to the upholding of predominant masculinity norms by making sure they don’t act outside the expected norms as that can be a sign of weakness. To support this view participant 3 in his response mentioned that:

“It is the culture of us as Swazis that in a setting like at home....once we face any problem, we believe that once we go to our father the problem will be solved, so as man we believe we are problem solvers...and if I fail I then feel that I’m not men enough”.

To be seen as a complete and worthy of being called a man one was expected to ascribe to the cultural expectations and responsibilities of the Swati male. Assuming that if one is incapable of fulfilling the cultural expectations of what is expected of a Swati male they could easily be discriminated against or ridiculed by society. This was revealed in a comment by participant 10 who stated that:

“Men do cry internally not outside because of fear of being laughed at” he further said in his statement *“...it is difficult for males to share their emotions because men are expected to have control over their emotions”*.

Furthermore, one other aspect that materialised was that of non-emotionality. Traditional Swati men are expected not to share their emotions and to deal with issues themselves. Talking about emotions for men was seen as going against traditional masculine norms. One participant shared that as a man he believed that he was strong enough to handle anything and solve anything that he came across and that talking to someone be it a family member, friend or a colleague would make him appear as not being man enough. As a result he stated that it did not matter what he was going through he preferred to keep it within himself with the hope that he can solve the problem. In one of his responses participant 4 said:

“I believe that I am strong enough to handle any problem...I do not need the help of anybody else not even my sisters, brothers, anybody else...”

This reinforced the idea that gender specific roles are influenced onto boys or girls through language (Brown, 2007). These responses confirmed the vital role culture plays in formulating masculinity ideologies. In a Swati family it is the family that controls, determines and safeguards family members' actions, just as alluded to by Ademiluka (2018) and Shabangu and Madiba (2019).

5.2.3.3 Police culture

Police training sets the precedent for police culture. During training police recruits are accustomed to the need to demonstrate tough and forceful behaviours, implied by an aggressive, harsh, competitive and performance driven leadership style from their trainers (Andersen, 2006). Andersen (2006) proceeds to state that it is during these trainings that male police officers get to distinguish masculinity from femininity and in turn embracing policing as a male profession, as women are deemed weak and unsuited for policing. Despite the fact that police training was the same for both males and females and that the police cadre now accommodates both sexes, for male officers it is easy to assume that nothing can deter the aspect that women are biologically weak and unsuited for the police profession.

Some participants revealed that being a police officer was more than just a profession it was a way of life. This could be seen in a statement by participant 4 who mentioned that:

“Being a police officer is more like being a father at home”.

A number of forces in the police culture shaped their beliefs about masculinity. From the responses it was clear that they considered their values as male police officers to be products of police training. As police officers, respondents revealed that they were trained to be physically strong, mentally and emotionally strong and to never show signs of weakness. Police officers are trained to be responsible and are wired into being able to attend any situation without failure which could be linked to the same values that are instilled by the Swati culture with regards to masculinity. Evidence of this could be seen in the following extracts. Participant 1 in his responses shared that:

“As an old police officer we were trained that as a police officer you need to be brave, no matter the situation as a police officer you don’t cry”.

To support this participant 2 also mentioned that:

“As a police officer you are expected to be strong physically, mentally and emotionally”. Participant 4 also mentioned being a problem solver as characteristic of being a police officer which is typical of traits expected of a Swati male.

More evidence was from participant 5’s statement who shared that:

“Police are trained to be confidential, so they keep things to themselves”.

Police culture focuses on the similarity of police officers' attitudes, values, and norms (Paoline, 2014). According to Fox et al. (2012), police work can be associated with fatigue from shift work, psychological stress or trauma and exposure to violent crimes to list a few. It is these work conditions that respondents referred to during their responses on how the police culture informs their ideologies on masculinity. Other traits that were associated with masculinity from the above extracts were that police officers from training were groomed to observe confidentiality and this manifested not only on a professional level but even in their own personal lives.

Furthermore one participant stated that as male police officers the chances of experiencing gruesome or rather traumatic incidents was very high, especially for male police officers. Participant 1 in his response revealed that:

“We have a high chance of experiencing gruesome situations than female police officers”

Thus, denoting that male police officers tend to be assigned to duties that are more likely to expose them to traumatic scenes. This reflects job assignment imbalance resulting from perceptions about each genders’ abilities in policing.

Police culture around the world has been criticised by many scholars for being very masculine, politically conservative, communally isolated and also characterised by extreme loyalty and commitment to the policing cadre (Burns & Buchanan, 2020). During the interviews the researcher observed the pride and commitment from participants from the

way they expressed themselves. There seemed to be a lot of passion in their voices as they spoke about their profession, one that could not be easily documented into words. The domination of masculinity was supported by a participant 1 who stated that:

“Ok so as male police officers we dominate the organisation, yes the organisation can say that it is 50/50 but males dominate...”

More evidence of such had been revealed in a conversation with the REPS human resource officer who stated that like many police organisations, the REPS has a relatively small percentage of female employees if compared to males, with the REPS having only 33% of female police officers (I.S. Nhlengethwa, personal communication, February 10, 2020). To support this evidence of a gender imbalance in policing Silvestri (2017) asserted that there was no evidence of an organisation where women represented 50% of a police workforce. Policing can thus be viewed as a culturally masculine profession in that its organisational structures, processes and practices are predominantly male oriented. One unique aspect that was predominant in the answers was that male police officers were expected to be fast thinkers and to do more work than their female counter parts and also support their female colleagues on top of taking care of themselves in the line of duty. Despite participant 4’s expression of respect towards female officers, his perception was that they were not as strong as male officers. According to him, female police officers were weak partners who could be easily traumatised. He made reference to a crime scene he attended with a female colleague stating that:

“We once attended a scene where a car was burning, when we approached the scene she ran straight to me and hid her face in my chest so that tells me that she can easily be traumatised so obviously she can easily be convinced to go for counselling”

Earlier on in the interview participant 1 had mentioned that:

“I won’t take the female officer as a counterpart who we are at par with at our level, I feel like all the time I have an upper hand than her”

This statement therefore stressed that for masculinity to be best understood it had to be studied in contrast to femininity because during the interviews participants often made reference to their female colleagues when doing contrasts. This could be seen as an acknowledgement of the existence of only two categories of gender amongst male Swati police officers, males and females dispelling any other forms of gender.

Because counselling is attributed to weakness it is then ascribed to female traits promoting the subordination of women police. Participant 4 stated said:

“Seeking help is a sign of weakness ...men don’t want to be told what to do”.

Participant 5 in his interview mentioned that:

“Seeking help is a sign of weakness, be it it’s a professional or not” he further went on to say *“Female officers seek help easily”*. This promotes the feeling and desire to maintain dominance for male officers through avoiding appearing weak. This can be seen in Connell’s definition of hegemonic masculinity which legitimises patriarchy and guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women (Connell, 1995).

On another note, special training processes are employed during the initiation of new officers into policing culture in an effort to ensure that officers are loyal and committed to their organisation (Burns & Buchanan, 2020). Evidence of such in the REPS was noted in participant 3’s statement where he stated that:

“Police are trained to be secretive”.

