

**MALE MAPULANA LEARNERS' VIEWS ON THE INFLUENCES
OF CULTURAL INITIATION ON THEIR SCHOOLING**

By

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**A full thesis submitted to the Faculty of Education of the University of
Pretoria in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Education**

2020

Supervisors' Declarations

As the candidate's supervisors, we agree with the submission of this dissertation.



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Personal Declaration

I, Mahlogonolo Mashile (18193502), declare that:

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Mahlogonolo Mashile

Date: 31 August 2020

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to Mpumalanga Department of Education, my wife Ripfumelo Mashile, my mother Enekie Makeku Makhubedu, sisters Refiloe, Reginah, and Mumsy, my brother Lucky Mashile, my sons Ditebogo and junior Mashile, and my nephews Moonface, Lynn, Kaelo, Oratilo, Reabetswe, Bokang and Kutlwano.

Abstract

In this study, Mapulana male learners' views on the influences of cultural initiation on their schooling were researched. Rite of passage was adopted as the theorisation for the study. In the context of the study, a rite of passage is when uninitiated male learners (mashoboro) go through the initiation process. Thereafter, their status of being boys is converted to becoming men (monna) through a transition (passage). Likewise, normal schooling is also a rite of passage, and Grades 1 to 12 are interrupted by another form of schooling, initiation, as a rite of passage. This study was motivated by the tension that was observed between the legal and customary, democratic and cultural, and formal and informal schooling. The study was qualitative in nature and rooted in the interpretive paradigm. Semi-structured interviews were employed to understand the Mapulana male learners' views on the influences of cultural initiation on their schooling. It was found that the operation of initiation schools in Mpumalanga conflicted with the school calendar and this ultimately influenced schooling. Much of this could be attributed to the loopholes in policies governing initiations. This study can capacitate the Mpumalanga Department of Education (MDoE) about possible policy amendments. I recommend that parents raise this problem with principals through school governing bodies (SGBs) and that it be brought to the attention of the MDoE. The authorities should come to an agreement that prospective initiates should undergo medical circumcision before they go into cultural initiation performed in the bush. I also recommend that the above stakeholders should only allow male learners who are less than 15 years of age or those learners who are still in Grades 8 to 11 to undergo cultural initiation. The school management team (SMT) should help male learners who were away for initiation (initiates) with catch-up programmes. The MDoE must work hand-in-glove with the Department of Health, Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), and law enforcement agencies to prevent male Mapulana learners from being left behind in the curriculum. It must be ensured that learners' health comes first and that initiation principals strictly adhere to policies governing initiation schools.

Keywords: Mapulana; initiation; legal and customary, democracy and culture, formal and informal schools, Western schools, African schools.

Declaration by Editor

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I hereby certify that I personally copyedited and structurally edited the following dissertation for submission for the degree Master of Education. My editing included: grammar, spelling, and punctuation; flow and style; and formatting. I made all amendments using the track changes feature in Microsoft Word and used comments for suggestions and clarification, but the implementation thereof was left to the author. I endeavoured to ensure that the author's meaning was left unchanged during the editing process.

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Please feel free to contact me should you have any queries.

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Sepulana/English Words Commonly Used in the Dissertation

Sepulana	English
Banna	Men
Bogolo	Adulthood
Bohlweki	Purity
Bonatla	Warriorship
Dimelo	Virtues
Dintweng	In fights
Dipserere	Whistles
Direto	Poems
Ditaola	Rituals
Gotloloka	It shall be fine
Gwababa	It is painful
Hlakanang	Unite
Kgati	Fighting stick
Koma	Initiation school

Legau	Homemade shield for Mapulana
Lekgotla	Office of authority/chieftaincy
Lepunama	White river
Leruo	Economic development
Leshahleng	Bush / forest /wilderness
Leshoboro	Uninitiated boy
Madika	Initiates
Makhombela	Harp
Mapulana	A group of people who speak Sepulana
Mapulaneng	Residential area of Mapulana population
Mashoboro	Uninitiated boys
Mathata	Problems
Matube	Mock fighting
Meropa	Cultural drums
Moditi	Initiation caregiver
Monna	A man

Mopulana (plural Mapulana)	Individual(s) who speak Sepulana
Motlalepula	Rain carrier
Nduna	Headman of Mapulana ethnic group
Nokeng	At the river
Sephiri	Secrets
Sephiri sa sechaba	National secrets
Sepulana	Dialect/standardised version of Sepedi
Setšo	Culture
Thuto-kelello	Cognition

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CHAPTER ONE

AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Ethnographic research was used to investigate Mapulana male learners' views on the influences of cultural initiation on their schooling and how that influences their progress in the semi-urban area of Bushbuckridge in the Mpumalanga province of South Africa. The research regarding the impact that initiation schools have on schooling was undertaken from the point of view of young Mapulana male learners. Western-style education in Mpumalanga remains the cornerstone that helps in growing the economy of our country through tax revenue, savings and investments, the technology of things, health issues, the success of small businesses, and civic society (Bloom, Canning and Chan, 2006). One of the strategies to accomplish these developmental promises is by means of education and through it the empowerment of young people, as in the case of the participants. Such development can also be achieved by facilitating their access to institutions of learning to produce the academic scholars and skilful workforce that would auspiciously contribute to the growth of the nation (World Bank, 2002). However, different cultural aspects impact on young Mapulana people's lives. In this study, the Mapulana cultural practice of initiation schools, which forms part of their immediate informal education, will come under scrutiny. Special emphasis will be placed on the tension between formal schooling and informal or African customary schooling in the form of initiation schools.

This chapter addresses the background and context to the study, the rationale and motivation for the study, as well as the purpose and focus of the study. A brief reference will also be made to the research design and research methodology, which will be fully unpacked in Chapter 3.

1.2 Background and context

According to Mabutla (2001), the Mapulana tribe is located in the north-eastern part of the Mpumalanga province of South Africa. Schools used as samples in this study fall within quintile categories one and two (National Norms and Standards for School Funding Act, 1996). It must be noted that schools are categorised into five groups (quintiles) based on the relative wealth of their surrounding communities. Schools in the poorest communities are classified as quintile one and schools serving the wealthiest communities are classified as quintile five. The fact that the schools in this study are located within quintiles one and two translates into a reality that there is a high poverty rate, the education level is low, and there is a high unemployment rate in the area. The schools that learners who participated in this research attended are among those where learners are exempted from paying school fees. This confirms the view that the residents in the area are poverty stricken.

Temu and Swai (1981) accentuated that the name Mapulana is from Lepunama, which means White River, a stream that runs through the region. The Mapulana reside in the region which is now known as Mapulaneng in Bosbokrand (Bushbuckridge) and vicinities. Their inherited plots extend from Shakwaneng in the Kruger National Park close to Nelspruit (now Mbombela) to Moholoholo, Hoedspruit, Graskop, Sabie, and Ohrigstad (Temu, 1981). Historians have argued that before the Mapulana lived in the Shakwaneng area of Lepunama, they resided in an area called Phageng, near the Nokamokwena, which means Crocodile River. The Mapulana also resided around Barberton in the place called Motshiteng. Bonner (1989) argues that the Mapulana, like any other South African tribe, succumbed to the cruelty of white minority rule.

Evidence for colonisation and the impact of white minority rule can be found in the fact that some Mapulana villages and townships in the Mapulaneng area have English and Afrikaans names. For example, Oakley, Arthurseat, Cunningmore, London, Violet-bank, Brooklyn, Greenvalley and Dingledale. However, Mapulana villages with Sepulana names such as Matibidi, Shatale, Thabokgolo, Marite, Khokhobela, Mphato, Hlabekisa, Moloro, Maorabjang, and Kapama also

remained.

The following quote is a Sepulane praise poem which serves to root the tribe in the geographical region as explained above:

Re batau a phaga a Malala a moenyane

Batho ba ba maleang Phageng, ba ba maleang Shakwaneng

Shakwana la kgomo le motho go phalang?

Go phala motho gobane kgomo re lla re djia.

The gist of this poem is that the Mapulana are wild and fearless beasts, like pure-bred lions. The poem outlines the Mapulana territories such as Phageng and Shakwaneng among others. The last lines of the poem are a comparison between humans and cattle in terms of importance. It concludes by saying that humans remain important since cattle are consumed by boredom.

The Mapulana speak Sepulana, a dialect, or what is known as the standardised version of Sepedi. Sepulana, as a Sepedi dialect, is ironic and vigorous. Therefore, this dialect is not official and therefore it cannot be written nor taught in schools; it is only used by the Mapulana for verbal interactions. Linguists like Vale (1989) categorise Sepulana as part of the cluster of south-eastern languages. However, the language itself distinguishes the Mapulana as a group. Recently other languages have also influenced Sepulana. Languages such as English, Afrikaans, Sepedi, Xitsonga, SiSwati, Setswana, and Sesotho had some words adopted by Sepulana. The motives for this are that learners are taught in English, Afrikaans, and Sepedi at school, but their parents, who many a time are labourers such as domestic workers bring Setswana, Sesotho, and Afrikaans from work into the home. The impurity thereof is evidenced thus: *poto* is Sepulana but in English we call it *pot*; *pasopa* is Sepulana but in Afrikaans we say *pasop*; and *kreya* is Sepulana but in Afrikaans we say *kry*.

The Mapulana learners attend public rural schools in Mapulaneng. These schools, which are managed along Western educational lines, are generally known to be lacking in resources when compared to urban schools (Du Plessis

and Mestry, 2019). Within the context of these schools, Mapulana culture dictates that males should be taken to initiation schools for, among other reasons, cultural induction and circumcision. This African customary school takes place parallel to the ordinary school that they attend. The reason why the young men are attending the initiation process is that it is believed that this is what gives them their identity. They practice this aspect of their culture lebollo (initiation) in the leshahleng (bush). Initiation school normally lasts for two months, from mid-June to mid-August each year. This means that learners have to stay away from ordinary school for two months.

The images below illustrate how the Mapulana celebrate the return of male initiates, now as young men, from initiation school. This takes place on a Friday, soon after the initiation lodge of the initiates in the bush has been burnt down. The motive behind burning down of the lodge is because the initiates have been circumcised and have undergone their cultural initiation rites – now they are moving from the bush to the house of the permit holder (a senior traditional leader who has applied for and is permitted to hold and manage an initiation school). In so doing, they leave their boyhood behind. The flags and dress in the image symbolise excitement and indicate that madika (initiates) have transitioned from boyhood to manhood.



Image 1.1 Celebration of the initiation by initiated men on the Friday soon after the lodge where the initiates were staying had been burnt down.

The image on the left above signals the excitement of the initiated males who now call themselves men, after being back from initiation school. They were

learning about their customary rituals, folklores, identity and manhood. The second and third pictures express the excitement of relatives and families about the return of their children, siblings, and so forth. The young men use kgati (fighting sticks) and legau (shields) to culturally play matube/kgati (mock fighting) against each other. One hand holds kgati (a fighting stick) and the other holds his legau (shield). The duration of each matube game by the two initiated men is normally determined by the fans in the crowd. If the men appear to be taking the game too personally then the crowd will intervene and stop them outright. They do so to prevent the men from causing injuries to themselves or their opponents. The cultural significance of mock fighting is to signal the cultural transition from boyhood to manhood.

Throughout the homecoming celebration the young, initiated men will again and again, in a show of masculinity, challenge each other to a mock fight. They will exchange fighting sticks and shields, one after another, playing until such time as the elders among the initiated men give a directive that they should stop. Thereafter they will flock to the house of the permit holder who is the principal of initiation. Initiates will sleep in the house of the permit holder on the Friday just after playing matube. Parents will come back on the following Saturday morning to officially receive their initiated males, who are now viewed in the Mapulana cultural context as men.



Image 1.2: Celebration of the initiation by community members on Saturday

The images above (Image 1.2) demonstrate the celebration of the initiates on the Saturday morning after the parents have received their initiated male children. The celebration continues all of Saturday, day and night, and laps into Sunday. As part of the celebration, parents, relatives, and friends dance and eat. Since the Saturday celebrations occur around the village, everybody takes part in the event, even the uninitiated and the uninvited. If the initiates attending the initiation school number 20 or more, all their parents, relatives, or any other community members (both initiated and uninitiated) will join the group. They stroll around the community, visiting all the homes of the initiated males. All along they will sing initiation songs for celebration purposes, dance, and play makhombela and dipserere (whistles and harps), meropa (drums), and other Mapulana musical instruments.

One of the celebration songs which they use to sing goes:

He o lele, He o lele, bangwe baile komeng! He o lele, He o lele,
bangwe baile komeng,

Sbangaila kgati o tshabang, Ba tshaba kgati bangwe baile
komeng. Sbangaila kgati o tshabang, Ba tshaba kgati bangwe
baile komeng.

Nna re Mapulana re bina Koma

The song can be translated as: 'You are asleep, you are asleep, and people went to initiation. Sbangaila is afraid of a stick, which they use to play their cultural initiation game with. You are afraid of a stick because you are not initiated. We are the Mapulana who dance to initiation.' This song symbolises how important initiation is to the Mapulana. It further suggests that for as long as one is not initiated, he is not recognised as a true man by the Mapulana community and his fellow men.

As a Mapulana male, I recall very well that it was in August 2002, on a Thursday, when my school principal was instructed by the local induna to dismiss school

early because the initiates were coming home from the bush. He said that on Friday there should be no school at all since the majority of the community, including learners, would be busy preparing for the homecoming initiation ceremonies, such as buying new clothes, food, and drink, and roaming around the community singing initiation songs in celebration of the return of the initiates.

In 2003, the following year, when I was in Grade 10, I was taken to initiation school by my parents. My class teacher was informed about my absence from school, but she said nothing because she knew that initiation schools are strongly buttressed by the various traditional leaders. By attending initiation school in 2003, my Grade 10 performance in the second, third and fourth terms dropped drastically. The result was a disastrous final examination which was based on all the knowledge and skills taught from the first to the fourth terms of the year. Because I was away for initiation for about two months, I did not pass the examination. As a consequence, at the age of 18 years, I had to repeat Grade 10 the following year.

The above Mapulana initiation practices as outlined is a problem since Section 27(1) of the Department of Traditional Affairs Notice 528 of 2017 (Act 528 of 2017) states the following, 'Initiation seasons must be held during the relevant provincial school holidays and may not interfere or overlap with official school terms.' In addition, the Department of Health in the Eastern Cape has embarked on a radio and newspaper campaign to raise community awareness of the necessity for traditional surgeons to comply with the law (Baloyi, 2004).

In the context of Mapulana cultural initiation, as part of the study under investigation, a traditional surgeon is the person who is chosen by Mapulana elders to circumcise the initiates at the initiation school. It must be noted that he is not certified nor trained. The criteria used to choose such surgeons is that he must be from the family which administers the Mapulana cultural initiation school.

As a result of the choosing of the surgeon, the notice, rituals, and culture associated with initiation are a serious source of tension. Historically, the education of a child was integral to the functions of families and communities.

People lived to educate other people, and, as such, mothers and fathers, and grandmothers and grandfathers were entrusted with the responsibility of providing appropriate education at the appropriate stages in life (Maharasoa and Mahaswa, 2004). In the context as outlined, initiation became the pinnacle of the socialisation process for young males. It thus became a high-profile endeavour that attracted the participation of most people within a given society. However, since we live in a different era, the Mapulana must understand that we are no longer living according to African customary laws, rather we must live according to the legislation as underpinned by the South African Constitution. An example of how this can be done is what happened when the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) in Limpopo adopted the Initiation School Bill. Section 76(1) of the bill declares that a traditional surgeon is allowed to hold and manage an initiation school. The bill also stipulates that the commencement of initiation school must not conflict with the academic school calendar (CoGTA, 2018).