Loyalty to the organisation is signified by the inauguration of police officers into office where they also sign a confidentiality policy. Echoing participant 3 was participant 5 who further stated that:

“Police are trained to be confidential, so they are trained to keep things to themselves”. Therefore for participants masculinity was deeply embedded in their capability to maintain confidentiality as trained in the police context. Stressing the influence of police culture and training in the formulation of ideologies of masculinity by male police officers.

5.2.4 Male police officers perceptions on help-seeking

The data collected suggested that the way police officers conceptualise and understand masculinity, their perceptions of what a police officer is and how they are expected to behave and the ways their masculinity ideologies are constructed have an influence on police officers perceptions on help-seeking. Similar results were found in a study where it was concluded that conformity to traditional masculine norms had an effect on the mental health of officers which also had an impact on men’s attitudes to help-seeking behaviours (Seidler et al., 2016). From the interview responses, perceptions on help-seeking amongst male police officers in the REPS included issues with lack of information and lack of mental health education and awareness. Trust issues relating to PTC’s and the psychotherapy itself also emerged. Finally fear of stigma and discrimination resulting from seeking mental health services was also evident.

5.2.4.1 Feeling of vulnerability

Male police officers associate a model officer with not just physical toughness but with mental toughness as well. The participants revealed that as police officers they were regarded as bold heroes and according to them heroes don’t need help from others. Participant 5 said:

“Police are more like heroes, heroes do not need help”, whilst participant 8 shared that:

“Police are bold...they prefer to do things on their own and take decisions alone”.

For police officers seeking help renders them vulnerable. During the interviews participants described the need to appear mentally strong and emotionally in control at all times during their duties. Participant 2 mentioned that:

“...males are in control of their emotions”.

Similarly Participant 6 revealed that:

“The public thinks that the police don’t need help”.

This suggests that as a police officer one is expected to appear to be in control and not express emotions. Male police officers because of the traditional notion that policing is a masculine profession find themselves forced to exercise emotional strength even under extreme situations unlike their female counterparts. Participants expressed that when female officers are exposed to traumatic incidents it was acceptable for them to cry on male police officers shoulders while it would be the opposite when a male police officer did the same. Expressing feelings of not wanting to appear vulnerable in the presence of their female colleagues.

Participant 1 revealed that:

“for example for female officers when they are exposed to such situations they can come and rely on me as a male police officer, but for me as a male police officer I cannot come and cry on the shoulder of a female police officer because of my culture individually or the culture of the organisation”

Echoing the same sentiments was participant 10 who said:

“I can’t imagine going to a female to ask for help”.

These responses suggested that for police officers it was important to have an ability to regulate ones emotions even in the light of an emotionally difficult situation especially in the presence of a female colleague. Consequently it appeared that confiding in someone else about their emotions was evidently a difficult action for the ‘ideal police officer’. It could

then be assumed that sharing or seeking help makes male officers feel vulnerable. Participant 2 put this explicitly when he said:

“...but it makes you feel vulnerable when you talk about it”

5.2.4.1.1 Weakness and self-esteem

During the interviews participants described how male police officers are expected to appear as strong and in control. According to a majority of the participants society expects police officers to be able to respond applicably to every emergency, they are expected to withstand any challenge they are faced with in and out of duty. To the police participants, the greatest impediment in seeking help from anyone, especially mental health professionals was that as a police officer seeking help was easily associated with ‘being weak’. Participant 4 in an attempt to emphasise this view asked:

“Who will need help from someone who can’t help themselves?”

Other researchers found that, irrespective of the emotional burdens associated with police work, the need for police officers to appear mentally and emotionally in control was found to play a role in their decision to access psychological assistance (Burns & Buchanan, 2020).

Officers in the REPS accessing services appear to be low because male police officers do not want to be seen going to PTC’s. Being seen seeking assistance may be associated with an open admission of failure and dependence on others which can have negative effects on the self-esteem of the one seeking help. For participants seeking help was viewed as a ‘degrading’ act for a male police officer. This can be seen in a response by participant 1 who said that:

“For me to go outside and seek help from somebody else is something that makes me somehow degraded”

This creates the assumption that seeking help creates pervasive negative feelings for male police officers which likely affects their self-esteem in negative ways.

Participant 7 went on to state that:

“Seeking help is difficult for police because of their position in society, they can’t show weakness”.

Given the nature of police work which can be associated with occupationally unique stress and risk factors that can affect the mental health status of police officers (Fox et al., 2012), some police officers acknowledged the need for psychological assistance but at the same time they felt obliged to always put up an emotionally and mentally strong front. According to Participant 2:

“Police need psychological help, but as you know police need to be emotionally and mentally strong”.

Participant 5 in his expression of seeking psychological assistance suggested that there had been a need during his career where he saw the need to get help but his mentality convinced him that what he was going through was part of being a police officer. Participant 6 on the issue of needing psychological assistance acknowledge that getting help was conditional. His comment was that:

“Yes I would get help, but it depends”

In addition to the negative emotions associated with help-seeking participant 5 further shared an experience he had with a fellow male colleague who exploded while at work. When they later sat down to talk about the reason for the colleague reacting the way he did which was rather aggressive and out of character he recommended that the colleague seeks psychological help but the colleagues response was that:

“It will be like I’m weak, so I can’t do that, I’d rather keep it to myself”.

While acknowledging the barriers to help-seeking participants were aware of the importance of mental health services in their line of duty and this was evident in officer's acknowledgement of needing psychological help and yet still express feelings of not wanting to be labelled as weak. Suggesting that optimism to change where help-seeking would be seen as a normal was a vague possibility.

5.2.4.1.2 Stigma and discrimination

According to Burns & Buchanan (2020) there exists certain systematic processes that encourage stigma directed toward persons with mental health problems. These are understood as having an influence in shaping help-seeking behaviours as they influence how others view those seeking mental health assistance. Which then ultimately contributes towards reduced awareness of mental health needs among public safety personnel (Burns & Buchanan, 2020).

The same was found to be true for male police officers in the REPS. This can be discussed with reference to participants voicing out that seeking help could leave them vulnerable to being 'laughed at' by colleagues. Participants expressed concerns about feelings of 'embarrassment' and 'being judged' by others when accessing mental health services. Below is what participants had to say on the issue. Participant 6 said that:

"What will my colleagues think if I go for counselling", whilst on the other hand participant 8 mentioned that:

"Most men have fear of asking for help reason Being I will be giving other people power of myself, making them see me like a failure"

Participant 10 also supported his colleagues on the matter when he voiced out his views saying that:

"...but as males we won't voice out our problems because of fear of judgement".

The stigma experienced by police officers appeared to come from three main sources: colleagues, the police organisation and interesting of them all was self-stigmatisation which could be attributed to self-perceptions about other people's views or perceptions.