Referring to another province in South Africa, Douglas and Maluleke (2016) explained that in the Eastern Cape initiation schools are administered twice a year, during the June and December school holidays. The reason for holding the initiation during school holidays is to make sure that the smooth running of schools is not impeded. This is unlike in Mpumalanga where initiates stay for two months or longer during school time.

Despite the legislation and practices as outlined, initiation schools face several challenges. It appears that there is a lack of proper administration of the set-up of initiation schools by, amongst others, the offices of tribal authorities, indunas, and traditional surgeons who do not conform to the policies enacted to govern initiation school and to ensure that they do not overlap with official school terms. Also, post-1994 the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious, and Linguistic Communities (Stu and Aullo, 2010) witnessed a vast operation of illegal initiation schools in many parts of South Africa. The accepted procedure is that a traditional leader, in consultation with the traditional council, is the only authority that has the power to call for initiation schools and declare them open, oversee their organisation, appoint the traditional

surgeons who will work at these schools, and entrust them with ritual responsibilities. The leader and the council must also ensure that all the essential primary necessities, such as parental agreement, resources and provisions for the initiates' health and fitness, are fulfilled beforehand.

However, the Commission for Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious, and Linguistic Communities (Stu and Aullo, 2010) found that the opposite is often the case, as far as the administration of initiation schools is concerned because unqualified, inexperienced initiation surgeons establish illegal initiation schools. Therefore, it has been observed that the practice of initiation is not regarded as importantly as it should be in the policymaking. This creates a serious challenge with the so-called 'fly-by-night initiation schools'. Initiation schools that are established with no approval involve unqualified individuals who every so often act as principals, with dire consequences for initiates.

The most serious issues regarding initiation school are related to matters of health. Statistics from the Limpopo and Eastern Cape Houses of Traditional Leaders and the Mpumalanga Department of Health indicate that, in the period between 2008 and 2013, 401 males died in the Eastern Cape and numerous others were admitted to hospital. In the same period, 18 males died, and numerous others were admitted to hospitals in Limpopo (Tau, 2019). In Mpumalanga, no figures on hospital admissions are available but 66 males died in the aforementioned period including 42 males who died in 2013. The causes of death included dehydration, septicaemia, complications during the circumcision procedure, gangrene, kidney failure, and injuries caused by assaults on the males during the initiation process.

Another report, by Lubabalo Ngcukana in the *City Press* (2019), noted that about 780 male initiates have died since 2006 in the Eastern Cape. Because of the administration of these initiation schools by unqualified surgeons, 317 young men were not properly circumcised and, as a result, their penises had to be amputated. One contributory factor to the opening of illegal initiation schools and botched circumcisions, according to Nicolson (2014), was that there was no

national legislation allowing for the organisers of illegal schools to be prosecuted. Provinces like Limpopo therefore introduced legislation to criminalise illegal schools. In contrast, in the neighbouring Mpumalanga province, illegal initiation schools continue to exploit the poor and to operate, resulting in the kidnapping, maiming, and even the deaths of young males who want to become ritualised as men but who also want to pursue their educational dreams after initiation (Duka-Ntshweni, 2009).

In Sepedi there is a saying, ‘Rutang bana ditaola le seye natšo badimong,’ meaning one has to teach young people customary rituals before they die. This also speaks to the role of initiation school principals and traditional surgeons. In this regard, the Commission for Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious, and Linguistic Communities (Stu and Aullo, 2010), argued that initiation schools with zero fatalities are those where a principal is duly elected by both the custodians of the males and the local induna, meaning that experience is required for successful circumcision and initiations.

The above has not only become the media’s concern. The premier of the Eastern Cape, Oscar Mabuyane, also expressed the government’s concern in the *City Press* (2019), where he emotionally argued that ‘women carry these males in their wombs for nine months, they raise them, they give them to us men at 18 years old and we kill them in just eight days.’ All of the above mortality rates came about regardless of laws being put in place such as the Customary Practice of Initiation Act (Act 524 of 2015).

In some initiation schools, the Department of Education in Mpumalanga and school leaders are also complicit. A case in point is a Facebook post on 30 July 2017 in which it was reported that, on a Friday, a principal was dancing and singing initiation songs with learners at assembly. Shortly after morning devotion, he dismissed the school because initiates were coming back from the bush. This, and other actions as outlined, speak to a tension between normal schools and African customary or initiation schools. Both schools are important in the upbringing of Mapulana learners. One is preparing them for life in a democratic, free-market society and the other for life in the culture in which they are rooted.

However, the administration of these two schools simultaneously is a problem. Ordinary schools continue with teaching and learning while initiation schools tend to ignore this. Although teaching and learning takes place in initiation schools, lessons taught at initiation schools and those taught at ordinary schools are contradictory. Yet learners spend more than two months in initiation schools. This speaks to a tension or conflict of interest between the legal and customary, democracy and culture, formal and informal education, as well as Western-orientated and African customary schools.

In real terms, the above tension in Mpumalanga plays itself out when male Mapulana learners who went for initiation come back after two months and are then treated similarly to learners who were present for schooling for all terms of the year. In short, they have to re-join school after missing much work and many school days without a catch-up programme. This tension takes on a different dimension for initiation schools which teach to develop moral and socially responsible adults but turn a blind eye to the negative implications of these schools in terms of the academic performance of the initiates.

This is exacerbated by the MDoE, which proves to me also that much as CoGTA in the province is aware that the operation of initiation schools interferes with the school terms/ school calendar, there is no indication that this matter is being given urgent and necessary attention by both stakeholders. Furthermore, there is a silence by community members, especially parents of the Mapulana initiates. It appears that they are not as much of concerned about the prolonged duration of initiation and only become worried at the end of the year when their children fail.

1.3 Rationale and motivation for the study

One key underlying reason for undertaking this study was after I realised that the Mapulana were not consciously aware of the implications that initiation schools have on their male children. This, as explained earlier, I experienced first-hand in 2003. I also have professional reasons for doing this study. My motivation as a teacher can be linked to winter enrichment classes, which are normally

conducted during the school holidays of the second term (June-July). This is the time during which we organise extra lessons for senior learners as a catch-up programme. Schools in the Arthurseat circuit in Bohlabela district of Mpumalanga where I work are among the schools dominated by Mapulana learners and which are prioritising winter enrichment classes so as to complete the curriculum successfully. The problem is that this is the time when male Mapulana learners are unavailable because they attend initiation schools. They, therefore, not only miss out on parts of terms two and three but also on the winter enrichment classes.

As alluded to above, I am not aware of any provision by the MDoE to develop a catch-up programme specifically to assist learners who missed school time due to their absence when attending initiation schools. In the end, the same performance is expected from both learners who were present for the whole year and those who were away for initiation.

By means of this dissertation, I hope to contribute to a body of knowledge that the national and provincial legislatures, the Department of Basic Education, and CoGTA can use. Based on engagements during this research, I came to a point of attributing my conceptual motivation to understanding that initiation and the related traditional circumcision practice remains the pride of the Mapulana. Since they have cultural rights, they should sustain their culture as it unifies them. However, cognisance should be taken of the context in which their culture is functioning. In this regard, Gorshkov and Sheregi (2010) argue that rituals and ceremonies such as initiation strengthen people for daily survival and serve future purposes. However, the problem persists that they are not administered according to the legislative act in Mpumalanga province.

The scholarly motivation for this study was to interview male Mapulana learners to learn about their views on the influence of cultural initiation on their schooling. Also, it was to try and establish how best the MDoE can assist the initiates who are attending the initiation schools with their studies. However, this study did not initiate a notion that initiation schools should be abolished because the practice is more than turning males into responsible men in their communities, it is also

about instilling deference, and an ethos of the self, ethics, and the cultural legacy of a group. Nevertheless, recurrent condemnation of the practice, negative media reporting, and the deaths that have occurred, juxtaposed with the inviolability, confidentiality associated with initiation, and other values characterising initiation were important guiding principles in this study.

1.4 Focus and purpose of the study

- The focus of my study was on the views of male Mapulana learners and the influences of cultural initiation on their schooling.
- The purpose of my study was to understand the views of male Mapulana learners on the influences of cultural initiation on their schooling.

1.5 Research questions

The following main research question guided this study:

- What are male Mapulana learners' views on the influences of cultural initiation on their schooling?

The following sub-question was developed to strengthen the main question.

- How does Mapulana male cultural initiation practice influence their schooling?

1.6 Research design and methodology

The research design and methodology for this study which will be fully unpacked in Chapter 3 are outlined in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 Brief explanation of the research design and methodology

Research Approach	Qualitative
Research Paradigm	Interpretivism

Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions	The belief that no eventual or outright truth or knowledge exists as informed my ontological and epistemological assumptions
Research Methodology	Case study
Research Method	Semi-structured interviews
Sampling	Purposive
Time Frame	Contemporary South Africa, Mpumalanga Province

To attempt to propose answers to the research questions posed, I deemed it fit to provide a brief explanation of the research design and the methodology used in the study in Table 1.1. This aids as an introduction and comprehensive details are established in Chapter 3. A qualitative approach was adopted for this study, so the nature of this study was qualitative and interpretivism was explored as a paradigm thereof. As a result of the above, I was able to acquire knowledge of Mapulana male learners' views on the influences of cultural initiation on their schooling. The participants were purposively selected for this study. In the study, I embraced an exploratory case study design. The case emerging in this study is that Mapulana male learners are expected to attend two schools at once, namely normal schools and African customary initiation schools. The data was collected utilising semi-structured interviews and analysed employing a thematic approach.

1.7 Concept clarification

As part of my research, the following were the main concepts used. Below they were clarified within the context of my study.

1.7.1 Masculinity

'Masculinity is the particular pattern of social behaviours or practices that is associated with ideas about how men should behave and their position within gender relations' (Van der Walt, 2007: 54). One of the more common features of masculinity is the equation of manhood with dominance, toughness, and risk-taking. Initiation contributes a lot to masculinity as childlike behaviours turn out to be different after the initiation process.

1.7.2 Culture

Culture is what characterises us as human beings and members of a community. Ooi and Richard (2017) are in support of the above statement by stating that culture is the aggregate of understanding, knowledge, principles, morals, approaches, values, orders, belief, ideas of time, characters, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving. Mapulana as a tribe exercise initiation as part of their culture which they are deeply rooted and socially believe in.

1.7.3 Tradition

'Tradition is the handing down of statements, beliefs, legends, customs, information, etc. from generation to generation, especially by word of mouth or by practice' (Anttonen, 2005:15). This means that from the definition itself, tradition describes a belief or behaviour that guides a form of heritage of a particular custom.

1.7.4 Initiation school

'It is the process by which young males are formally transformed from male-hood to manhood among some African cultural groups like Mapulana' (Nqeketo, 2004: 24). Part of the activities they are exposed to include, amongst others, the removal of the entire prepuce from the penis, to study, and to be exposed to all the cultural rites, including learning about sexuality.

1.7.5 Ritual

'It is a religious or solemn ceremony consisting of a series of actions performed according to a prescribed order. It can also be conforming to cultural rites, which are sacred, customary ways of celebrating a culture or religion' (Martini, 2002: 23).

1.8 Route map of the study

The following table summarises the structure of my dissertation.

Table 1.2 Summary of the dissertation structure

Chapters	Descriptions of chapters
Chapter 1: Introducing and contextualising the study	In this chapter I engaged with the following: Introduction of the study; background and context; rationale and motivation; purpose and focus of the study; research questions; research design and methodology, concept clarification and route map of the study and the conclusion.
Chapter 2: Literature review and theoretical framework	This chapter is a review of the literature relevant to my study. It is intended to make one discover the known and unknown (research gap) on the influences of cultural initiation school on learners' schooling.
Chapter 3: Research design and methodology	This chapter deals with the research design and methodology employed so as to propose possible answers to the research question posed.

<p>Chapter 4: Analysis and discussion of the findings</p>	<p>After I gathered the data, it was analysed, and from this process themes emerged. These themes are discussed and brought into conversation with the existing literature in Chapter 4. Throughout the analysis the theoretical framework devised was applied.</p>
<p>Chapter 5: Concluding the study</p>	<p>In this chapter, the study concludes by looking into the link between the research topic, the literature, and the implications of the findings. At the same time, a personal and professional reflection is undertaken, and recommendations made.</p>

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a structure for the investigation of Mapulana male learners' views on the influences of cultural initiation on their schooling. The background to the study was discussed. The discussion was placed within the context of South African challenges regarding ordinary schools and African initiation schools. The concepts to be used were highlighted and the research questions were presented. In the next chapter, I will be reviewing the literature related to my study. A theoretical framework for the study will also be proposed.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I review the literature that has been written by international and local scholars related to my topic, that is, Mapulana male learners' views on the influences of cultural initiation on their schooling. The intention is to get a clear understanding of issues such as conducting and presenting a literature review, clarification of themes, the nature of cultural initiation, the genderised nature of cultural initiation, cultural initiation as non-formal/informal schooling, and cultural initiation and its relationship with formal schooling. In this chapter, I also propose a theoretical framework for my study.

2.2 Conducting and presenting a literature review

A literature review is a broad idea of prior research about a particular topic. We review literature to discover the known and unknown so that we can be guided as to what requires further investigation (Denney and Tewksbury, 2012). Therefore, the need for the literature review is to help build a logical link for researchers so they can be convinced that I have read widely about the proposed topic. Doing a literature review also serves to sharpen my research focus. In reviewing the literature, a point was made that this study is relevant to what has already been researched by other scholars in the past.

When you review literature, you need to make sure that you select published or unpublished sources with accessible, relevant, and recent information on the topic to express an idea (Hart, 2003). Since a literature review offers a guideline to a specific idea, Denney and Tewksbury (2012) further allude to the idea that it contributes to a deep understanding of the acknowledged phenomenon under investigation. Therefore, for the sake of engaging in research, one has to develop a deep insight about the knowledge of the topic (in the case of this study, male Mapulana learners' views on the influences of cultural initiation on their

schooling) in the review process. Moreover, one cannot understand what has been done on the topic and how the key issues on the topic have been addressed if you do not conduct a review of the literature (Hart, 1998). Denney and Tewksbury (2012) fittingly summarised the aim of reviewing literature in asserting that it is to be conversant with the theme of the phenomenon, classify proper research questions, discover the nature of past research and matters neighbouring the research question, and seeking testimony in the academic study and updates on the continuous knowledge on the study under investigation.

Jesson, Matheson and Lacey (2011) contend that reviewing the literature is more than summarising sources; it has to deliver an in-depth analysis, not a report, an index, or an expenditure list. They additionally propose that a literature review can be perceived as a first-hand image or narrative that you are delivering through your findings based on evidence, consideration, and sometimes understanding. Therefore, I chose to use a traditional way of reviewing my literature. Thus, the work of academic scholars was critically reviewed since I felt they fundamentally contributed to my study. I intertwined the contributions in a common sense, logical, and thematic approach to cultivate an argument. In so doing, I was able to identify a gap or niche from that research. It is clear that many scholars had little to say or research about the influence of cultural initiation in schooling, hence I saw a need to undertake this study.

The idea of using a critical approach suggests that judgment is made on how an idea is presented. This means that in research I need to be independent from the research by becoming critical on my own. This becomes possible when one is knowledgeable about the research topic and understands the theory applicable to the chosen study (Jesson et al., 2011). In so doing, one will be able to make a transition from shallow reading to thorough reading. Besides, it is similarly imperative to recognise that criticisms made in the study originate from both good and bad features. Also, it is about recognising the pros and cons of previous studies undertaken by others and knowing how and what you think can be done to advance their notions and models. Being a critical thinker requires enormous

skills which can sometimes be challenging.