Participant 10's response was that:

“Men do cry internally not outside because of fear of being laughed at...it is difficult for men to share their problems because they are expected to have control over everything...the organisational make-up makes it difficult to seek help within the organisation”

Based on these findings one can assume that the perceptions police officers have on help-seeking are negatively inclined to fears of being stigmatised and ultimately being discriminated against. Additionally police seem to judge themselves on their help-seeking behaviours long before others do.

Emerging during the interviews was that mental health professionals were associated with mental illness or psychosis. Going to a mental health professional deemed one mentally unstable and this could have negative implications at work as an officer could be categorised as being unfit for duty.

Participant 5 stated that:

“The reason we don't use this kind of service is because we are afraid of going to the Psychiatric Centre”.

Similar findings were found in Burns and Buchanan (2020) study where participants expressed their concern since they felt that accessing psychological services would result in negative consequences including loss of promotion. The fear of being discriminated against and labelled as psychologically unfit was a contributing factor in developing negative help-seeking behaviours amongst police officers. In this study this was expressed through statements of fear of being labelled as 'mentally unstable' by colleagues and supervisors

which emphasised the issue of stigma associated with mental illness (Bradby et al., 2008).

Participant 4 said in his statement:

“I don’t understand what the psychologists do, what if I talk to them and they tell my supervisor, batongicindzetela kahle (meaning so that they can oppress me)”

Participant 5 also shared that:

“If I am seen going to you they will think I’m crazy”. The participant was referring to PTC’s when he mentioned ‘you’ in his comment.

As a consequence police officers would rather be emotionally burdened and unwell psychologically but still be accepted rather than seek psychological help and fall victims to discrimination.

Another interesting finding was that participants felt that supervisors and senior officers played a major role in modelling how to deal with emotions while in the line of duty. Having supervisors who were caring and proactive in their response to major incidents affecting the mental wellbeing of officers and encouraging officers to seek mental health assistance when necessary, contributed to junior officers developing the same approach to subsequent traumatic events. While the latter was more likely to feel embarrassed and have difficulty in accessing mental health services available. Emphasising that senior officers could play a role in the perceptions junior officers have on the importance of help-seeking. They can thus be used as role models to promote mental health services. On senior officers playing a role participant 5 said:

“The only way I think they can improve this thing is by the National commissioner of police must start by recognising these psychologists...”

This statement translates to male officers’ expressions of modelling behaviour. To them if the service is accepted by the senior officers then that would instil feelings of faith in the

counselling service making it easier for junior officers to accept and have willingness to utilise the service.

5.2.4.1.3 Trust

During the discussions it became clear that the closed nature of the police organisation and distrust of outsiders have made it difficult for researchers to gain access to the population. According to participants it was difficult for a police officer to trust an outsider with problems. This was reflected by participant 5 who stated:

“...men can't even share their problems with each other let alone a stranger”.

It can thus be said that police officers' decisions to seek psychological assistance were strongly influenced by co-worker attitudes. Participants were of the view that as police officers they possessed negative perceptions about mental health workers especially because they were un-uniformed. The negative perceptions thus reduced trust towards these mental health professionals which ultimately had an effect on male police officers' help-seeking behaviours.

The police organisation is generally viewed as being masculine in nature, yet the REPS's mental health professionals are mostly female. This then appeared to contribute towards participants not trusting the help rendered by the professionals. Faulkner (2018), in his study also discovered that scepticism and mistrust were some of the factors interfering with help-seeking amongst police officers in Ontario, Canada.

Emphasising this finding was participant 10 who revealed that:

“As police we need psychological help but we won't use them because most of the counsellors are female, imagine going to a female to ask for help, there's doubt as to whether they can be trusted because females are known to talk”.

Thus stressing the lack of trust officers have towards PTC's in the REPS because of their sex (being female).

Another issue of trust that emerged was with reference to the police organisational culture, where participants felt that the REPS had a culture of 'gossip'. They felt that their seeking help was risky because in the organisation it was easy to hear other officers make fun of other officer's personal problems. Participant 9 mentioned that:

"You can't share with colleagues because they are peers and they can find themselves re-sharing colleague's stories"

Similar findings were found in a study by Stuart and Benezra (2018), in which police-to-police stigma, discrimination and gossip was found to be prevalent within the police.

Another issue that came to my attention during the interviews as a barrier to help-seeking was that of the commitment and loyalty male officers have towards each other and the organisation. Difficulty to trust the PTC's was due to not all the PTCs being trained as police officers. Therefore, police officers had the perception that PTCs were highly unlikely to fully understand the issues they went through as uniformed police officers on a daily basis.

Participant 7 even mentioned that:

"I have felt the need to go for psychological help as a police officer, but because I am a man I believe I can handle anything, the reason I have never gone to a psychologist is because I don't think they would understand".

Other officers felt that their help-seeking would be determined by the counsellor's demeanour and assurances stressing the importance of trusting your source. Participant 9 mentioned that:

"It would take something drastic for me to go for help, it depends on the person I find there at that time in that office. If I trust him or her and see his or her demeanour..."

The participants' response suggested that the PTC's attitude would contribute towards the officer's reception of services thus improving their trust and confidence in the services of PTC's.

Participants also highlighted that in most cases they accessed mental health services merely because the situation they were in had become severe. Counselling was seen as a last resort following all possible self-help methods by the participants. When asked about what would eventually make him go to a PTC, participant 6 answered that:

“Depends on the kind of help I need, the degree of the situation I'm going through. I can only go for help under extreme situations, but in the early stages I would counsel myself”.

This statement supported the idea that individuals who do not seek help are likely to believe that they are able to change things they do not like and solve their problems on their own (Simoni et al., 1991). During the interviews distrust on the effectiveness of psychotherapy or counselling was also discussed. Some participants felt that they did not trust counselling services because they were of the belief that they had the know-how of doing self-counselling. Reluctance to use mental health services by police can thus be attributed to self-regard amongst police officers which further promotes emotional stoicism amongst them.

5.2.4.2 Importance of mental health

Participants further highlighted the importance of mental health education and the need for awareness within their different departments. The issue of promoting access to psychological care was raised by participants, as they felt that these factors contributed to them being reluctant to seek psychological help. They also mentioned the importance of the PTC to be proactive and to take services to the officers. In their responses participants indirectly brought up the issue of how police officers are not well informed with the trauma counselling

service provided to them. Another key finding was that police officers were not keen on utilising the service as they lacked full understanding of how it works. Neither were they aware of its importance or its benefits thereof. Although this factor is structural in nature participants were adamant on the role it played in challenging their help-seeking behaviours as male officers.

Participant 4 stated that:

“I think first and foremost we need to be taught the importance of the psychologist, like what psychologists actually do. Because male officers being like they are, the pride in them, it is the same thing that makes them not to go to someone else for help so it needs someone to come and tell them how important it is to go to that person...we need to be taught exactly what a psychologist is for”.

Participant 6 on the issue of educational gap and importance of mental health awareness stated that:

“I think this service can be involved during the training, even as a module whereby the trainees can be taught information on what psychology is, this can also be done after leaving training where psychologists come to the formation to help us with psychological issues and even ask from station commanders to provide lectures on psychological help”.