Bell (2010) supports my argument that it has never been an easy task to involve yourself in reviewing literature, especially using a critical approach. This is because it requires a sense of discipline so that you can come out with a sound review that also convinces the reader that the researcher has deliberated on the area of his/her focus with understanding. Therefore, a review of the literature is a study development package that prepares you for becoming a professional in your chosen field. De Vos (2001) summarised this by saying that in understanding the main purpose of reviewing the literature, I will be able to place relevant literature in my study.

In the process of the literature review, I was able to identify very significant ideas which are relevant and current, including applicable theories and methodologies for my study. Based on this, whatever literature I have reviewed is not a first-hand research nor is it new literature in my research field. The key objective was to position the existing study, which is to investigate male Mapulana learners' views on the influences of cultural initiation on their schooling, inside the body of literature and to establish a perspective for the reader. Besides, in researching my chosen study I was capable of framing the research questions by identifying other ideas of the phenomenon which have in the past not transpired in my presence. Similarly, the literature review will also prove the fundamental norms of the overall research questions.

Furthermore, a literature review constitutes several motives and approaches, but this depends on the approach (qualitative or quantitative) adopted (De Vos, 2001). I investigated my study using a qualitative approach hence my literature review is intended to contribute to providing a clear understanding of the nature and context of my study.

Before any research can unfold, one needs to be mindful of the fact that a preamble should be the research question(s) because they guide the entire

literature review (Jesson et al., 2011). I had to access a variety of sources to discover a broad criticism of the literature relevant to my study. Conversely, as I consulted literature accessible within the scope of my study, I had to condense the focus and select those ideas that made my research not lose focus through relevant information.

2.3 Clarification of themes

For my study, I advocate Luneburg and Irby's (2008) notion when they say that literature reviews should find several themes from several sources. So, in the process of reviewing the literature, it must be noted that this literature review is divided into themes, namely the nature of cultural initiation; the genderised nature of cultural initiation; cultural initiation as non-formal/informal schooling; cultural initiation and its relationship with formal schooling; and other factors influencing cultural initiation and schooling. However, there are also sub- themes derived from literature, namely issues related to bohlweki (purity); thuto-kelello (cognition); dimelo (virtues); leruo (economic development); sephiri sechabeng (national secrets); bonatla (warriors); boqapi le bokheleke (creativity and eloquence) and sephiri (secret). A detailed exposition of these themes is attempted below. The selection of these themes was made after a thorough reading from different sources whose focus was on how initiation schooling is viewed as influencing normal schooling by male Mapulana learners.

2.3.1 The nature of cultural initiation

The term 'initiation school' can be understood as a style of school that was primarily created as a cultural ceremony that enables or permits a licence from boyhood to adulthood (Van Rooyen, Potgieter and Mtezuka, 2006). In addition to the aforesaid, it can be referred to as an environment where boys are supposed to exercise their cultural customs, including circumcision, which is one of the activities executed. Finally, initiation school brings about the transition from boyhood to manhood where it also considers instilling lessons of culture and traditions, respect and responsibility as a community member. For example, the

learners are being exposed to issues of how one is prevented from infections of the pandemic of HIV/AIDS. These issues are being taught by moditi (the initiation caregivers). However, it must be noted that these caregivers are not qualified but are informally accredited by initiation principals to conduct such lessons.

Hakielimu (2010) articulated that in Zambia different tribes conduct initiation ceremonies to males at the onset of puberty. Other tribes such as the Ngonis, Chewe, Nsenga, and Kunda also practice male initiation. However, a direct link between male school dropout and initiation rites has been established. Studies have correlated school dropouts of males with the training and expectations the males receive during initiation. In this regard, Hakielimu (2010) argues that when a male pass through different traditional rites, his sexual arousal increases and thus psychologically he no longer wants to continue with his studies. In another argument Colclough (2003) reports that in a discussion with teachers from Tanzania, they mentioned that male interest in school declined dramatically after they were initiated. Mteweile (2012) accentuates this argument by stating that the root cause of male dropout from school includes absenteeism, which is correlated to initiation ceremonies. The reason for this dropout is because learners find themselves repeating grades, hence they become discouraged from pursuing academics.

The period spent by initiates in initiation schools varies. For example, in the province of the Free State, the period spent in initiation schools is three months, but in countries like Lesotho, Johnson (1976) found that they spend seven months. The seven months are divided into two periods: two months for going to the bush and coming back and five months during which initiates stay in the bush without frequenting home. Maharasoa and Maharaswa (2004) coupled with another study by Malisha, Maharaj, and Rogan (2008) accentuate that initiation schools normally last for six months in the Basotho culture. Conversely, Lesotho people argue that Free State people spend a very short period practicing their culture. They indicate that it is not enough time to enable them to learn cultural

rites, folklores, and other important aspects (Thomas, Tran, Cranston, Brown, Kumar and Tlelai, 2011). Lutendo, Pranitha, and Michael articulated that in Venda only three months are spent in initiation schools for boys. Van Rooyen et al. (2006) contend that in some initiation schools, the duration of initiation schools is dependent on the recovery of the circumcised boys, meaning that the sooner the initiates get healed the better for them because they will soon go home. Consequently, the teaching and learning period in schools is persistently influenced negatively as a result of the prolonged duration of initiation.

The amaXhosa is among the cultures that practice initiation and it is referred to as ulwaluko. Despite the changes from the colonial era to our current democracy, this custom has proved to be most resilient (Ntsebeza, 2006). Magubane (1998) states that despite the complications during a circumcision, which may lead to fatalities, there is no indication that the Xhosa people will abandon this custom since it educates males about their customs and it elevates them from boyhood to manhood. Therefore, this means that no matter how unscrupulous initiation schools may be, the Mapulana population seems to be reluctant to get rid of it nor to administer it in a way that will not interfere with learners' scholastic progress.

Mboweni (2014) expressed concern in his study about learner absenteeism during winter in schools. His opinion was that learner absenteeism during winter was more than during any other season because winter is when most Mapulana boys are away at initiation schools. Though there is a ruling which regulates initiation schools' duration, many principals of initiation schools turn a blind eye to this (South African Schools Act, 1996). Mboweni (2014) further alluded to the fact that principals of normal schools of learning and teaching are seriously disturbed about learners' absence at school because of initiation schools. It is distressing since initiation schools around Bushbuckridge in Mpumalanga Province cannot be properly administered for the three months of initiation and those Mapulana boys who are taken to initiation schools are left behind in the school curriculum for more than two months. This becomes a heavy burden for

the schools. Schools are supposed to administer school registers and those learners who go to initiation schools are marked as present in the registers, even though it is known they are not present because they are away for initiation. This is so because a learner is withdrawn from the school register when they are absent for a maximum of 14 consecutive days, so marking them present even when they are absent is a way of protecting them from being withdrawn from the school register system (South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996). The problem of cultural practices influencing the scholastic progress of learners does not only affect one circuit in the Province of Mpumalanga, but it is an international problem. Li (2003), for example, advocates that countries like Kenya also experience this as a challenge. At present, this is still a problem.

In the South African context, the authorities of initiation schools are the ones accountable for the administration of such schools in the community (Department of Traditional Affairs, 2015). The office of the chieftaincy is the one heading the community or indunas. The office is also responsible for determining the duration and other logistics of initiation schools (Dikotla, 1996). However, the majority of traditional leaders overlook the provision of proper operation of initiation schools, which ultimately compromises the scholastic progress of the South African child through a prolonged period of initiation.

The above assertions speak to one tension that, as a researcher, I have articulated earlier in Chapter 1. In the South African context, initiations remain the right and pride of the Mapulana people, however, there is a disjuncture emerging in the process of administering initiation schools because they conflict with the school calendar.

2.3.2 The genderised nature of cultural initiation

The circumcision process is the one that the Mapulana strongly believe in as their most important traditional practice and it is done by surgeons whose task it is to cut the boys' prepuce (Bottoman, 2006). Circumcision processes are not done by just anyone because it is something that customarily involves gender-based

privacy, including specific ways of performing those rituals. Adults are also supposed to be part of the process so that they may guide other procedures. If a boy is able to endure the pain of the initiation school, that boy will automatically be graduated to manhood because he will be stained by the numerous corporal tests that he will be exposed to (Bottoman, 2006).

In Mpumalanga, initiation schools are administered in the bushes far away from their homes so that the boys and their teachers perform their secret rites without any hindrance by the uninitiated community members. However, it must be noted that it is not only the Mapulana tribe that practices this culture in bushes, the Batswana and Xhosa also practice the initiation culture either in the bushes or mountains depending on whether they have mountains that are within reach or not (Ntombana, 2011).

Initiation practices are normally performed by boys who are in the age group 16 to 20 years. Commonly speaking, cultural initiation schools consist of the following stages. Stage one is called 'sacred ground'. This is the stage where the initiates will be in misery before they are circumcised because they do not know what is going happen to them in the initiation. In stage two, the principal of that initiation school is the one who will circumcise the initiates. The last stage is stage three when the initiates are arranged according to their state of healing from the circumcision. For example, they put aside those who were admitted to the initiation school the same day. The motive behind the separation is that they are trying to teach these initiates rituals according to their age groups.

2.3.3. Cultural initiation as non-formal/informal schooling

Many African countries and societies still practice their rites of passages in their respective environs. Those practices signal that the boys are making a transition from one stage to another, that is, from childhood to adulthood since culture is generational (the boys are moved from one age group to another). Culture also ensures that in the transition process they become knowledgeable, thoughtful, and have a way of getting along with one another. Cultural circumcision of male

Mapulana remains an important time in the history of modern civilization and in the society in which the Mapulana operate (Mbiti, 2008). Performing initiation rituals symbolises something thereof because this culture dictates that boys should leave their families and stay in the bush for quite some time. In Mapulana cultures, the boys who go to initiation schools come home with names they got from the initiation schools such as rete-botse (a good poet) and gama-botse (a good shepherd who is good in milking cows). They are given such names for praising them and for cultural reasons.

The importance of the cultural rites of passage is to expose initiates to manhood. As men, they become active community members whose voices can be heard and considered. They enjoy ceremonial obligations, they get fresh privileges and fresh duties, which the community expects of them. The Mapulana culture engages Mapulana males in sexual issues, marital affairs, reproduction, and household tasks. In principle, the culture instils educational values as the initiates acquire new knowledge and skills, including how to withstand difficulties and how to love others (Janusz and Walkiewicz, 2018).

One of the important ways in which Mapulana, Batswana, and Xhosa celebrate their culture is that this culture of initiation is considered a vehicle to maturity and physical development. These are the rites of passage to maturity. They support the graduated initiates to become responsible parents and community members. Initiation marks the most notable phase of Mapulana culture. It is notable in the sense that uninitiated boys become pressurised by this culture because they are given less recognition by the initiated in the community. They are also given nasty names in Sepulana such as mashoboro (uninitiated). In this culture of initiation, you only become a man when you have been initiated. Otherwise you remain a boy – no matter how old you are – even far beyond 18 years of age. In other words, being a circumcised initiate is a licence which makes you eligible to become a real, responsible, noticeable, and culturally educated man in humanity (Bottoman, 2006).

2.3.4 *Cultural initiation and its relationship with formal schooling*

As Mapulana, we are affected both negatively and positively by modern society. The reason for this is that learners between 15 and 20 years of age are expected to attend two schools simultaneously. A case in point is a Facebook post, dated 30 July 2017, in which, one Friday, a principal was dancing and singing initiation songs with learners at assembly. Shortly after morning devotion, he dismissed schooling because initiates were coming back from the bush that day. This speaks to a tension between schools (normal school of teaching and learning) and African customary schools (initiation schools). I think the reason why it is a tension is because one school is compromised at the expense of another. Both schools are important in the upbringing of a human being, especially Mapulana males in Bushbuckridge, because that is their culture in which they are deeply rooted, but the administration of these two schools simultaneously becomes a problem.

Another case in point was a trending issue in the *City Press* (Makhanya, 2020) where the story was told about a learner by the name of Enock Mpianzi of Parktown Boys' High School who drowned at Nyati Bush and Riverbreak resort after a homemade raft overturned in a strongly flowing river. It was reported that there was a lack of proper care and responsibility by the school management at large, based on how his death was caused. The death triggered many issues, including raising the matter of initiation, as the president of the Republic of South Africa, Honourable Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, had an appetite to say young children are abused. Young children are being abandoned, chased away from homes, and end up being street kids. They are being starved, deprived of opportunities for quality education, and they lack the support they so need. Also, the President overlooked, or rather forgot to mention, that we witness a high mortality rate of initiates caused by illegal initiation schools each year.

The *City Press* of December 2019 reported 788 cases of death in the Eastern Cape, where rites of passage have been exercised culturally from the year 2006 (Makhanya, 2020). During the said period, there were also 317 males whose

penises were cut off by unqualified surgeons (Ngcukana, 2019). Before Christmas 2019, families of those initiates who went for initiation had to prepare themselves for the return and completion of rite-of-passage celebrations. In December 2019, 25 initiates died. Should the trend carry on till the 2020 winter initiation season, the death rate may be counted at 401, said the Eastern Cape Premier Oscar Mabuyane. He additionally indicated briefly that women roles in carrying these boys for nine months in their wombs were taken as child's play because initiation school principals killed them at their poorly administered initiation schools (Tau, 2019). The principals of initiation schools are careless about the deaths of these boys because they know they are from underprivileged homes where families cannot be independent enough to take the principals of initiation schools to task.

Learners are away for two months attending initiations, but they also need to attend lessons in schools of teaching and learning to push the core curriculum. It is impossible for them to be available for these two schools at once. At the end of the day, normal schools of teaching and learning are compromised because of initiation schools and that negatively influences the schooling, if not the scholastic progress, of an initiate (Adell, 2002). This means a tension or conflict of interests emanates between the legal and customary, democracy and culture, formal and informal schools, as well as Western and African schools.

2.3.5 Other factors influencing cultural initiation and schooling

Ntombana (2011) expatiates that crime has started happening in the initiation schools. It is no longer a community-building environment but a place with a high volume of worries and misfortunes. According to research done by Crowley and Kesner (2013), there is evidence that some initiates die in hospitals, while others leave the hospital with penile deformity and lifelong physical scars of the abuse that they have endured in the initiation school. Those who survive in the hospital also face being stigmatised by their peers at school and by the community at large. Their manhood will be questioned as going to the hospital is seen as a sign of weakness.

Duku (2006) raises a relevant argument about how initiation sometimes excludes learners from participating fully in school activities. She cites an example of how an uncircumcised learner leader in Dimbaza was refused participation in initiation-related debates that were meant to guide policy development at school. The issue of initiation comes with big challenges, such as having two groups of learners in one classroom: those who are ahead of the curriculum because they did not go for initiation and those who are behind because they went for initiation. Duka-Ntshweni (2009) reveals that there is evidence that some young men are struggling to fit into the school and society at large after returning from initiation. At school they do not want to take part in extramural activities. They are sometimes undermined by older males and they have to constantly demand respect and remind everybody that they are now men. Some of them even experience a drop in their school performance and end up repeating grades. The changing times sometimes put a strain on the traditional way of doing things.

Einat and Herzog (2011) adopted a young crime (juvenile delinquency) theory. Using this theory, they argued that in an environment where they practise the same culture, the learners from both Mapulana groups should agree on the morals and customs of the group. But in varied school environments in terms of cultural beliefs, there is no way in which one size can fit all. This means that there is no way in which one culture can be followed. In schools where we find initiated and uninitiated teachers and learners from different tribes, learning and teaching take place in one environment despite their different cultures. This research reveals that initiation schools create a societal cultural sub- group with specific morals, customs, and behaviours that are different from those of the regular schooling system. In the Western-styled standards, we instil knowledge and good behaviour in learners, Sellin's theory argued. This theory is buttressed by Lemmer (2006). Both theories contend that should educators find it difficult to acknowledge and accept cultural diversity in the environment they are operating in, that in itself will not only instigate cultural segregation, cultural destruction, and learning difficulties but it can also create attitudinal problems and instigate ways that will eventually impede teaching and learning.