The importance of information and education and the relevance of mental health amongst police officers emerged quite vividly, highlighting that not having sufficient knowledge about mental health and related issues was a contributing factor towards being reluctant to getting professional help. Similarly the same was true in a study conducted amongst Canadian Mounted Police officers in the lower mainland of British Columbia, Canada (Burns & Buchanan, 2020).

Mental health education as suggested by some of the views could create greater awareness on the importance of psychotherapy or counselling services, not just for male police officers but to the entire police organisation. Introducing the services and mental health as part of the curriculum at training level would create ownership amongst the police and ultimately better understanding of mental health. Better understanding can therefore equip officers with the skills to identify mental health problems associated with the job and also the importance of getting professional assistance. In the study officers with greater understanding of mental health or psychological wellbeing possessed more positive perceptions about mental health help-seeking.

For those officers masculinity socialisation and culture played a major role in deterring help-seeking. Knowledgeable officers were more likely to embrace proactive strategies with regards to their mental health whilst those with little understanding were prone to attribute seeking mental health to weakness ultimately choosing unhealthy coping strategies. Burns and Buchanan, (2020) found that amongst Canadian police one unhealthy coping strategy that officers turned to was increased use of alcohol. The same coping strategy was revealed by participants in this study. For an example, participant 9 shared that:

“We tend to get too many officers imbibing in too much alcohol because that is where some of them get their comfort or their counselling...trying to get traumatic pictures out of their heads”

Worth noting was that a substantial number of participants indicated that they had experienced traumatic events that deeply affected them during the course of their work and with that they admitted that mental health services could have benefited them and improved their psychological wellbeing. But even with that knowledge they still opted not to utilise the service but instead try and deal with their emotional issues on their own.

Participant 6 stated that:

“Every now and again I listen to people’s problems, some of these problems I am also facing or are similar to my own problems, honestly it feels like I need some time to offload but I cannot because I have to be at work and this adversely affects me at work”

Despite having knowledge on the importance of psychotherapy some officers still refused to seek help.

Participants expressed their concerns on the visibility and accessibility of PTC’s in the organisation. They felt that PTC’s needed to make more effort in making themselves accessible to police officers. Participant 9 mentioned that:

“I think you should make those courtesy calls, visit the stations more, because what I have seen is that after the horrific accident that happened in the organisation I saw the PTC coming out more so what I’m saying is that you need to come out more and be visible”.

Likewise researchers like Gulliver et al. (2010) also concluded that accessibility to services plays a major role in help-seeking amongst young men.

It is quite important that attention to education and promotion of knowledge about the impact of police work, the importance of taking care of one’s mental health and information of available resources be done as this would play a major role in improving access to services. Officers felt that there wasn’t enough information available about the mental health service in the organisation, meaning that there was a gap in marketing the service to police officers suggesting that lack of service awareness contributes towards police officers reluctance to use mental health services as also suggested by Faulkner (2018).

5.2.5 Masculinity and help-seeking

5.2.5.1 Men and psychotherapy

A number of studies report that men in general tend to show reluctance towards utilising mental health services irrespective of the fact that they too have a need for mental health support (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Seidler et al., 2016). A number of explanations have been offered in literature in an attempt to understand the issue of reluctance. One perception that is rooted in traditional masculinity (emphasising traits such as strength and stoicism amongst males) disputes emotional vulnerability and communication needed to access effective and necessary psychological treatment (Seidler et al., 2016).

5.2.5.1.1 Emotional stoicism

The practice of exercising emotional control has been found to act as a barrier in accessing psychological services (Heffren & Hausdorf, 2016). In this research study, emotional regulation, which is associated with hegemonic masculinity and characteristic of male police officers was found to hinder male police officers decisions to seek mental health services. In the literature review in chapter 2 discussions on males and male police officers mental health challenges and needs and masculine ideals such physical strength, emotional control, stoicism and dominance were highlighted and these were also found to be true for male police officers in the REPS. A substantive number of participants mentioned in their interviews that males were emotionally reserved. An example of stoicism was communicated by Participant 2 who mentioned that:

“Males are in control of their emotions” suggesting that the ability to regulate emotions was a socially acceptable male trait even amongst police officers.

In support of this view was participant 9 who said:

“We are people who don’t like putting our problems to other people, we are reserved...” emphasising the difficulty males have to share their emotions.

Participants reinforced the opinion of help-seeking being a feminine trait. To them death was better than seeking help, denoting the idea of suicide being a better option than help-seeking or sharing of emotions. Expressing this view was participant 7 who stated that:

“When I feel I’ve failed as a man, I decide to kill myself, most of us have killed ourselves because we don’t get the help we need, so we opt for the last resort”

Embracing traditional masculine norms like that of ‘men don’t talk about their emotions’ evidently made it difficult for male police officers to seek help creating the illusion that they can’t be seen seeking-help and that they can help themselves.

One major aspect that could contribute greatly to the literature in this study is the difference in frequency of access to mental health services for work events versus personal events. As much as most of the participants admitted to not have used the mental health services provided by the organisation, those that had opted to seek help described mixed experiences of feelings of discomfort during sessions to feelings of great relief after sessions. For those participants who felt the need to help themselves without any professional means, failure to do so led to them to exhibiting negative behaviours like alcohol abuse, being harsh towards members of the public, being aggressive and underperforming at work were thus, creating the understanding that emotional stoicism contributes greatly to poor help-seeking behaviours through promoting the suppression of emotional or psychological problems. Failure to seek psychological help when needed can be harmful, not only on psychological health but it can have a negative impact on behaviour and ultimately affect aspects of life, like ones career or social life.

5.3 Summary

In this chapter a discussion of the findings of this study was presented. Information was organised into five main themes. In the discussion of results, it is quite evident that in an attempt to maintain the masculine status quo a continuous process of identity construction and reconstruction of what it means to be a male in particular a police officer is evident amongst male officers in the REPS. Thereby assuming that masculinity has an influence on the help-seeking behaviours of male police officers. Traditional or ethnic and policing culture present themselves as playing a certain role in officer's behaviours and ultimately their help-seeking behaviours. Stigma and labels attached to officers who seek help have a negative impact on police help-seeking behaviours. The next chapter, chapter 6 thereby concludes the findings of the study, discusses the limitations of the study and finally outlines future recommendations.

CHAPTER 6:

CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Overview

Masculinity as evidenced by the literature review in this study is a very complex issue and attempting to rationalise the help-seeking behaviours of police officers from this construct is even more difficult. In the first chapter the background and rationale of the study was outlined. In this study the aim was to explore how masculinity influences the help-seeking behaviours of male police officers in the REPS. In an attempt to conclude the study this chapter provides a consolidated review of how the research study answered the study's research question ultimately meeting the aims and objectives of the study. Finally limitations of the study are discussed and subsequently recommendations of the study are highlighted.

6.2 Summary of the key findings

Police officers across the globe risk repeated exposure to trauma and other forms of stress leaving them vulnerable to mental health problems (Faulkner, 2018). Efforts to build awareness and address mental health needs of police officers have been included in health policies in the REPS. The REPS health policy attempted to address gaps in access to services amongst police officers in the organisation, thus the introduction of PTC's (REPS, 2019). Characteristics of traditional police culture which may be discordant with mental health help-seeking like norms of hegemonic masculinity have been challenged. The current study's aim was to explore the influences of masculinity on the help-seeking behaviours of police officers in the REPS through the use of one-on-one in-depth interviews with ten male police officers. A qualitative research approach was utilised for this study from a social constructionist point of view. Given the context of this research where participants belong

to a closed and untrusting organisation it was challenging getting participants to be part of the study, therefore the researcher used convenience sampling to select participants for the study. The participants in the sample included male police officers from the REPS. In order to ensure that the study was trustworthy, measures were taken to guarantee credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability of the study. Ethical considerations were taken into account and all necessary permissions were sought. Having obtained all the requisite permissions the researcher was able to carry out the research study.

The research study was guided by three primary objectives including: (1) understanding the peculiar construction and constitution of masculinity/ies amongst male police officers of the REPS, (2) exploring how male police officers of the REPS understand help-seeking behaviour in gendered terms and finally (3) understanding how the peculiar constructions of masculinity/ies amongst male police officers in the REPS influence their help-seeking behaviour.

To understand how police male police officers in the REPS construct masculinity/ies, understanding existing knowledge on masculinity was important as can be seen in chapter 2 of this study. Biological perspectives that considered gender to be a consequence of sex (male/female) were discussed (Diamond, 2002; McLeod, 2014). To counteract gaps found in biological theories, social or psychodynamic theories of gender where masculinity was viewed as being rooted in social dynamics, socialisation, culture, patriarchy and power dynamics were also reviewed (Jewkes et al., 2015). This led to the integration of hegemonic masculinity to understand the concept of masculinity/ies in relation to male police officers.

Through reviewing militarised masculinities it was easier to understand masculinity and policing in gendered terms from a hegemonic point of view (Enloe, 1993; Whitworth, 2004). This body of work drew attention to masculinity as a fluid concept, constituted through adherence to and performance of multiple masculinities, with a hegemonic

masculinity being constructed through the endorsement of a more traditional ideology and understanding of masculinity (Connell, 2000). Police officers' views on what their understanding of masculinity was, how they construct their masculinity ideologies and their perceptions on help-seeking were key resources in my study to discovering the influence of masculinity on help-seeking behaviours in the REPS.

From the participants responses five main themes were generated namely: (1) *male police officers views of masculinity* (2) *male police officers understanding of policing*; (3) *constructions of masculinity ideologies*; (4) *male police officers perceptions on help-seeking* and (5) *masculinity and help-seeking*. These themes provided a rich understanding of the meanings that police officers have of masculinity and the views they had about their profession. Furthermore police officers revealed how the ideologies they possessed were constructed and ultimately how the constructions influenced their help-seeking behaviours.

This allowed for the integration of masculinity theories in explaining the behaviours associated with help-seeking amongst male police officers in the REPS. One such theory was that of hegemonic masculinity by R. W. Connell (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The themes that transpired during the research study were intertwined such that patterns in male police officers constructions of masculinity were revealed. Police officers views and their understanding of masculinity also emerged as a theme during the interviews bringing to the fore police officers perceptions of how masculinities are constructed. Finally an understanding of help-seeking in gendered terms allowed for an understanding of how masculinity influences the help-seeking behaviours of male police officers in the REPS.

In the findings reference to what a police officer is including the expected qualities of a police officer were closely attached to masculinity traits, denoting that masculinity as understood by police officers, dominates the police profession such that police work becomes tantamount to masculine performance (Silvestri, 2017). Thus also supporting

earlier views of policing being an inherently male profession or a profession ‘naturally’ more suited to men (Ménard & Arter, 2014; Viljoen, 2015). Swati male police officer’s constructions of masculinity can be largely attributed to ideologies informed by the family socialisation, Swati culture and the police culture as police officers experience it. For example the family socialisation and belief systems in the Swati context expects men to be emotionally strong, thus the Swati idiom that “Indvodza ayikhali” (a man does not cry).

These social constructions of masculinity amongst police officers were easily linked to traditional masculinity norms characterised by specific traits. Connell (2005) assigned traits like physical toughness, emotional regulation, aggression and sexual assertiveness to a dominant masculinity type expected of police officers. Similar traits were found to be true amongst male police officers in the REPS. In the research study male police officers in the REPS were found to embrace a hegemonic view of masculinity, where traits like physical strength, positional power, courage, ability to take decisions, emotional stoicism and responsibility towards others were of significance as an ‘ideal male police officer’.

According to research by Karaffa and Tochkov (2013), male police officers are expected to be bold, confident, self-sufficient, resilient and to have the ability to take decisions. Male police in the REPS were found to be socialised from childhood, as young boys, to believe that they are superior to women. This contributes to their need of always wanting to dominate thereby exerting patriarchy even in the workplace.

Due to the nature of police work, which is widely associated with fatigue from shift work, psychological stress and trauma and exposure to violent crimes (Violanti & Paton, 1999), psychological support is very important for police officers. Yet because participants felt that they were trained as recruits to always exercise a degree of control, where they were taught the importance of appearing mentally strong and emotionally in control at all times during their duties even under extreme emotional situations while help-seeking was judged.

Seeking help for a police officer was labelled as a sign of weakness which left the ones seeking help feeling vulnerable, degraded and unworthy of the police identity. Police officers seeking help were reportedly subjected to a lot of stigma and discrimination. There were reports that these officers were subject to being labelled as ‘unfit for duty’ or ‘not man enough’, which corresponded with findings by Hing et al. (2016). What these findings highlight, is that there almost exists a kind of social-organisational or peer sanction for those male police officers who appear to deviate from the values and behaviours which constitute the hegemonic form of masculinity endorsed by men within the REPS.

As Faulkner (2018) discovered that scepticism and mistrust were some of the factors interfering with help-seeking amongst police officers the same was found true for the REPS as reluctance in seeking mental health services was noted as a consequence of lacking trust towards the organisational trauma counsellors. The lack of trust was related to their gendered sexuality, since a majority of the PTC’s in the REPS are female. Their position as males reflected their underestimation of female PTC’s capabilities and further emphasised doubts on the confidentiality of counsellors.

The importance of information and education and the relevance of mental health amongst police officers emerged quite vividly. It was highlighted that the lack of knowledge about mental health and related issues was a contributing factor in male police officers poor help-seeking behaviours. Male police officers had little or no understanding of how counselling works and they were not aware of its importance or benefits. Similar results were found in a study by Burns and Buchanan (2020).

Emotional regulation as a factor associated with hegemonic masculinity and characteristic of male police officers was similarly found to hinder male police officers decisions to seek mental health services in the REPS (Heffren & Hausdorf, 2016). From police officer’s point of view help-seeking infracts traditional masculinity gender norms.