Lemmer (2006) moreover reasons that diverse cultural beliefs and societal morals might create conflict inside the learning environment. Individuals with the same customs, societal morals, and practices position themselves within one common belief. However, the opposite is similarly effective. In my research, this suggests that learner–teacher differences and initiated–uninitiated learners’ conflicts may emerge. This implies that there is a war over customs in the South African school system which is either vertical or horizontal. Vertical means there is a cultural versus Westernised schools setting and horizontal means there are cultural or subcultural differences. By this, I mean in a vertical system there is a difference between cultural versus Westernised schools, while in a horizontal system there are cultural versus subcultural differences. In other words, both conflicts are culturally based.

The invasion of media concerning a Facebook video posted has painted a bad image of Mapulana culture because it recorded and dramatised all activities performed during initiation and the entire public was able to watch (Theko, 2019). The modern press and other social media have therefore created a negative impression about initiation schools as part of Mapulana culture.

2.4 Education at initiation school

2.4.1 Bohlweki (purity)

One of the principles canvassed at the initiation schools was purity. This relates to being hygienic and having peace in your mind. The physiological aspect of purification was achieved through lessons on acceptable hygienic practices such as washing one's hands before handling food (Denney and Tewksbury, 2012).

2.4.2 Thuto-kelello (cognitive engagement)

The absence of the written genre meant that initiates had to remember all they were taught, including folklore and accounts of Mapulana. The initiated boys were taught to think tactically and often on their feet. The ability to think strategically and at a high level was of paramount importance, since one of the

duties for men was to serve on the authority's offices (lekgotla). Non-thinkers or slow thinkers were subjected to punishment. Cognitive skills were evoked by way of problem-based education (Denney and Tewksbury, 2012).

2.4.3 Dimelo (virtues)

The enhancement of personal as well as societal characters was one of the purposes of initiation. This was achieved by, amongst other things, role-modelling (Gorshkov and Sheregi, 2010). The facilitators at initiation schools (moditi) were aging men of generous, partisan, and communal portfolios – openly known paragons of virtues. These men were carefully selected by the chief on the advice of his cabinet.

2.4.4 Leruo (economic development)

Although talk of entrepreneurship and self-employment is beginning to surface in higher education spheres, the current systems are largely focused on employment, which is why one hears so much about how universities can best meet the expectations of employers. At initiation schools, on the other hand, initiates were skilfully educated with regard to independence. In addition to equipping initiates with technical skills such as furniture-making, as well as agricultural and farming practices, proverbial utterances such as 'Mphe-mphe ya lapisa' (begging makes you hungry) were emphasised to stimulate the notion of sustaining oneself and to dampen apathy economically (Guba and Lincoln, 1989).

2.4.5 Makunutu (national secrets/confidentiality)

Hakielimu (2010) indicated that while many of the African cultures were ravaged by the mighty power of Western education, lebollo remains one of the few systems that have proved impenetrable, hence the mystical speculations that were created to depict the institution as some diabolical entity beset with barbaric practices.

2.4.6 Bonatla (warriors)

Wars feature strongly in the history of mankind. To prevent nations from being wiped out by wars, warriors were bred at initiation schools. Games like mock fighting for males were some of the tactics taught so that they could be warriors. The ability to make creative and appropriate decisions quickly was core to this exercise (Kitavi, 2005). Lebollo bred the courage to face the enemy without flinching to prevent the annexation of land and the capturing of cattle.

2.4.7 Bogapi le bokheleke (the ability to compose/eloquence)

Inventive capabilities like the aptitude to compose songs and poeries as well as high-order linguistic ramifications are held in high esteem among Africans. As a result, opportunities were created for the initiates to discover their talents in this regard through mock courts and the composition of their praise poems (Maharasoia and Maharaswa, 2004). Lebollo addresses one of the deficiencies of our current higher education system in that although history is taught, it is more general and fails to procure the individuality and diversity of learners as is the case at initiation schools.

2.4.8 Borapedi (spirituality)

One of the dazzling realities about the way lebollo was perceived is the alleged tension between lebollo beliefs and Christian beliefs. Litwin (1995) argued that even today most churches continue to excommunicate initiates and their parents until initiates recommit to the Christian church by denouncing lebollo and its teachings.

2.4.9 Lenyora la tsebo (appreciation for knowledge)

Indigenous society appreciated knowledge for what it was worth. The fact that there were no failing students at the initiation school was indicative of this fact. The fundamental principle was that every human being was endowed with some kind of talent which could be unearthed (Denney and Tewksbury, 2012). To facilitate the discovery of individual talents, each initiate was designated an

instructor/mentor who had to ensure that at the end of the initiation period his fellow initiates, as well as the instructors, knew exactly where the individual's strengths lay. The graduation day was an exhibition of competencies demonstrated by way of direto (poems).

2.4.10 Sephiri (secret)

According to Van Rooyen et al. (2006), initiating boys is a furtive act, especially them not telling their mothers, since the mothers are not supposed to be informed about how boys are converted into men. Another case of secrecy is when the processes taking place at initiation schools go wrong; young males can be maimed for life. Boughey (2011) writes about an 18-year-old male who was circumcised by a traditional surgeon (also known as an *ingcibi*) in Pondoland in the former Transkei. The young man was circumcised and endured many hardships. Because of this, he experienced a lot of exclusion and anxiety. Boughey (2011) confirmed through his book that the boy always locked himself inside the toilet because he was scared of others discovering his illness. Also, he saw it fitting to cease the affair with his lover because she did not know what had transpired. 'I still over and would like to carry on with her in our relationship, but I do not want her to know what has previously happened as I prompt to share with no one,' he said.

Several factors have contributed internationally, in Africa, and South Africa to the scholastic progress of learners, hence one cannot speak to only one factor (Colclough, 2003). This study addresses the culturally based factors that negatively influence normal schooling.

2.5 Theoretically framing cultural initiation and formal schooling

This study was framed by rite of passage as a theory that is relevant and applicable to this study. A rite of passage as a theory can be understood as an occasion that enables one to make the transition from one stage to another. It is about a fundamental conversion of standing in the environment you are living in

(Fanning, 2011). Within the context of my study, a rite of passage is seen when the uninitiated boys are considered as males (mashoboro), but immediately they are taken through the initiation process, their status of being boys is now converted ('passaged' through) into men (monna). This means that there is a transition (passage) that they move through. In addition to this, normal schooling is also a rite of passage, but Grades 1 to 12 are interrupted by another form of schooling (initiation). However, the situation dictates that they should also passage through this stage.

Every human being is aware and exposed to this theory both directly and indirectly because we all know that we must move from one stage to another, for example, from childhood to adulthood. This suggests that customary rites symbolise the occasion in someone's life and it signals a move from one phase to another, like from childhood to adulthood. People staying in one community may have different cultures of their choice, some of which are more valued than others. Van Gennep (2011) says, metaphorically speaking, that rite of passage as a theory is like a house separated into rooms and passages. Therefore, when one moves from one room to another it is the same as when one grows from one stage (childhood) to another (adulthood), hence we say he 'passaged' through.

Cultures demonstrate how one makes a transition from one generation to another. The theory performs various roles: discharging pressure from the community you are living in; establishing conversion as a chance and approval; supporting an individual from certain misery; and excavating the significance and worth of transformation (Kirsch, Rutter and Singer, 2016).

The males who went to initiation had to be examined so that it could be proved beyond any reasonable doubt that they could enthusiastically go on. The culture of Mapulana appears not to have suitable methods of guiding moves (transitions). In this culture, there are a very limited number of occasions which signal passages. It is only when initiates come back home that celebrations are

conducted in the form of appreciating that their children have graduated from childhood to manhood (Van Gennep, 2011). On the other hand, these ceremonies have largely misplaced their profound link to our generation, to the meaning of the move (transition), and to the bigger community.

Abuse of liquor is sometimes seen as a result of mistaken efforts at a rite of passage. People try to do all this at a young stage and the problem is that they get less support from their elders who are professionals in administering culture. Without socially sanctioned and widely recognised rites of passage, teenagers have little choice but to create their own and many of these self-generated initiations are dangerous and counterproductive (Mbiti, 2008).

It should be obvious that rites of passage are critical at many other points in the life journey. Mbiti (2008) further contends that mid-life transitions, changes in relationships, including marriage and divorce, births, deaths, the emancipation of one's children, menopause, and elderhood, all offer the need for initiation and a call to a rite of passage. Since most adults have not confirmed their passage into adulthood, a rite of passage can provide the opportunity to make that step too.

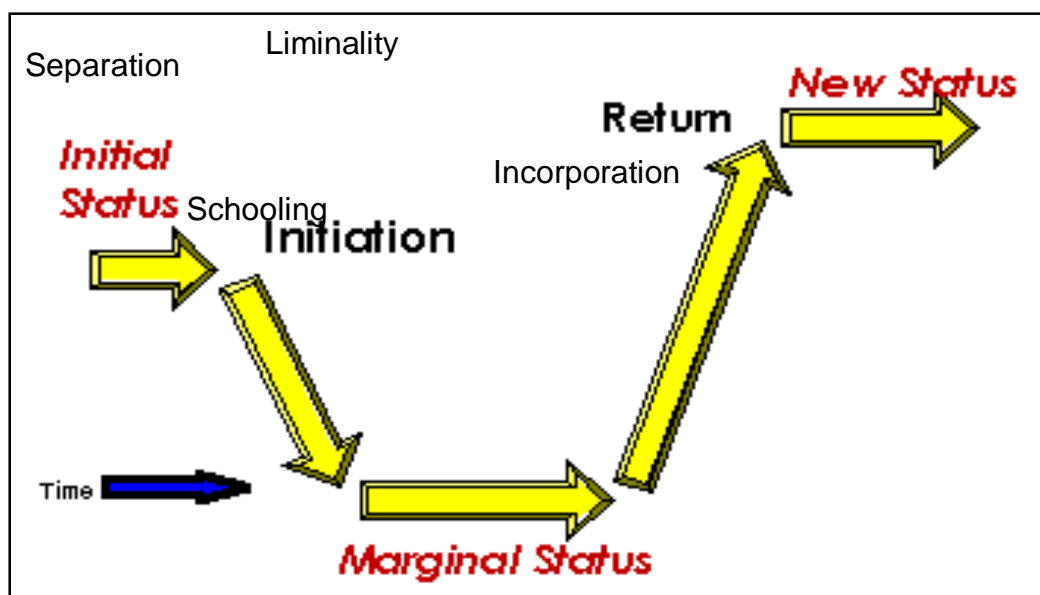


Figure 2.3 Demonstration of rite of passage theory

From the figure above, the initial status and time process (separation) signal the beginning stage before a male can be taken to initiation school and at that stage, he is called an uninitiated (leshoboro). Then with the downward arrow, that is where the male is taken through initiation processes and at the same time, he is supposed to attend schooling (the disjuncture). In the marginal status, the male adapts to the initiation environment (away from formal schooling) in the bush where he starts to learn cultural rites through initiations, bravery, endurance and overcome difficulties (liminality).

In the return process, when the male comes home from the bush everybody, including his parents, will celebrate his return. The last process is the new status (incorporation). The initiate is no longer considered a boy, rather he is considered as a man because he has entered into the new status by being initiated in the initiation school, which elevates him to associate with a new group of people – those who have been to initiation school. For example, before I went to initiation I was nervous to walk in the streets around the community in the evening, but after having gone to initiation I gained all self-confidence and bravery that I could now walk everywhere, every time, no matter how dark it might be. This came after I stayed in the bush for quite some time. Based on that, I told myself that I since I could manage to stay in the bush where there were all sorts of animals (both dangerous and non- dangerous), I could walk alone in my homestead streets, where there were only people. Therefore, this initiation contributed to male empowerment.

Rite of passage as a theory is divided into three stages: separation, liminality, and incorporation. In the first stage, the boys pull out from their existing stand and get ready to convert from one stage to another. This stage (separation) includes behaviour that signifies the group from an earlier fixed point in the social structure. There is often a detachment or cutting away from the former self in this phase, which is signified in symbolic actions and rituals (Fanning, 2011). For example, the removal of the hair of an initiate who has just entered the initiation is a sign that he is removing the previous. The transition (liminal) stage is the phase

where an initiate has left one phase and is preparing himself to enter into another phase. The qualities of liminality are essentially vague, for example, the learning process of initiation rites, endurance, bravery, and overcoming of difficulties. In the third stage (incorporation), Fanning (2011) indicates that the passage has completed the ritual focus. Since the ceremony has been completed and a new self has been created, an initiate enters a community with new things.

The performance of the initiation rite is deeply rooted in communities. It must be noted that parents today still preserve their culture by taking their children through the process of initiation in this 21st century. Initiation remains their culture and the initiates are ready to satisfy the beliefs and wishes of their society at large. The practice of this culture remains important in such a way that the uninitiated become embarrassed, out of favour, lonely, and normally observed as not earnest of being called men around societies. Another kind of rite of passage is revealed in a study conducted by Nxumalo (2014), where he explained that young African women undergo the process of virginity testing before the king can invite them to the Umhlanga ceremony. Testing their virginity signals a new beginning and it displays that they are making a transition from one stage to the other.

2.6 Conclusion

In Chapter 2, I discussed literature that emanated from the African continent, South Africa, and down to the Mpumalanga Province. The nature of cultural initiation, the genderised nature of cultural initiation, cultural initiation as non-formal/informal schooling, cultural initiation and its relationship with formal schooling, other factors influencing cultural initiation and schooling, as well as theoretically framing cultural initiation and formal schooling were looked at. I was also able to move from shallow to in-depth thinking and develop patterns. This served as truthful evidence that I can identify and link arguments and theories of other scholars to my study. However, the gap here is that initiations are viewed as negative influences on formal schooling. This is supported by the fact that learners felt emotionally betrayed because their academic plans were disorganised because they had to attend initiation schools. Their academic

participation dropped due to the fact that they were no longer engaged in the formal curriculum of schooling. Since they were in initiation, they had to learn their customary folklores, which were very different from what they learnt in normal schools. Their relationship with normal schooling was bitter. This is a result of a prolonged duration of initiations. This niche/gap is what I propose to fill through this research. The next chapter will present the research design and methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter conceptualises the research design and methodology embraced in this dissertation. Other issues which are explored in this chapter are as follows: research approach, research paradigm, issues of truth and reality, the nature of knowledge based on the ontological and epistemological assumptions adopted, research methodology, case study, research site, research sample, sampling, data collection, coding and analysis, the trustworthiness of the study, ethical clearance, limitations of the study, and the conclusion.

The use of research design and research methodology in this research was primarily to accomplish the objectives of investigating Mapulana male learners' views on the influences of cultural initiation on their schooling. This study has adopted an interpretive paradigm and a qualitative approach. Therefore, the research design has been drawn collectively with what was intended for this research so that we may seek proposed answers to the posed research questions. Throughout the investigation, I was concerned with identifying the influence of initiation on male Mapulana learners' formal schooling through their views. Participants were advised to speak in the language they were most comfortable with and the majority preferred to speak Sepulana during the interviews, which I transcribed thereafter. The process of analysing the collected data for this study was continuous. Furthermore, analysis was carried out after data collection had been completed as a final step before the consolidation of data. To remain with useful data, I deduced my data so that I could generalise my outcomes and draw conclusions (Miles and Huberman, 1984). Hence, this verifies my point that it was indeed a continuous analysis.

3.2 Research design

Blanche and Kelly (2002) define research design as ‘a plan for a study, providing the overall framework for collecting data’. MacMillan and Schumacher (2001: 189) in turn see it as a ‘plan for selecting subjects, research sites, and data collection procedures to answer the research question(s)’. They added that the objective of a research design is to deliver proposed answers that are adjudicated to be trustworthy. For Durrheim (2002), a research design is a planned structure for achievement that aids a connection between the research questions and the performance or operation of the research plan.