Failure to access mental health services was found to contribute towards destructive behaviours such as alcohol abuse, being harsh towards members of the public, being aggressive and underperforming at work. Consequently this placed not just the individual officers but the organisation in a socially and lawfully compromising position.

The peculiar construction of masculinity/ies amongst male police officers in the REPS and their understanding of help-seeking behaviours from a gendered perspective evidently influences male police officer's help-seeking behaviour in drastic ways. Seeking help in this study emerged as being a difficult task to do for most male police officers based on their conformation to traditional masculinity norms which feminise help-seeking. To avoid talking about their emotions and appearing as 'weak', some of the male police officers preferred to internalise their emotions. Instead of being seen seeking help from a mental health professional officers stated that they would 'rather die' – indicating the significant level of social or public shame entailed in help-seeking by male members of the REPS and creating the notion that, for some male police officers, committing suicide was perhaps a 'better' option than help-seeking. This could help explain the low numbers recorded of male officers accessing mental health services within the REPS. Not all the participants were against seeking mental health services as some officers acknowledged the importance of counselling especially in the police organisation.

Finally, what these findings specifically highlight are the ways in which traditional and hegemonic forms of masculinity become injurious and deleterious to the mental and emotional health of men in the REPS. Thereby exposing how these ideologies of masculinity come to hamper the utilisation of proactive and responsive organisational interventions, like the provision of mental health and trauma counselling by the REPS to its officers. What this ultimately points to is that for such organisational and mental health interventions to be both meaningful and sustainable within the REPS, toxic and

problematic forms of hegemonic masculinity which are held by male officers of the REPS will need to be attended and undone, perhaps through larger and organisationally systemic interventions.

6.3 Limitations

As described by Price and Murnan (2004), limitations in a study refer to the systemic bias that the researcher could not control which could consequently negatively affect the results of the study or affect the researcher's ability to generalise the findings. In this study as it has been previously mentioned in the methodology section, not all the police ranks or departments were represented in the sample. This could affect the study in the sense that the officers missed in the sample could have possessed different views from those gathered during the interviews. Furthermore, it was not in the researcher's capacity to guarantee that research participants answered the questions honestly without any outside influence from prior interactions with colleagues because participants came from various backgrounds. Therefore, interaction with colleagues could have distorted participants' views and depictions of their own lived experiences.

The findings and conclusion reached by this study cannot be generalised, making the experiences case-specific and subjectively interpreted. This being the consequence of the research only being conducted on 2 police stations in Mbabane and Matsapha. The police stations are in 2 police regions while Eswatini has seven police regions¹⁰. Additionally, a methodological limitation that could have occurred was during the data collection phase where participants could have only shared views they assumed were appropriate due to the researcher's position as a PTC and because the researcher was of a female gender. During the analysis of data the danger of bias was also pertinent because the interview was open

¹⁰ The seven police regions are Police Headquarters, Hhohho, Manzini, Police Academy, Shiselweni, Lubombo and Ngonini OSSU

ended and unstructured and research questions could have been subjective to the researcher. The researcher therefore had the responsibility to play an objective active role while collecting and analysing the data. Interviews were recorded with participant's permission and this helped to ensure that researcher remained objective.

In addition, this study elicited the views, perceptions, and perspectives of male police officers in the REPS without taking their sexual orientation into account, hence the study participants could not attest to factors affecting help-seeking behaviours of males who do not conform to traditional masculine ideologies. Within the patriarchal or male dominant culture that exists within then REPS, the researchers gender may be viewed as another limitation or at least something that possibly could have influenced the results. The mentioned limitations of the study may be overlooked based on the contributions this study has sought to make.

6.4 Recommendations

6.4.1 Recommendations for the REPS

The results of this study demonstrate the negative influence of adhering to traditional masculinity norms in the ways male police officers in the REPS seek help. Gender specialised interventions that will challenge the negative perceptions relating to mental health services in the REPS need to be developed and implemented, in order for male officers to likely approve of the present PTC services and increase service utilisation. Some of the major perceptions contributing to reluctance in service usage are that mental health help-seeking is a feminine activity because males don't talk about their emotions. The masculinity ideologies amongst male police officers in the REPS defame anything that has to do with femininity unless it does not challenge masculinity roles or if does not attempt to challenge the superior role of masculinity. For example female police officers are acknowledged as

being police officers as long as they will do tasks or duties associated with their gender role like less physically demanding duties and doing administrative work.

The negative perceptions of help-seeking may therefore be more acquiescent to alteration if factors such as lack of information, education, trust and fear of discrimination that contribute towards officers negative perceptions and reluctance to use services are taken into consideration. Some of the actions that can be done to improve service utilisation include the provision of mental health education to members of the REPS, support staff and their families on mental health services in the REPS. This can be done through the introduction of a mental health module from training at the Matsapha Police Academy during the inception of officers into the police profession. The mental health education can further continue periodically throughout officers career where PTC take education to the regions at station level at the same time reaching older police officers, support staff, and family members. This can be done through incorporating mental health education in in-service trainings and refresher courses.

Educating police officers about psychological issues, services available to them, logistics of services (issues of payments and confidentiality), expectations and when to seek help can be beneficial to officers. Disseminating information on services on a regular basis to all REPS police regional headquarters, police stations, posts and border posts could enable officers to have information readily available and easily accessible. Information packages with PTC's contact lists and psychological issues indicators can also be distributed to police officers or be made available in all police vehicles and work stations for easy access and this will also accommodate those officers who fear requesting information about services in fear of being discriminated against.

Because the REPS has more female PTC in a male dominated field having a supply of contacts for alternative free mental health providers in order for officers to not feel that

they are confined to the organisational service providers. The key reason behind alternative service providers is to ensure all officers get the help they need irrespective of the provider.

PTC's in the REPS would benefit from police training in order to understand and be accustomed to the police culture for better understanding of their clients and to also generate trust from police officers. This induction of the non-uniformed PTC's as uniformed officers would promote ownership of the service by police officers. The training of supervisors on mental health related issues would be of great benefit as that would equip them with basic skills to identify distress, the provision of psychological first aid and ultimately knowing when to refer officers exhibiting signs of psychological problems.

Another recommendation would be to explore the organisational skill inventory with the intention of identifying officers with mental health or psychological background. These officers would then be trained as psychological first aiders providing services at station levels and doing referrals to the regional PTC's. This will improve client flow and further bring services closer to the officers. Similarly, with the ecovid-19 pandemic the development of virtual services (telephonic and video) can be of convenience. The virtual counselling services will assist in limiting contact hence they can be done in the comfort zone of officers. Thereby counteracting the fear of being seen consulting with a PTC. Compulsory counselling for officers after every exposure to traumatic incidents can contribute towards creating a culture of psychological help-seeking amongst male officers as a proactive and mandatory component of health surveillance and mental health promotion in the REPS. Furthermore, gazetting that all officers receive counselling and undergo psychological assessment on an annual basis can eliminate the stigma attached to mental health services as officers would become accustomed to mental health help-seeking as it would become part of the police culture.

6.4.2 Recommendations for future research

It is recommended that the study be replicated with a larger population which includes officers from all ranks and all departments. This would be useful in understanding the experiences of all officers as the sample would be more representative of the organisation.

Replicating studies similar to this one in other police regions Eswatini or in other security and law enforcement forces like the Eswatini Defence Force or His Majesty's Correctional Services would allow also for a greater generalisability of the results or identification of differences or similarities across organisational contexts within the realm of state security as well as law and order more broadly. The absence of not taking sexual orientation into consideration in this study was mentioned, it is further recommended that future research explores this concept taking sexual orientation of participants into consideration.

The role organisational processes, such as leadership style and organisational policies were mentioned as facilitating factors in help-seeking but they were not explored. It is therefore recommended that future research further explore police help-seeking behaviours in relation to these factors. This would address the role that police organisations play to discourage or promote help-seeking behaviour. The current study only included male police officers from the REPS, it would be useful to understand the perceptions of officers other than males in order to explore similarities and differences in their views on help-seeking behaviours.

Finally it is highly recommended that future research critically look into the role police organisations play in the establishment of masculinity and how the latter becomes a means to cope with the difficult work police officers do.

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Appendix A

Letter request to conduct research in the Royal Eswatini Police Service



Mrs. Thandiwe P. Khumalo
Department of Psychology
University of Pretoria
Cnr. Lynnwood Road and Roper
Street

Hatfield, Pretoria

July, 2020

The National Commissioner of Police
The Royal Eswatini Police Service
P.O. Box 49
Mbabane
Swaziland

Dear Sir

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE ROYAL ESWATINI POLICE SERVICE – RESEARCH TOPIC: THE INFLUENCE OF MASCULINITY ON HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIOUR(S) OF MALE POLICE OFFICERS IN THE ROYAL ESWATINI POLICE SERVICE

Sir, I am Thandiwe (Makhanya) Khumalo, Police Trauma Counsellor, currently stationed in the Matsapha Police Academy Region. With this letter I kindly request permission to conduct research for my Master of Psychology, which I am currently pursuing with The

University of Pretoria in the Republic of South Africa. The title of the dissertation is The Influence of masculinity on help-seeking behaviour(s) of male police officers in the Royal Eswatini Police Service.

The anticipated value of the research will depend on the feedback I receive from individual face-to-face unstructured interviews which I will conduct with male police officers. All information obtained will serve no other purpose than that of academic research. The estimated time for each individual interview will be 60-90 minutes. The face-to-face unstructured interviews will be conducted during the officers' free time and will not affect their daily duties. The researcher hopes that the feedback received will contribute towards help-seeking behaviors research for police officers and further assist service providers improve their strategies on service delivery.

Your consideration of this request will be greatly appreciated Sir. Thanking you in advance for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully,



Thandiwe P. Khumalo

Contact number : +268 7631 0296 or 7931 0296

Email address : portia.makhanya@gmail.com

Appendix B

Unstructured interview guide

KEY COMPONENTS OF THE INTERVIEW

1. Thank participant for honouring the interview appointment.
2. Introduce self
3. State purpose of the interview
4. Address confidentiality issues with participant
5. State duration of the interview
6. Tell participant how interview will be conducted
7. Opportunity for questions
8. No more than 15 open-ended questions

Main Research question

How does masculinity influence the help-seeking behaviours of male police officers in the Royal Eswatini Police Service?

9. Lastly ask for additional comments from participant
10. Inform participant of next steps after the interview
11. Thank participant for participating

Appendix C

Participant information sheet



TITLE OF THE STUDY:

The influence of masculinity on help-seeking behaviour(s) of male police officers in the Royal Eswatini Police Service

Hello my name is **Thandiwe Khumalo**, I am currently a Master student at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria. You are being invited to take part in my research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take some time to read the following information carefully, which will explain the details of this research project. Please feel free to ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

- The purpose of this study is to examine the peculiar construction and constitution of masculinity/ies amongst male police officers of the REPS and also explore how male police officers of the REPS understand help-seeking behaviour in gendered terms. No studies have been done on masculinity and help-seeking behaviours amongst male police officers in the REPS. I have decided to conduct a study on the influence

of masculinity on help-seeking behaviour(s) of male police officers in the Royal Eswatini Police Service.

- The overall aim of this study is to explore how masculinity influences the help-seeking behaviours of male police officers in the REPS.

WHY HAVE YOU BEEN INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

- You will be invited to participate because in 2019, it was recorded that out of 586 police officers who accessed counselling and psychotherapy services provided by the organisation during the calendar year only 34% of them were male police officers (REPS, 2019). It is against this observation that the researcher was motivated to find out why there is this disparity in the help-seeking behaviours of police officers.
- You have also complied with the following inclusion criteria, your gender is male, you are a police officer in the REPS by profession and you are fluent in the English language (written and verbally).
- You will be excluded if you do not meet the three (3) criteria for inclusion.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

- You will be expected to participate in an unstructured in-depth interview. This activity/interview will take approximately 60-90 minutes. The individual interview will be a one-on-one meeting between the two of us. I will ask you several questions about the research topic. This study involves answering some questions such as: *How does masculinity influence the help-seeking behaviours of male police officers in the Royal Eswatini Police Service?* With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded to ensure that no information is missed.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

- Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason, if you decide not to take part in the study without negative consequences or being penalized

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Confidentiality will be ensured by assigning code names/numbers to each participant, and that will be used in all research notes and documents. Findings from this data will be disseminated through reports and publications. Reporting of findings will be anonymous, only the researchers of this study will have access to the information.

The records from your participation may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including members of the Research Ethics Committee. All of these people are required to keep your identity confidential. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

All hard copy information will be kept in a locked facility in the department of psychology at the University of Pretoria, for a minimum of 15 years and only the research team will have access to this information.

Please note participant information will be kept confidential, except in cases where the researcher is legally obliged to report incidents such as abuse and suicide risk.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

You will not benefit directly by being part of this study. But your participation is important for us to better understand if masculinity does influence the help-seeking behaviours of male police officers in the REPS. This will contribute to the body of knowledge in that this study will open opportunities for subsequent studies in the REPS. The information you give may help the researcher contribute towards strategies that can be employed by the REPS so as to improve male police officers help-seeking behaviours. Thus improving service utilisation and possibly minimising the impacts of poor help-seeking amongst police officers. Which can further improve service delivery amongst police officers.

WHAT ARE THE ANTICIPATED RISKS FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

We do not think that taking part in the study will cause any physical or emotional discomfort or risk.

During the interview you may find that some questions are sensitive; for instance, questions about how the peculiar construction of masculinity/ies amongst male police officers in the REPS influences your help seeking behaviour?

There are also some questions about things that have happened to you in the past and this may bring back sad or fearful memories. If questions feel too personal or make you uncomfortable, you do not have to answer them.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT THAT SOME FORM OF DISCOMFORT OCCUR AS A RESULT OF TAKING PART IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

Should you have the need for further discussions after the interviews or surveys an opportunity will be arranged for you.