The above descriptions of a research design can be further elaborated on. When erecting a building structure, you do not have any specific place to make an order for the equipment you want to use in the building neither do you have an exact date in which the structure will be complete till you know the type of structure you want to erect. The point of departure should be the structure you want to build. Unless this is done, you cannot sketch a plan, obtain permits, work out a work schedule, or order materials.

Equally, qualitative research requires a plan before data collection or analysis can start. A research design is not just navigation; it outlines details on what has to be done to finish the task. The role of a research design is to make sure that the proof acquired empowers us to respond to the proposed research questions as explicitly as possible (Christensen, Johnson and Turner, 2011). Gaining pertinent evidence requires stipulating the kind of evidence desired to respond to the research question, to examine a theory, to assess a topic under investigation. This suggests that in the process of investigation, we need to find out the kind of evidence required to test the applied theoretical framework in a research design that works with a coherent problem and not a logistical problem (Yin, 1989). Therefore, if these research design issues are lacking from the outset, the conclusions drawn will typically be fragile and in vain and fail to respond to the proposed research question.

3.3 Research approach

All procedures, plans, steps, and methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation broadly define a research approach (Crotty, 1998). This includes several judgments, and they must not only make logical sense to the researcher alone. The final result comprises the type of method envisaged to examine the chosen study. Therefore, to inform the results one needs a theoretical perspective that guides the researcher to speak to the study. This is procedurally done through research designs, data collection tools, verifications, and data that must be analysed.

The research approach selected is determined by the scope of the chosen phenomenon under investigation. It is also determined by how conversant the researcher is with the topic and his/her relationship with the research participants.

Therefore, research approaches, research designs, and research methods play a pivotal role in my study because they characterise a perception about research that broadly delivers insights and narrow processes of methods in a succeeding approach. Hence, a qualitative approach has been applicable in this study (Daniel and Paul, 2017).

3.4 Interpretive paradigm

In this study, I used interpretivism as my paradigm. According to Pickard (2013), interpretivism assumes that human beings continue to make sense of their worlds and therefore situations are not similar. However, the initiated argument about interpretivism as the theoretical perspective of this study about initiation is that society is able to think outside the box and in that sense, they become creative thinkers, doing everything and anything with intention and understanding (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Besides, society strongly believes in its method of living and, in so saying, people can create their own cultural environment. They refuse to be like positivists who are incapable of creating their social world. Also,

in the interpretive perspective, the cultural environment created can only be understood by the very same people who created it. For example, initiation schools in Mapulana culture are best understood by none other than Mapulana. Subsequently, the emphasis is on understanding human actions and this paradigm (interpretivism) views knowledge and reality as subjective, socially constructed, and situation specific.

There is a sound and meaningful relationship between the interpretive paradigm and the qualitative research approach adopted. Willis and Edwards (2014) explained this relationship by clarifying that the interpretive paradigm is qualitative in nature. The interpretive paradigm asserts that societal discoveries are fundamental, and they must be treated as such. This must be done by listening to ideas and having a reciprocal relationship with them. Blanche and Kelly (2002) strongly attach meaning in advocating that qualitative research techniques remain the best when using the interpretive paradigm. The essence of the interpretive paradigm is to come up with a descriptive analysis that underscores the deeper interpretive meaning of societal beliefs (Henning, 2004). Based on this, the attempt in this research was to make available enough accounts of the Mapulana male learners' views on the influences of cultural initiation on their schooling as the topic under investigation envisaged.

Steven, Schade, Chalk and Slein (1993) suggested three key accounts of the interpretive paradigm which are explained as follows. They articulated that for one to be knowledgeable there should be learning and teaching taking place. Also, the interpretation of collected data stems from the researcher with a great point of prejudice. Moreover, they believe that a study carried out using the interpretive paradigm is investigated within the settings in which a phenomenon take place. Investigation of this phenomenon unfolded after a careful examination of the offending administration of initiation schools in Mapulaneng and Bushbuckridge of the Mpumalanga Province. In Chapter 2 (the literature reviewed), it was explained that the operation of cultural initiation schools remains an issue that left the society with divisions. However, rite of passage theory

clarified the phenomenon under investigation and made the society to have clarity of minds theoretically, particularly with concern to its application in this study. The phenomenon was therefore derived from this framework, that is, a rite of passage. The interpretive paradigm assumes that the social activities are decisive and that they must be understood literally rather than figuratively. If I were to bring the interpretive paradigm into conversation with my study, I would, therefore, accentuate that the above paradigm, which assumes the following:

3.4.1 Human life can only be understood from within

This means that the Mapulana understand initiation schools more than any other as it is their culture. They can take and interrogate each other. Therefore, the epistemological idea is that their understanding for cultural initiation must be understood under a literal meaning rather than a figurative one. How people relate to their social world implies that the research techniques are used to speak to the chosen research topic (Maree, 2007). Robson (2002) contends that truth is not found but created, therefore this means that there are various interpretations about the way people view the world.

3.4.2 Social life is a distinctively human product

From an interpretive paradigm perspective, it is assumed that truth is not factually placed but is being made by society (Fouche and Delpont, 2002). In terms of studying the knowledge (epistemology), I, as a researcher, have engaged in this research project to find knowledge on my own because I believe that knowledge is created, not found (Robson, 2002). Hence, I was eager to get the Mapulana male learners' views on the influences of cultural initiation on their schooling. It can also be assumed that when the Mapulana population are at their environment of origin that is a chance to realise their views and understandings. The exclusivity of a specific circumstance is significant to comprehend and read between the lines of the knowledge created (Hussey and Hussey, 1997).

3.4.3 The human mind is the purposive source or origin of meaning

By seeking to apprehend the fullness, complexity, and density of the phenomenon under study, I am beginning to advance a common sense divulged by society to phenomena and their social world. By discovering knowledge through this study, perceptions were made available for me to develop the acquisition of knowledge further (Geertz, 2017).

3.4.5 The social world does not exist independently of human knowledge

Research must have proposed questions intended at aid an answer of sorts thereafter (Guba and Lincoln, 2014). Therefore, the questions must assist in bringing knowledge and understanding of the social world to the fore. Knowledge must be gathered since the things we know about the social world should be more than enough.

3.4.6 Human behaviour is affected by knowledge of the social world

Interpretivism suggests that there is no single truth, but many truths of phenomena. These truths can vary through time and environment. Hart (2003) argues that our perceptions and views about subcultures increase every time we seek to know and, by so doing, we enter into a world with sufficient philosophies.

One of the pitfalls of interpretivism is that it fails to speak to the dynamics that stimulate understanding, procedures, and theories. It also does not recognise organisational formations (Sarantakos, 2005).

Figure 3.1: Representation of interpretivism (Maree, 2014)

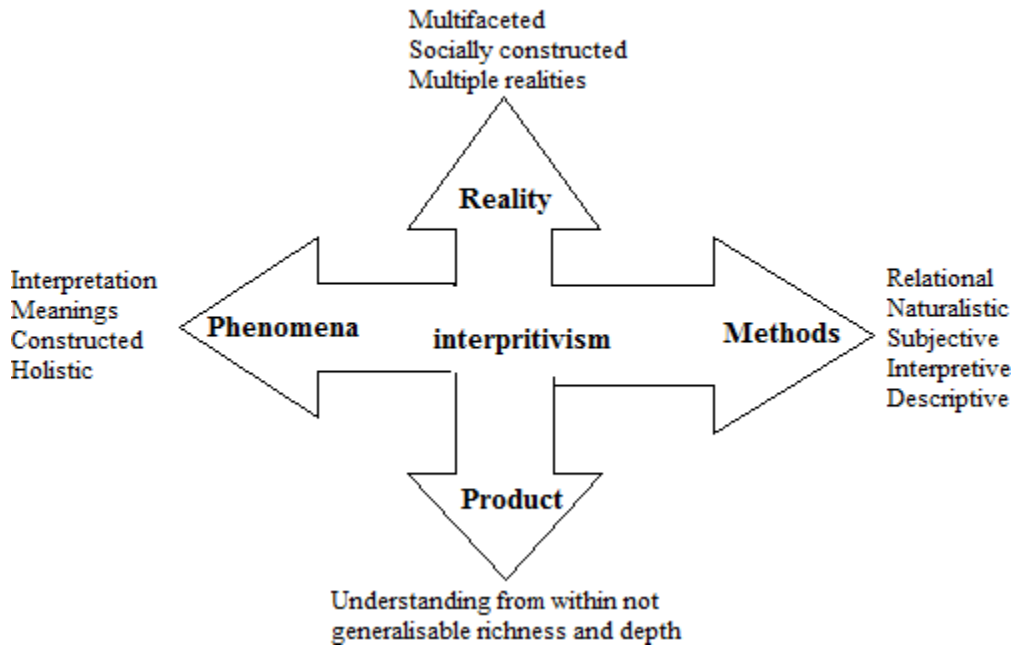


Figure 3.1: Perception and views about interpretivism

Based on the notion above, I am left with no option but to accept that cultural affairs, politics, and ideology have an excessive stimulus on initiations. The drive was not to divert the phenomena but rather to come to a deeper knowledge of the operations and administration of initiation schools as well as its influence on formal schooling. Blanche and Kelly (2002: 85) disclosed that, ‘It is conceivable to describe a phenomenon in rich detail and present its findings in engaging and sometimes evocative language and still be an interpretive researcher.’ This, therefore, confirms the applicability and relevancy of my chosen interpretivism paradigm. Regardless of the limitations, the interpretive paradigm suitably encompasses the objective and rationale of the phenomenon under study.

3.4.7 Issues of truth and reality and the nature of knowledge based on the paradigm and research approach (ontological and epistemological assumptions)

Ontology is the study of truth (Horn, Spencer, Barnard and Snape, 2014). Therefore, in the context of my study, I realised that after having heard many allegations about the operations of initiation schools, I had to undertake this study to understand the truth about all allegations made. Denney and Tewksbury

(2012) add that ontology refers to the anticipation we make about what we might have seen in existence, heard, and experienced. Similarly, Creswell (2013: 95) stresses that ontology is focused on the question, 'Does God exist?' In other words, ontology relates to our beliefs about the form of truth we acquaint ourselves with in our cultural environments.

Horn, Spencer, Barnard and Snape (2014) put forward that epistemology is different from ontology. In epistemology, we study or want to discover knowledge but in ontology, we want to discover the truth which has been pursued.

Ontology and epistemology are philosophical branches that speak to the sense of truth and knowledge. If I were to bring my study into conversation with epistemology, I would say epistemology narrates how operations and administration of Mapulana cultural initiation schools influence normal schooling of teaching and learning. Initiation school is another kind of a school where knowledge (epistemology) should be acquired. However, a deeper acquisition of knowledge so that the academic schooling calendar is not conflicted by initiation schools is also needed so that a remedy to the phenomenon can be sought. In bringing ontology to my study, I would therefore indicate that there are always intimations that as time goes by initiation schools will be prohibited. But the truth (ontology) is that initiation schools will remain in Mapulana culture. Therefore, this study is intent on finding a truthful understanding (ontology) as to whether initiation remains a main contributory factor that impedes the smooth running of teaching and learning in regular schools. It is through this study that truth will be found. Epistemology concentrates on how truth is known, how that truth is discovered (techniques), and how one draws a conclusion about that which he/she knows (Horn et al., 2014). In epistemology, we view the social world and make sense of it. On the other hand, knowing means knowledge is embraced and, essentially, it symbolises a particular meaning of what is entailed in that knowledge.

One can further describe epistemology as a possibility of knowing the unknown.

This shoulders a link between the knower and the known. Therefore, we may conclude that the findings had a worldview application and that they can be generalised to all cultural initiation settings. However, in this study of Mapulana male learners' views on the influences of their cultural initiation on schooling, it is not possible to generalise, but one should be subjective (Maree, 2007). Therefore, the truth about initiation is that I am not aware of any developments concerning policies developed and enforced on surgeons who administer initiation schools.

I have chosen Mpumalanga to conduct this study because I know that it is the province where it takes longer to hold initiation schools (two months) than Limpopo and Eastern Cape schools (two weeks).

3.5 Research methodology

Research methodology refers to explicit processes or methods employed to recognise, choose, process, and analyse data on a topic under study (McBurney and White, 2010). The case emerging in this study is that Mapulana male learners are expected to attend two schools at once, namely Western- style schools (normal schools of teaching and learning) and African customary schools (initiation schools). Hence, an exploratory case study was used in this study as my methodology because I wanted to understand the views of Mapulana learners on the cultural initiation of their schooling. My methods included an interview schedule of semi-structured questions.

Christiansen, Betram, Land, Dampster and James (2010) claim that there are several opinions about research methodology. It is assumed that qualitative research is used as a canopy in which approaches that have qualities in common reside. Data was collected twice so that I satisfied myself that, after probing, I had rich data. The link between the qualitative research approach and the interpretive paradigm is that they are both a description and interpretation about how the social world in existence feels and what have they experienced practically, unlike positivism which depends on quantity and measurements

(Blanche and Kelly, 2002). This implies that interpretively speaking we deal with qualitative issues rather than quantified issues. The interpretive paradigm sees the social world as truthful, that subjective experiences ought to be recognised, and the only method to make sense out of this is through interaction with them. Blanche and Kelly (2002) advocate that qualitative research methods remain suitable in researching the topic under study.

The above notion implies that we research the real and practical aspects of the social world rather than assuming situations through measurements or quantities. So, discreet data gathering methods like interviews are central to qualitative research (Maree, 2007). Also, solely analysing data qualitatively requires a continuous and interactive basis. This implies that data collection, processing, analysis, and reporting take place soon after each other.

Whenever you are analysing data it is imperative to re-read your data so that Lewis (2003) came up with the following figure demonstrating the application of a qualitative research approach.

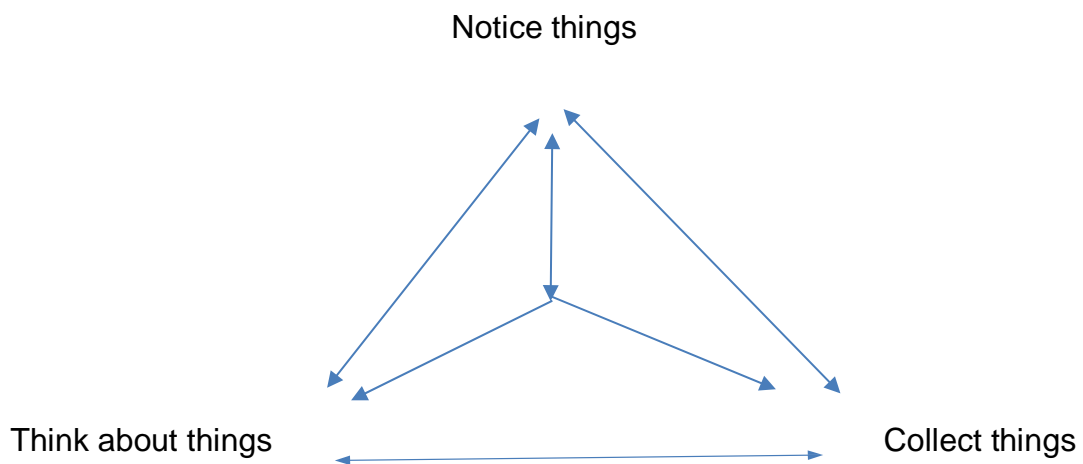


Figure 3.2: Qualitative research approach (Seidel & Lewis, 2003)

The above figure constitutes three elements. As a researcher, you need to notice useful things, you need to collect data that will respond to your phenomenon, and you need to think about the application of all research methodologies into your

study. The elements in the above illustration cannot work in isolation, hence they should be applied interchangeably (Seidel and Lewis, 2003). For example, as I was thinking about how my data would gel properly and make sense in my study, I realised that my study would bring out niche data and that has been realised within the rich data gathered.

I chose an exploratory case study design as the methodology to apply in this study so that it would help in making sense from Mapulana male learners' views of cultural initiation on their schooling. This has indeed been useful and applicable because I was able to get rich data, which paved my way in researching the topic under study deeply. A case study can be referred to as a piece or brief situation that is often planned to exemplify a further overall belief. It creates an image of reality in a practical sense, which accelerates our meanings and thoughts about a particular phenomenon (Fouché and Delpont, 2002). Case studies can infiltrate circumstances in instances not suggested tstatistical analysis. Robson (2002: 154) states that case studies 'opt for analytic rather than statistical generalisation that is they develop a theory which can help the researchers to understand other similar cases, phenomena or situations.' Therefore, a case study can perceive things in a natural setting because a setting remains key in determining both causes and effects (Geertz, 2017).

3.6 Research site

The fieldwork for this study was conducted in Mpumalanga Province, Bohlabela District (in Bushbuckridge), and Athurseat Circuit, as defined by the Mpumalanga Province Department of Basic Education. Bohlabela district has 16 Circuits and they are Mashishing, Manyeleti, Sabie, Agincourt, Cottondale, Greenvalley, Dwarsloop, Marite, Thulamahashe, Ximhungwe, Mkhuhlu, Lehukwe, Maviljan, Arthurseat, Shatale, Casteel and Athurseat. All schools under this district are dominated by Mapulana in the rural villages of Rooiboglagte, Tsakani, and Greenvalley.

3.7 Research sample

The population for this study comprised nine sampled males (six school-going males and three dropouts) aged between 15 and 20 years of age from three high schools and three rural villages under Arthurseat Circuit. These schools are found in the rural villages of Rooiboglagte, Tsakani, and Greenvalley, which are dominated by Mapulana, for whom initiation is their culture and they are socially deeply rooted in it. This is also the situation for the three dropouts from the rural communities of Rooiboglagte, Tsakani, and Greenvalley. Their parents were consulted for informed consent. The reason for this interview with learners and dropouts was that some of them were taken to initiation schools even before they finished writing all their examination papers. This sample was suitable for this search because learners were relevant and affected parties of underperformance.

The size of the sample comprised six learners from three different high schools and three dropouts (i.e. nine participants in total) in the rural communities of Rooiboglagte, Tsakani, and Greenvalley under Athurseat circuit of Bohlabela District in Mpumalanga. The district of Bohlabela is a located within Bushbuckridge local municipality. This municipality is dominated by Tsonga-speaking people, while Athurseat circuit is dominated by Mapulana-speaking people. This study had to be a purposive sampling strategy because it makes available participants who have data based on their experiences, which is relevant to the research. Participants were purposively chosen because the study focused on how schooling is influenced by the cultural initiation of Mapulana as this practice eventually compromises the achievement of minimum requirements which serve as a prerequisite for the next grade or university entrance.

Therefore, purposive sampling was employed in this study because only participants with the relevant and required data to the topic under study would be interviewed. The choice of purposive sampling was guided by the fact that

Mapulana were the ones whose academic achievements were being hindered by their own cultural practice. This nurtured my research participants' appetite to participate and be deeply constructive in our engagement (Etikan, Musa and Alkassim, 2016).

I wanted to focus on male Mapulana learners who are within the 15- to 20- year-old age group as well as former learners who dropped out of school for cultural reasons. This was because they were the vulnerable victims who were negatively affected by their own cultural initiation, hence purposive sampling was deemed necessary and suitable. Corbin and Strauss (2015) understand purposive sampling as headhunting participants in terms of their qualities so that we can develop a suitable sample. This technique is applied in circumstances where the sampling is conducted with a precise motive at hand (Maree, 2007).

The following criteria were developed before engaging in this research so that the participants could agree and understand what was expected from them:

- Age group: 15-20 years
- District of origin: Mapulana from Bohlabela district of Bushbuckridge
- Number of participants: Six learners and three dropouts
- Cultural belief: Initiation
- Citizenship: African

I have coded the above participants thus:

Learner A from school A (Nokeng High School) which is found in Tsakani;
Learner B from school A (Nokeng High School) which is found in Tsakani;
Learner C from school B (Gotloloka High School) which is found in Brooklyn;
Learner D from school B (Gotloloka High School) which is found in Brooklyn;
Learner E from school C (Mapanteng High School) which is found in Mapaleng;
Learner F from school C (Mapanteng High School) which is found in Mapaleng;

Dropout A from community A (Rooiboglagte); Dropout B from community B (Tsakani); Dropout C from community C (Hebron).

Table 3.1 List of schools and participants from which data was collected.

School	Participants (Learner)	Age	Place
School A (Nokeng High School)	Learner A from school A (Bogolo) Learner B from school A (Mathata)	15 16	Tsakani
School B (Gotloloka High School)	Learner A from school B (Gwababa) Learner B from school B (Hlakanang)	17 19	Brooklyn
School C (Mapanteng High School)	Learner A from school C (Motlalepula) Learner B from school C (Ikano)	16 18	Mapaleng
3 Schools	6 Learners	3 communities	
Community	Participants (Dropout)	Age	Place
Community A (Rooiboglagte)	Participant (Dropout) A from Community A (Motau)	18	Rooiboglagte
Community B	Participant (Dropout) B from Community B (Dintweng)		

(Tsakani)		19	Tsakani
Community C (Hebron)	Participant (Dropout) C from Community C (Diagana)	20	Hebron
	3 dropouts		

3.8 Data collection

In this study, data was collected through semi-structured interviews. These were conducted with the interviewees whose parents were asked for informed consent. Neumann (2006) defines data collection as the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest. The aim was to answer the research questions. To get all the data or evidence needed for the study, the semi-structured interviews and observation methods were triangulated. This ensured the trustworthiness of the findings. After original data was collected and transcribed, I found it imperative to go back to the field again and probed for rich data to get more participants' views. I integrated these views for analysis in chapter four. However, I used the initial ethical clearance for both data collection and probing. The interviews were transcribed in Sepulana (a dialect of Mapulana).

3.8.1 Obtaining access

Since obtaining access to the research site was an issue, my position was to negotiate approval from the principals, parents, learners, and the Department of Education Bohlabela District of Mpumalanga province. I did this to comply with the rules and regulations regarding access to information in public schools. I arranged times and days in a schedule and where I would meet my participants. They were available to agree and stick to the agreed-upon arrangement. This

was distributed to the participants prior to the interviews so that they could indicate when they were available.

Concerning the nature of the phenomenon under study, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) advised that there are two ways in which one can access the participants – covert and overt access. In covert access, you are deliberately accessing information without indicating your presence to the participants. But overt access dictates that you must get approval to access data from your participants and this must be agreed upon (Corbin and Strauss, 2015) which is based on informing participants and getting permission from all of them. I chose overt access because of its relevancy to this study; learners who participated in this research were doing so voluntarily without being forced (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

3.8.2 Becoming acquainted: The initial relationship

It must be noted that I was not part of the staff in the public schools where I gathered my data. Based on this, a relaxed atmosphere had to be created. I had to negotiate access and ensure that I became very friendly with all stakeholders to ensure that I was able to get the necessary and expected assistance. I therefore presented my requests to three schools and, as a resident of Mapulaneng, I was granted access after outlining the objectives I wished to achieve. I got permission from the University of Pretoria Ethics Committee, Department of Basic Education Bohlabela District of Mpumalanga province, principals, parents, and learners.

I explained to the above stakeholders that I wanted to get clarity on Mapulana male learners' views on the influences of cultural initiation on their schooling as well as the role played by Department of Basic Education Bohlabela District of Mpumalanga province, policy developers, and affected stakeholders (e.g. principal, educators and parents) in the administration of initiation schools so that the teaching and learning period was not tampered with.

3.8.3 Data collection tools

Individual, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted for individual learners. Semi-structured interviews were to the advantage of this study because it involves two people: me as the interviewer and the research participant as the interviewee (Cohen and Manion, 2018). The drawbacks of this study were that it was time-consuming to sit down with participants and conduct open-ended interviews. I used open-ended interviews because I was interested in provoking the participants to share some sensitive matters with me. To collect my data, I utilised an interview schedule (see Appendix D attached) and a tape recorder. However, I was also able to engage with other people I knew in informal conversation to get sufficient data.

3.8.4 Data analysis

Analysis in this study was done by focusing on themes generated from the responses of interviewees. Firstly, I collected data from participants, secondly, I processed the data, thirdly, I explored the data so that I could start with the analysis, and lastly, that is where I analysed that data. The data on the topic under study was gathered from the interviewed participants, transcribed into Sepulana, translated, and then coded. I later developed the main and subthemes. Data analysis refers to the process of breaking data into meaningful and manageable sections. This includes verifying, interpreting, and organising data. This section presented a thematic and narrative analysis of the results of the data collected at schools that highlighted several views held by learners (Seidel, 2013).

3.9 Trustworthiness of the study

I ensured that the tape recorder used was not a fake and that was how applicable it was in my study. In so doing, it added to making the study trustworthy (Creswell, 2003). I further ensured the trustworthiness of my study by recording all conversations with the participants during the interview so there was no way in which information could be distorted. This served as enough evidence that I did

not tamper with the gathered data. Cohort sessions at the university conducted every month also made available clear evidence that this study is trustworthy since issues discussed in our cohorts were very critical and useful in assisting me to keep on building a comprehensive and informative study.

3.10 Confidentiality and ethical clearance

The MDoE, the Bohlabela District, Athurseat circuit office, the three high schools, the participants, and their parents were consulted for informed consent. The permission thereof was requested by sending a letter of request to the relevant authorities. A letter asking for permission from the Ethics Committee of the University of Pretoria, consent forms, and confidentiality forms were also sent. Pseudonyms were used since participants preferred their names to remain anonymous during the interview process (refer to appendices). Furthermore, I explained to the participants that the data I collected from them would remain confidential and I also explained to the participants what my objectives in undertaking this study were. This was done after MacMillan et al. (2001) advised that one must first explain the purpose of the research before a research participant can sign a consent form. This consent form is attached in Appendix B.

It is important to be compliant with all the rules and regulations of research and respect to all involved research stakeholders as well as honesty must be entirely observed. To observe the aforementioned, I remained faithful to my participants by keeping the gathered data from my participants confidential and their ethical issues were protected. I did not record all the conversations especially those that did not serve the purpose in my study.

3.11 Limitations of the study

Although implications of initiation schools directly affected me as Mapulana, during the process I found it difficult to disclose some information about initiation schools since I had once been told not to do so when I was an initiate; this limited

my study. However, I managed to overcome this by complying with a request that I should interview less than ten males from the entire Mapulana population in Bushbuckridge, which I did. I engaged in an informal conversation with those who did not form part of my participants for more views. Withdrawal of participation due to personal problems by some participants in this study delayed the data collection process as finding another participant was time-consuming and also incurred extra financial resources because some participants' homesteads were far away. Agreed times in which we were supposed to meet with my participants at times clashed with their normal schooling periods. Nevertheless, this was mitigated by confirming appointments before the interview so that learners were sure of the times that they would be free. However, this did not disqualify the recommendations from being generalised in Mpumalanga secondary schools and the other eight provinces of the Republic of South Africa.

3.12 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented a research design and methodology relating to Mapulana male learners' views on the influences of cultural initiation on their schooling. This chapter began by describing concepts of the research design and methodology before deliberating on the specific design and methodological choices employed. The interpretive paradigm was used as a branch of philosophy that guided my study. The tape recorder and interview schedule were data collection tools that made the data available through semi-structured interviews. I found these tools useful in transcribing my data. A qualitative approach was used, and I deliberated on its link to the interpretive paradigm. The nature of the case study used was exploratory because I was trying to gain an in-depth understanding of Mapulana male learners' views on the influences of cultural initiation on their schooling. Thus, writing research questions was an essential phase which provided access to hit the ground of my study because, without research questions, one remains directionless as research will end up losing its focus.

I was able to read, read, and read (research) broadly before I established the two research questions which positioned my literature review. The following research questions were used in my study: (a) What are male Mapulana learners' views on the influences of cultural initiation on their schooling? (b) How does Mapulana male cultural initiation practice influence schooling? This research was solely guided by the above questions in terms of the type of data that needed to be generated, from which sources, and how the data should be analysed, and this played a major role in bringing my attention to the research design. However, the next chapter seeks to present and analyse the results of the data about male Mapulana learners' views on the influences of initiation on their schooling. The chapter will also outline the findings categorised in terms of Mapulana male learners aged 15 to 20 years who went for initiation.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the data gathered was presented and analysed thematically. The data that was collected from Nokeng, Mapanteng, and Gotloloka High Schools highlighted male Mapulana learners' views on the influences of initiation on their formal schooling. The chapter outlined the findings categorised in terms of Mapulana male learners aged 15 to 20 years of age who went for initiation. These learners were from three different high schools dominated by Mapulana for whom initiation is part of their culture that they strongly believe and are deeply rooted in. The sample also includes the three sampled initiated males who dropped out of school. The findings from these learners (school-going males and dropouts) established different views.

The collected data was transcribed, presented, and analysed. The analysis was arranged in three categories namely **before, during, and after** initiation schools have taken place. The reason for these categories is to ensure coherence to the reader, so that it can be understood that the state of affairs of initiation schools is dimensional. Moreover, the following themes emerged during the analysis process and were captured and discussed.

Table 4.1: Themes that emerged from analysing the collected data

Themes that emerged before the operation of initiation schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture as an influential factor to curriculum • The value of tribes in the generation of the 21st century

Themes that emerged during the operation of initiation schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views on mortality rate of initiates in search of identity (theorising the transition of a boy into a man) • Simultaneous operation of two schools in one cycle
Themes that emerged after the operation of initiation schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability post the unprofessional operation of initiation schools • Disjuncture or tension in commercialised ceremonies • Compliance to the Constitution of South Africa

4.2 Learners' views of initiation before attending initiation schools

I realised that research is the collection of different ideas, hence I had to ask my participants about their views before initiation schools were administered. Their responses empowered me to develop the following themes.

From the semi-structured interviews which I conducted, I found that Mapulana initiation schools were a factor that influenced normal schooling. This came after the research participants in general vowed that they were dedicated to their studies and often their main focus was to achieve by passing well through studying. This was evidenced by the utterances made by Hlakanang from Gotloloka High School where he indicated, 'Mo ke sokoya komeng, ke mo ke rata go tšhuta sekolo ende ke le ngwana waga butši.' (Before I could be taken to initiation school, I academically used to perform well in my schoolwork.)

Based on the above assertion, it is clear that before he left for initiation his

schooling was good and he was doing all his schoolwork (homework, classwork, assignments). He was also working on other school tasks given by teachers in all eight subjects that he was doing. Therefore, this means that in being taken for initiation his academic performance would be compromised, since some of the topics would be taught in his absence. Hence, Mapulana cultural initiation school was an influential factor on the schooling of Hlakanang.

Gwababa from Gotloloka High School shared the same view as Hlakanag, and he said, 'Nako ye ngwana ke nabela nkare bashemanyana bagore aba bollwa baka tšhutsiwa tsa dikoma basokoya, morago gamone ba botsisiwe gore ba sa nyaka goya komeng goba ba nyaka goya skolong naa? Ke a ditšiba tsa gore kemo batlo kgeta goya solo hay komeng.' (It sometimes came into my mind as a wish that, if it were possible, all these learners would be first lectured to the last point about initiation before they can go. After that, they are asked which one between initiation schools and normal schools they would choose. I have no doubt in my mind that these learners would choose to go for normal school instead of initiations.)