If you need psychological support or counselling during or after the interview, I will be able to refer you to one of five police trauma counsellors available in the REPS.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

- Electronic information will be stored for period of 15 years. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable.
- Participant information in hard copies of raw data be will locked in the cabinet and electronic data will be kept in a file that is password protected in the Department of Psychology

WHAT WILL THE RESEARCH DATA BE USED FOR?

- Data gathered from the participant will be used for academic purposes, the fulfilment of research for MA Psychology at The University of Pretoria
- The data will also be used for dissertation presentation, article publication and organisational presentations (REPS)

WILL I BE PAID TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

- NO, you will/will not be paid to take part in this study

- There will be no travel expenses as interviews will be conducted at your respective station. This means there will be no costs involved to you if you take part in this study.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Committee of Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria. Ethical approval number is *HUM046/0620*. A copy of the approval letter can be provided to you on request.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

The findings of the research study will be shared with you by Thandiwe Khumalo after one year or two years of completing the study.

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IF I HAVE CONCERN, COMPLAINT OR ANYTHING I SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE STUDY?

If you have questions about this study or you have experienced adverse effects as a result of participating in this study, you may contact the researcher whose contact information is provided below. If you have questions regarding the rights as a research participant, or if problems arise which you do not feel you can discuss with the researcher, please contact the supervisor, and contact details are below

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and in advance for participating in this study.

Researcher

Name Surname : Thandiwe P. Khumalo
Contact number : (+268) 7631026 or 76310296
Email address : portia.makhanya@gmail.com

Supervisor

Name : Dr. Jarred Martin,
Contact number : (+27) 12 420 2830
Email address : jarred.martin@up.ac.za

Appendix D

Informed consent to participate in this study



The influence of masculinity on help-seeking behaviour(s) of male police officers in the Royal Eswatini Police Service

ETHICAL APPROVAL NUMBER – HUM046/0620

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

STATEMENT	AGREE	DISAGREE	NOT APPLICABLE
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, and			
I understand that information collected during the study will not be linked to my identity and I give permission to the			
I understand that this study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance from Research Ethics Committee			
I understand who will have access to personal information and how the information will be stored with a clear			
I give consent that data gathered may be used for dissertation, article publication, conference presentations			

STATEMENT	AGREE	DISAGREE	NOT APPLICABLE
I understand how to raise a concern or make a complaint.			
I consent to being audio recorded.			
I consent to have my audio recordings be used in research outputs such as publication of articles, thesis and conferences as long as my identity is protected.			
I give permission to be quoted directly in the research publication whilst remaining anonymous.			
I have sufficient opportunity to ask questions and I agree to take part in the above study.			

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Name of person taking consent

Date

Signature

Appendix E

Letter request for police trauma counselling services



Mrs. Thandiwe P. Khumalo

Department of Psychology

University of Pretoria

Cnr. Lynnwood Road & Roper Street

Hatfield, Pretoria

22 August 2020

Director Health and Wellness

The Royal Eswatini Police Service

P.O. Box 49

Mbabane

Swaziland

Dear Madam

RE: PERMISSION TO UTILISE REPS TRAUMA COUNSELLORS FOR POST-
INTERVIEW COUNSELLING OR DEBRIEFING

Madam, I am Thandiwe (Makhanya) Khumalo, Police Trauma Counsellor, currently stationed at the Matsapha Police Academy Region. I am currently studying my Master of

Psychology, which I am pursuing with The University of Pretoria in the Republic of South Africa. The title of the dissertation is: The Influence of masculinity on help-seeking behaviour(s) of male police officers in the Royal Eswatini Police Service. For my data collection I will be using one-on-one in-depth interviews with male police officers. Permission to collect data from police within the organisation has been approved by the National Commissioner of Police. With this letter, I kindly request permission to utilise the Hhohho & Manzini regional police trauma counsellors for post-interview counselling or debriefings.

During the research I do not anticipate or foresee risks or discomforts to the participant(s). However, should the research interviews trigger some kind of distress about the participants' masculinity/ies and how these influence their help seeking behaviours, a post-interview counselling or debriefing platform ought to be offered to the participant, without charge. The REPS police trauma counsellors will help fulfil this platform in that they are free and easily accessible to the police officers.

Your consideration of this request will be greatly appreciated Madam. Thanking you in advance for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully,



Thandiwe P. Khumalo

Contact number: +268 7631 0296 or 7931 0296

Email address : portia.makhanya@gmail.com

Appendix F

Ethical clearance



Faculty of Humanities

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Lefapha la Bomotheo



18 September 2020

Dear Mrs TP Khumalo

Project Title: The influence of masculinity on help-seeking behaviour(s) of male police officers in the Royal Eswatini Police Service
Researcher: Mrs TP Khumalo
Supervisor(s): Dr JH Martin
Department: Psychology
Reference number: 24049507 (HUM046/0620)
Degree: Masters

I have pleasure in informing you that the above application was **approved** by the Research Ethics Committee on 18 September 2020. Data collection may therefore commence.

Please note that this approval is based on the assumption that the research will be carried out along the lines laid out in the proposal. Should the actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, it will be necessary to apply for a new research approval and ethical clearance.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Pikirayi'.

Prof Innocent Pikirayi
Deputy Dean: Postgraduate Studies and Research Ethics
Faculty of Humanities
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
e-mail: PGHumanities@up.ac.za


Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Lefapha la Bomotheo

Research Ethics Committee Members: Prof I Pikirayi (Deputy Dean); Prof KL Harris; Mr A Bizos; Dr A-M de Beer; Dr A dos Santos; Ms KT Govinder Andrew; Dr P Gutura; Dr E Johnson; Prof D Maree; Mr A Mohamed; Dr I Ncofo; Dr C Puttersill; Prof D Bayburn; Prof M Soer; Prof E Toljard; Prof V Thebe; Ms B Tsebe; Ms D Mokalapa

Appendix G

Approval from Royal Eswatini Police Service to Conduct Study (Organisational Clearance)

Telegrams: NATCOM
Telephone: (+268) 404 2501/5
(+268) 404 5541/5
Telex : 2017 WD
Telefax : (+268) 404 4545
NOTE : All correspondence should be addressed to The National Commissioner of Police and not to individual.



**THE ROYAL ESWATINI
POLICE HEADQUARTERS**
P.O. BOX 49
MBABANE H100
ESWATINI

2020/08/20 14:30

20TH August, 2020

OUR REF: NATCOM/99/PF6890/66

Ms Thandiwe P. Makhanya
P. O. Box 606
Ezulwini.

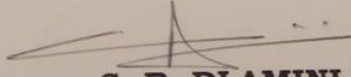
Dear Ms Thandiwe,

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT
ROYAL ESWATINI POLICE SERVICE**

Reference is made to the above captioned.

Your request to conduct a research/study on the Influence of masculinity on help seeking behaviour(s) of male Police officers in the Royal Eswatini Police Service has been approved.

We look forward to receiving the full research report upon completion of your project and further wish you success on your academic journey.


S. R. DLAMINI
FOR: NATIONAL COMMISSIONER OF POLICE

Cc. Regional Commissioner, POLICE ACADEMY