The confidence of the above participant in answering the question shows that he would have weighed his options and ultimately seen the importance of attending normal school instead of initiation school. These male learners would also be able to understand that going to initiation is just for fun and that it does nothing to contribute to their academic achievement which can result in a better future. But, going to a normal school, something is going to happen in the long run that will gear them to a brighter future.

Another important factor that I have found contributing to their schoolwork was the study groups that the learners created. They organised themselves around extra classes to help each other. Motlalepula from Mapanteng High School had this to say, 'Kemo redi botsiye gore retlo thoma grupu ya rune gore re thušane ga di thopiki tse re šitegago ga tsona.' (We told ourselves that we were going to establish study groups to assist us through exchanging knowledge and ideas.)

The example that I cite brings out Motlalepula's claim that learner A may be good in topic A and learner B may be good in topic B. This implies that learner A may impart his/her knowledge to learner B and learner B may impart his/her knowledge to learner A. Therefore, this exchange of knowledge will make them become even more knowledgeable through study groups. Such study groups existed and became effective during school holidays. However, contrary to the above statement, some participants would end up being absent for study group but present for initiation schools. Because of this trend, their study groups ultimately became dysfunctional. This eventually dragged learner academic performance down.

In addition, it seemed that the idea of the initiation was always lurking in the background, for according to Ikano from Mapanteng High School, as peers, they half-heartedly planned that they were going to have a study group as friends, but they did not follow through with it because of the initiation school being planned. Tied to what Ikano has said, Hlakanang articulated this, 'Kemo ke planne gore ke nyoko bala ka maatla mo di kolo di kwala ka June ka gore ka March ke berekele fase gabo level five. So kemo kedi botsiye gore go thoma ka June go ya pele ke di kgwetše ke berekela kgakala gabo level seven' (My plans were to study hard during the school holidays of June because in my March exams I passed with levels five (60-69%) and six (70-79%), so I wanted to find myself operating at level seven (80-100%) in all the eight subjects that I was doing.) As a result of initiation, this participant did not accomplish his plans.

Based on the views expressed by participants, I have found it clear that the generation of the 21st century view the world differently from those who lived before. Initiation schools were viewed by participants as not having the same value as in previous times. This was buttressed by the notion that Mathata from Nokeng High School brought forward, 'Dikoma matšatši yawa adi sale botlhokwa kagore batho bahwa ka botlalo elegore dilo tse ba di makago kuwa tlhageng dia makiwa dipetlele mo okabago o bolokegiye ka maatla gona.' (Attending initiation school these days is just a bad thing because people die in their large numbers

while the main thing that they do in the initiation, which is circumcision among others, is now also done in medical hospitals which is safer and healthier than in the initiation school.) This once again shows that we must have an understanding of the current generation. This must be listened to and deliberated on by relevant stakeholders and learners should not be bound against their will by cultural practices.

I have also established that other tribes do not do initiation. This was supported by Ikano from Mapanteng High school where he alluded, 'Banghani baka ke machangani ene ba di kgonne go tšhuta ke se šiyō ka gore setšo sa bona sa muchongolo se ka sontaga fela.' (My friends are from a Tsonga tribe. Their tribe is different from mine and they carried out their academic plans in my absence because they only attended/participated in their cultural dance called Muchongolo on Sunday afternoons.) On the basis of the aforementioned, this means the Mapulana tribe suffered the consequences of the deprivation of formal education while learners from the Tsonga tribe proceeded with it.

Despite the fact that some of the participants were keen on going to school, I found that excitement about initiation school was always in the air. Bogolo from Nokeng High School had this to say in this regard, 'Kemo ke thabiye ka maatla mo bare keya komeng kagore kemo ke botsiwwe ditaba tsagore komeng gwa thabisa ende go jiwa dilo tsa monate tsa go tshwana le di phitsa ende badi tlisa ka di eroplein.' (There was an excitement and anticipation about attending the initiation school since they were told tall stories. They were told that life is good at the initiation school to such an extent that they would eat food they normally did not eat frequently at home, such as pizza, delivered at initiation schools by air transports like airplanes and helicopters.)

Contrary to the excitement and tall stories expressed, Motlalepula from Mapanteng High School was saddened from the outset and he said, 'Ke mo ke

kwatiye disa tloga ka gore kemo kesa nyake goya komemg vele, mo ke fihla kuwa komeng ke bona tse nkadi bona kefolokwa nkare nka jika keye gae ka gore kemo ke makisiwa dilo tsagore ake di nagane godi dira.’ (I was very upset because I did not want to go to initiation school and when I arrived there, I felt like I could immediately go home. I started missing home from the first minute I got into the bush because all that which I was exposed to was just unexpected.) This means that when the prospective initiates heard from some former initiates about all this, they became amused and thought that initiation school was attractive, while, in reality, these were just hyperbolic statements.

With regard to lack of truth, I have also found that some male learners were pressurised by their peers and ultimately considered going to initiation school as an uninformed decision. Ikano from Motlalepula High School who went to initiation when he was in Grade 12 had this to say, ‘Nna kemo ke planne goya komeng vhele ka gore banghani baka ka moka kemo base bayye komeng ende kemo ke nyaka goya gore kete ke bonagale gore lenna ke monna, kemo kele ga Grade 12 skolo.’ (Going to initiation school was not my plan. But I ultimately went there because I was under the pressure because all my friends had already been for initiation. Going to initiation was a norm or a status that we would be recognised when we came back from initiation school.)

The above sentiment was also shared by Gwababa from Gotloloka High School who said, ‘Goya komeng ne kesa di nyake, mara ka gore kemo kele tlase ga kgatelelo ya gore banghani baka kamoka bayye komeng ka gore ba nyaka go tseyediwa tlhogong moba boya, lenna ke feleletsibe keye.’ (Going to initiation was the last thing I wished to do in my entire life. However, I was under the internal conflict that my group members went for initiation in their majority and their standing in the community would get place of pride and dignity when they returned.) This once again shows us that they experienced a sense of cultural compulsion against their will and they seemingly had little choice in the matter.

As Mapulana, there was still a mentality of passing the torch from one generation

to another. Some participants said that conducting an initiation school was an inheritance which was dictated by elders to be carried out by those who are still alive and well. The participants viewed the world differently from their parents or elders. Motau said, 'Bjalo ka gore papa kemo teyi wa dikoma goragore mo aka kgwa ke tshwantse ke tšwele pele lego teya koma.' (If my father died administering cultural initiation, it means that, as his children, we must take the torch or legacy forward by exercising cultural initiation continuously.) The above assertion shows that the male learners' minds were still colonised by the cultural experiences of the previous generation; a time where people were forced to follow their parents' or elders' and ancestors' paths. Also, a generational conflict exists which takes the form of tension between cultural practices and modernity.

On the basis of the above, this has brought to light the fact that some learners partook in initiation school forcefully and not of their own will. This attestation is evidence enough that they had a sense that they really would not make it in life if they put more effort into initiations than normal school. This has eventually led most initiates into being school dropouts, jobless, and victims of poverty.

As guided by the arguments and findings made above, I as a researcher would point towards and conclude that most initiates enjoyed and valued formal schooling and had little issue with it before initiation because they were innovative and hardworking. There was a sense in which cultural tension existed around initiation schools between initiates and other stakeholders. Initiation schools always lurked in the background and all kinds of stories did the rounds and there was also a sense of fatalism. The idea of 'it is what it is' surrounded the prospect of initiation schools. It cannot be part of formal schooling for cultural reasons and those who did attend struggled to adjust to society and normal school when they returned.

4.3 Learners' views held during initiation schools

After insights from the participants before initiation schools could be undertaken,

had to further seek their views in order to advance to the ‘during’ stage of initiation. This is where they were exposed to different initiation processes.

I found that the mortality rate increased because the principals of initiates took advantage of the fact that no cultural authority would hold initiation principals accountable. Bogolo from Nokeng High School said, ‘Se sengwana ke gore mo oka hwela komeng kagore o tobekele ke motho wagosa di tšibi, aga šiyoyewa atlogo go patela goba go tseya maikarabelo. Ba tlo fo kgopela tshwarelo di felega gana mone.’ (Another important aspect is that if you die in the hospital because you were not circumcised well by a trained and skilled medical practitioner and it is found that the practitioner was wrong, you or your parents may be reimbursed, unlike in the initiation school where you are just being circumcised by an uneducated somebody who uses you as a guinea-pig. Should you die, no one will be accountable. The initiation principal will only say ‘sorry’ to your parents). This young male speaks about fear of death and lack of accountability. He explores that there is a need for cultural authorities’ intervention.

The participants established that going to initiation made them gain identity but shun good academic performance. Bogolo from Nokeng High School had this to say about their performance after being initiated, ‘Hanta le tse koma ere makiye gore rebe le seemo sa rune sa bonna bjalo ka Mapulana mara mo re boela gae, ke mo resasa di yemisele skolong ende ma phelelo ya rune ma tšhentšiyee, kemo resasa ngwala mmereko wa skolo ende re sasa tlhompale mathitšere.’ (Although we regained our identities that we are Mapulana men, when we returned from initiations our performance changed hopelessly and our behaviour changed towards our schoolwork, educators, and classmates).

The above was supported by Motau (a dropout) who said, ‘Ke feleletsilye ke sasa bona bohlokwa bja sekolo kagore kemo ke sasa pasa gabotše sekolong. Se nka bona sele kaone ke gore kesasaya sekolo.’ (I ended up losing interest academically and resorted to dropping out of school.)

I have found that functioning in two types of schools (cultural initiation and formal schools) at the same time was also a challenge. Hence, after having asked Dintweng, who dropped out of school, about the possibilities of blending the two schools, formal and initiation, in one or operating them simultaneously, he responded thus, 'Adi kese maki kagore ahi kamoka ma titšere yawa maka bollwa ende bakese di kgoni go tloga sekolong baya tlhageng bo tšhutiseng mmereko wa bona otloba se o tlele.' (It's not possible due to the fact that some teachers are uninitiated, therefore they are not allowed in the bush or within the initiation premises.)

Motau, who was also a dropout, supported Dintweng by making this statement, 'Di ri tseyela nako ye yikabago 3 yadi kgwedi gore menagano ya rune yi boele sekeng sa di puku. Tse dira gore re thomme go kwisisa tsa di puku mola gabo October ene nako mo se e sepediye. Kemo se gole kotare yabo four. Tse di makiye gore resa pasi ende re boelele mphato. Re kwile nkare kego di tlhopa mara re bonne go le kaone gore re lese sekolo.' (About 60% of our mindset was still at initiation three months after we were back from the initiation. This means we started adjusting to the normal schooling activities by October. This was during the last week of the fourth term and because we were sort of slow, learners we didn't pass and were supposed to repeat Grade 10. We found it difficult to return to school but resorted to leaving school.) This evidence points to the fact that school was interrupted, and cultural changes happened which meant that he no longer coped with formal schooling.

I also found that justice was not done satisfactorily with regard to literacy or training of initiation school principals. In the view of Bogolo, 'Ka baka la gore ba teyi badi koma aba tšhutega, a ba bone gole bothata go lefisa nako ya go bollwa ka gore ga bona agona botlhokwa bja go tšhuta.' (Initiation school leaders are illiterate, so prolonging the initiation schools remained no hardship to them because they saw no importance of education). Therefore, I think the male Mapulana learners were at the mercy of initiation school principals who had little formal education themselves and thus did not value it. They valued the initiation

school more than official school.

The participants were extremely concerned that they were academically left behind because of initiation. Hlakanang from Gotloloka High School in Moloro posed that as initiates, they were thinking deeply about formal school while away for initiation schools. 'Sewa nka se bolabolago ke gore banghani baka ba šalela morago ende nako ye batlogo boya komeng ka yona gotloba se go fetsiwwe ka di thopiki ka moka. Ma thitšere abakasa di kgoni go boela morago ba tšhutisa tse baka di tšhutisa kgale.' (All I can say is that my fellow learners are left behind too much and by the time they come back to school they'll find us done with the curriculum. I am not aware of any teacher who would be sympathetic enough to teach them specially, but teachers will be revising.) The notion therefore signals that even though it was not possible to attend two schools at the same time, teachers were still burdened with two classes in one. Some learners were ahead of the curriculum in their schooling and some learners, that is the Mapulana learners, were behind in the curriculum. Yet, the exception or grace for those who missed lessons because of initiations was not considered when they wrote examinations.

I also found that the Mapulana learners were not told the truth. According to Bogolo from Nokeng, those who went for initiation (initiated males) used to tell them (uninitiated males) that initiations were good and enjoyable, however, the reality soon proved otherwise, and he naively thought he could leave. 'Go bolabola nnete kemo ke thabiye mo bare keya komeng ka baka la gore ke mo ke di tšiba gore keya le buti waka, mara mo ke fihla kuwa komeng ke fitlhiye ke di bona gore ka moka ga tsona tse mo ba di bolabola bawa baka bollwa ne e le maaka ene kemo kekwa okare nka boela gae ka lebelo. Ke thomme go belaela ka maatla ka gore ke mo kedi bona gore kea šalela sekolo.' (I was honestly happy and felt good before I went there. In addition to this, I never had a problem because I went to initiation with my brother and did not feel lonely and miserable. This was influenced by the tall stories I had heard about initiation before I went there. However, I realised when I arrived that it was not a good thing for me and,

if it had been reversible, I would have run back home with a jet lag speed because I was left behind with my schoolwork.)

All the activities taking place in initiation do not link to normal school activities, which makes these males find themselves having divided attention. This is because the two different schools both need their attention simultaneously. The participants contended that during initiation they were only exposed to one style of schooling which was cultural. Motlalepula from Mapanteng said, 'Ke mo re tšhuta tsa koma fela tsa gore adi tshwane letsa skolong, dikoma di fapanne ka maatla le skolo ka gore melawo ya gona e fapanne ende ke yewa resa makego skolong, mo okasa bale melawo ya gona otlo teyiwa.' (We were only engaged in initiation activities which were unrelated to our schooling. Initiation remains a school of its kind, systems, lessons, and a unique knowledge dispenser. We were introduced to different folklores and poems that we were forced to comprehend and sing. If you did not do this, you were going to be punished.) Corporal punishment has been abolished for a fact, but in initiation schools, it is still enforced, and the initiates endure all the hardships without telling any of their parents or guardians. This once again reveals the bad conduct of initiation schools by unqualified initiation principals who fail to do that which is good and right. Also, this points to the fact that Mapulana learners are being punished during the operation of initiation and this punishment is in conflict with the legal framework that normal schools are bound by.

From the above responses, one can see that divided attention emerged from these initiates. This is because they were told something which was not true in its real sense to such an extent that after being taken for initiation, they had second thoughts about it. This is one of the aspects that contributed to these male learners going to initiation under the pretext that they were going to be exposed to something that was not there and created a loophole in their schooling. Deep thinking was taking place at the initiation school about their physical health, especially as it related to circumcision. Such a sense of fear lurked that when they got back to official school, having seen what happened to

other initiates who did not complete school, they were worried. The actual value of initiation school was not realised by the initiates of the 21st century as compared to official education. The fact is that they were losing out/missing out on important sections of their official schooling. The fact that teachers did not work with them specifically to catch up emerged as a matter which can be related to negative influence. The romantic picture painted of initiation school was challenged but, in many ways, they were powerless and could not leave. A sense of victimhood existed, but they had little to say about the matter as it was decided by elders as a cultural practice.

4.4 Learners' views after attending initiation schools

This is the last section that presents learners' views after being initiated. This is a stage where self-introspection and reflection occurs since they now have undergone every cultural custom at initiation school.

I found that principals of initiation schools must inform parents in instances where a boy goes to initiation school and is subjected to circumcision without the knowledge of his parents or guardians. It has been revealed that parents or guardians remain custodians of accountability to their children. Hlakanang from Gotloloa said, 'Di botlhokwa tsa gore batswadi ba botsiwe pele motho aka tobekediwa komeng ende go botlhokwa gore batswadi ba tseye bana ba bona baba yise sepetlele pele, se ngwaga wo wo latelago baba yise komeng ya tlhageng.' (It is important that parents be notified before circumcision and it is also important for the initiates to be taken for medical circumcision before cultural initiation. This must be the point of departure before the circumcision process can commence so that the parent is involved well in advance if this did not happen.) In my interviews with the participants, I have discovered the aforesaid.

Due to the lack of accountability by permit holders, I have further found that the participants thought that initiation schools would soon be abolished and Gwababa from Gotloloa High School argued, 'Ke nagana gore dikoma batlodi

khansela di sasa ba gona mengwaga yewa etlago, ka gore koma ke setšo sewa se tseyago nako ye telele se kganediwa ende tsewa ke tsona di makago gore district ya Bohlabela yibe fase ka go pasisa.’ (I think Mapulana initiation is a dominating culture that contributes to poor academic performance of Bohlabela district. This is based on the fact that other cultures do not require long periods to be practiced other than with Mapulana, hence something needs to be done about this.) So, what is being said here is that I want to be like other cultures (similar to others) and that the Mapulana thing of initiation is not appealing to me.

Practically speaking, initiation schools take about two months in the bush. When schools close for winter recess, winter enrichment classes are usually organised to advance the curriculum. This is a very dire time because initiates are taken for initiation while other learners are busy attending organised lessons for winter enrichment classes. Some initiations will normally come out of the bush on 9 August. This means that by the time initiates come back, teachers will be done with the term three topics. The worst part of it is that the Mapulana learners are not learning school-based concepts in the initiation but are exposed to culture-based concepts. No matter how academically good you are, the initiation attention will avert your academic achievement.

I have discovered that age remains an issue that has left the initiation authorities with divided attention, hence a tension prevails. Age must be considered when undertaking initiates for initiation. In this regard, Mathata from Nokeng High School made this argument, ‘Ke nagana gore mengwaga yewa motho a tshwantseng aya ka yona komeng e tswantse go tseyediwa thogong le yona.’ (I also think age should be made a priority when taking a child to initiation.) I can recommend in essence that all those who undergo initiation should be from Foundation Phase/band and General Education and Training (GET) band, not from the Further Education and Training (FET) band. The aim should be that those in the FET, especially Grade 12 learners, should focus their attention on schooling, especially curricular activities as opposed to cultural and/or extra-curricular activities.

After realising that cultural initiations take longer than they are supposed to, one of the participants brought to light a thought that circumcision should be done at medical hospitals first and then cultural initiation may follow. Hlakanang said, 'Ke nagana gore saga botši ke gore modika a thome a bollwe sepetlele ka gore o tšhetšha a fola. Morago ga goya sepetlele kemo se otlayang komeng ayo bollwa leshahleng. Mohlala ekaba gore ngwagowa aya sepetlele bjalo ngwago otlago aya leshahleng.' (I think it is imperatively advisable for parents to take their children via the hospital route and thereafter take the 'bush' route. For example, this year they can take their kids to the hospital for medical circumcision which always doesn't take time for the child to heal since the powerful and appropriate medication is being used in hospitals. Then, the following year the kid can be taken to cultural initiation to learn folklores, poems, etc.) This also speaks to a tension between Western and traditional styles of operation. I think the point has been made that he is happy to go to initiation school, but the circumcision part needs to happen beforehand for health reasons and with parental consent.

Based on the expressions made thus far, I have found that initiations are no longer administered for culture preservation purposes only, but for commercialisation benefits as well. Diagana said in this regard, 'Ke nagana gore dikoma adisa teyediwa setšo fela ka gore batho bago tlala ba di nyakela tšheleta fela nako ye re phelago ga yona. Tse di bonala ka gore le batho ba ele go baditi aba tšhutega ende ba golediwa tšhelete ye nyana.' (Since initiation schools for this 21st century are mainly exercised for income generation only, they know that uneducated caregivers won't be paid a lot and, in that case, they'll be able to accumulate more profit through them.) Many people who were abused at initiation schools have lost their cultural imperative and initiation schools are now money-making commercial endeavours. He, therefore, doubts the cultural value of initiation schools.

Initiation was found to be valueless because it did not contribute to the gainful employment of Mapulana. Hence, Mathata from Nokeng said, 'Mola bare koma ya thuša ene e bohlokwa, mo madika matšwa komeng ke mo batlo ba neya di

setifikeit tsa go šupa gore kannete se ke banna baka sepela ba nyaka mmereko. Se aba hwetši selo gora gona gore difo ba jela nako.’ (If initiations were of importance, after graduating from the bush, as a metaphor of initiation, they would certify these males with something they know would enable them to get employment but to show that it does not contribute positively in their academic lives, they come home with no certificate of employment.) Based on the above assertion, I can generally conclude that the initiation schools do not add any value to life in the contemporary world, in other words, it does not make you employable in the context in which you will be living your life.

The disjuncture emerged as a cause of tension between the two forms of schooling. Bogolo from Nokeng High School advocates this finding and he said, ‘Ke a di kwišiša tsa gore koma ke setšo mara ke bona dile gabotši tsa gore gobe le maphephe ya go dumelelana gare ga Nduna le mo teyi wa dikoma.’ (Much as I recognise it as a culture, I think consent under certain conditions should be signed between the traditional leader (induna) and the initiation principal.) This means that there are conditions that are overlooked by initiation principals and the indunas are aware of those, hence an agreement must be made beforehand in the form of a consent.

Some of the participants indicated that even if they did not want to go to initiation schools, they were forced by their parents to do so. This finding shows that compliance with the Constitution of South Africa is overlooked because forcing Mapulana learners to go to initiation by their parents is a violation of their human rights, which conflicts with the South African Constitution. Hence, Motlalepula from Mapanteng High School accentuated his thoughts about formal school and how it came into conflict with the traditional views of his parents. ‘Ka baka la gore ke mo ke di kgona tsa skolo, ke dumele gore ba tswadi baka ba ntseye bangyise komeng. Mara kemo kesa di nyaki ka gore kemo kedi bona gore ketlo šalela morago skolong efo ba gore eki tšhaba go ganela batšwadi baka.’ (Since I was a good performing learner, I agreed to my parents taking me to initiation. I did not say this to anybody but deep inside of me I was somehow worried that I would be

left behind academically. However, I was still young and therefore, did not have the guts to take a contradictory decision from that of my parents). This male had a concern about being taken for initiation. This portrays negative thoughts about leaving normal school for initiation. Therefore, some males remained with no option since parents could dictate that they do so. This suggests that the human rights of these learners were contravened. Again, a generational conflict and tension between parents and their cultural visions for their son emerged and this male's own personal ambitions in a changing world was once again jeopardised. There was also a tension between tradition, culture, and modernity.

Since no one wants to remain young, these boys were told that when they came back, they would no longer be called boys but men because of the transition they would take from boyhood to manhood. Dintweng supported this notion by saying, 'Maemo ya rune ma tšhentshiye mo nageng re dulago ga yona. Re botsiwwwe le gore mathitšere ya rune batlore tlhompka ka maatla ka gore ba bangwana aba bollwa.' (My status in the community will change. Teachers will be afraid and respect me because they will be aware of the fact that they need to address us properly as men, not boys). Although it is good to make a transition from one stage to another, this once again shows how these initiates were told to perceive themselves. They perceived themselves as dummy gods in some way; they were given the status that was above their age. Culturally, they were men because they had 'passed' through, but constitutionally they remained boys for as long as they were still under the age of 18 years. I think the tension here emanates between cultural ideas of masculinity and legal ideas. This also would then play itself out in schools and the power dynamic of boys returning as men expecting to be treated differently by their teachers.

Initiation schools did not only change their status but even their behaviours changed. This finding is evidenced by what Bogolo from Nokeng who said, 'Mo ole ka komeng, ba rata go go reta bare mo o boela gae okasaba moshemanyana mara otloba monna. Tsowa ke tsona di makago gore redi bone rele batho baba golo le gore re di shemanyana.' (At initiation school, they normally emphasise that

when we return from initiation, we will no longer be boys but men. Because of this, we became bossy, disrespectful, had high demands, and wanted to be in control of everything.) It has been once said that bad company corrupts good character. Since all people who are hired to take care of initiates in the initiation are uneducated, one can end up being influenced by them and remain uneducated because all they tell us about school is negative. Some of their deeds include insulting teachers about their schooling days, making jokes and laughing in the presence of teachers, disrupting and bunking lessons, etc. In addition, what happens there is that these now young men re-enter schools with a different set of values than those that they left with. They are now also seemingly in conflict with the school as a structure and a system and the authority of the school. The result is tension between the Mapulana male initiates and their schools.

The participants deemed it fit that provinces collaborate and expressed that there is a need for partnership, especially in the CoGTAs of Mpumalanga and Limpopo provinces. The above finding was supported by utterances from Mathata of Nokeng High School who said, 'Ka mo Tzaneen di gona dikoma legona, mara ba bollwa mo dikolo di kwadiye fela ende mo dikolo di bula, dikoma le tsona diatšwa gore bana ba skolo basa šaleli morago.' (In Tzaneen, Limpopo province, they also practice this (initiation) culture, but they only practice it during school holidays. By the time schools re-open, all learners go back to school including those who went for initiation.)

Mathata from Nokeng High School is supported by Hlakanang who said, 'Bjalo ka mo ke duliye komeng nako ye telele, kemo kesasa rata sekolo.' (The only thing that I discovered was that the academic commitment I had was no longer there after being initiated). This developed a negative attitude towards his schooling. Therefore, this means that as much as it is possible in Tzaneen, Limpopo, I think the traditional leaders of Mpumalanga should not have reasons why they fail to administer it as Limpopo do. The principle should be the same. These boys saw the bigger picture of how initiation schools function elsewhere and how that did not disrupt formal schooling in another province. This shows an active awareness

and engagement with bigger ideas around initiation schools.

4.5 Conclusion

A conclusion that can be drawn from this section is that deep reflections took place after the initiates returned from initiation schools. This implies that initiates who are taken through initiation schools should be from the lower phase (GET) of secondary school not from the upper phase (FET) of secondary school. It must be organised to fit into the formal school year to have less of an impact on their formal schooling. Parents or guardians of initiates must sign consent forms before admission of a boy into an initiation school can be made. This speaks of cultural/societal coercion.

From the data, there was a sense that initiation schools were no longer cultural only, but that a strong commercial and capitalist element had crept in, as some people were making money out of them. Those who lead and conduct initiation schools need formal training. Deep suspicion and partial rejection existed about initiation schools as the value of it was doubted. This impacted negatively on their return to formal schooling in many ways as they were now left behind and had a different view of their place/role in the school as 'initiated men'.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

In this concluding chapter, interpretations, discussions, and recommendations from the findings have been deliberated on as a means to draw the study to a close. The focus and purpose of the dissertation was to understand, in an interpretivist sense, the views of male Mapulana learners on the influences of cultural initiation on their schooling. Therefore, conclusions were drawn and discussed and recommendations from the findings were then proposed. This I did primarily to pave the way in stimulating the advancement of policies governing and monitoring initiation schools for the betterment of the male learners involved. The above was done while keeping concepts central to this study, such as cultural and historical initiation ceremonies, rites, pride, gender identity, male empowerment, bravery, values, endurance, and overcoming difficulties in mind. Finally, matters which require future investigation to be researched are outlined.

5.2 Summary of the major findings from the data

This section presents findings from the participants' responses. The findings served as responses to the proposed questions developed in Chapter 1 on the topic under study, namely 'What are male Mapulana learners' views on the influences of cultural initiation on their schooling?' In response to the above question, I found that the learners held views on several influences before, during, and after initiation schools had been administered. The data on which these findings are based were presented in Chapter 4. However, it must be noted that after the initial data was collected and transcribed, I found it imperative to go back into the field to get more participants' views to probe for rich data. Equally, it must also be noted that the transcriptions were from Sepulana (the dialect

language of the Mapulana) in Mapulaneng.

I found that cultural tension exists around initiation schools between initiates and other stakeholders, such as principals of initiation schools, traditional leaders, parents, DBE in Bohlabela District of Mpumalanga province, CoGTA, and the Department of Traditional Affairs. The tension here is related to the conflict between cultural rituals, ceremonies and practices in the form of initiation schools and formal education. The participating Mapulana male learners ended up, either willingly or by means of coercion, having to endure traditional cultural education at the expense of formal education. From this, I also determined that another tension emerging is related to a quiet youth rebellion, which cites issues of democracy versus traditional practices. However, much of this rebellion was shrouded in ambiguity with some cultural needs being expressed by male Mapulana learners by dint of the gains made in terms of masculinity and manhood. As explained earlier, in Sepulana we say 'rutang bana ditaola le seye natšo badimong' (elders must teach young men customary rituals before they die). This means that initiation plays a pivotal role for the young men in gaining their identity with pride. The practice of this culture also ensures that when these male Mapulana return they are not the same as when they left. They were boys but now they come back home as men. This is the transition I spoke about in my theoretical framework in Chapter 2. As a result of being initiated, they perceive themselves as strong, powerful men, brave enough to engage in cultural mock fights and to be active participants in the agenda of determining how male Mapulana cultural initiation issues should be handled. Consequently, they developed a different view of their place or role in the formal school setting as 'initiated men'.

Initiation schools always lurked in the back of the minds of the male Mapulana learners and all kinds of stories did the rounds. This was tied to a certain sense of fatalism from the side of the initiates, meaning that whatever views they held by being Mapulana they would not be able to escape initiation. In short, initiation remains a cultural practice for male members of the Mapulana and that is what it

is, regardless of the positive or negative consequences. Furthermore, it cannot be part of formal schooling for educational and cultural reasons and the sense of fatalism played itself out in the experiences of those initiates who struggled to adjust to society and formal schooling when they returned from the bush. The reason for their struggle was that the teaching and learning activities embodied in the curriculum continued while they were away at initiation. When they returned, not only had the school year progressed significantly, but they also found that post-initiation they were totally different individuals than earlier. Psychologically and on many other levels they realised that they needed time to adjust to school or, more fatalistically, drop out of it.

The issues around tribal affiliation also emerged as a view among the male Mapulana learners and how this relates to schooling. It was argued that the formal schooling of the Tsonga was virtually not disturbed by their muchongolo dance, since it was practiced at home every Sunday afternoon. Consequently, the view was expressed that being Mapulana appeared to be disadvantaging male Mapulana learners because they were supposed to practice their culture in the bush for a period of two months, and sometimes more, during school time. This became a point of cultural disjuncture and the view was that while their Tsonga peers progressed educationally, they were in the bush undergoing initiation.

Contemporary issues related to their rights also featured in the views of the male Mapulana learners. According to the Bill of Rights in South Africa, learners have a right to free education, and to them this was a matter that was not given its pride of place. They were informed during formal schooling about their rights under a human-rights-driven constitution. This caused tension between democracy and tradition. Constitutionally speaking, male Mapulana learners, in their views, had a right to choose whether they should participate in initiation or not. However, traditionally speaking, they had no choice but to go for initiation because that is the culture their parents and community strongly believe and are deeply rooted in. This could be seen in the excitement and anticipation that accompanied the lead up to attending the initiation school and that some learners were being

pressurised or forced by parents to take part. Thus, a form of cultural coercion took place. In other words, parental or peer pressure and tall stories were used to convince many of the young men to take part. Since many initiates eventually ended up as school dropouts, jobless, and victims of poverty, a sense of fear lurked at the thought of going back to formal school as they had seen what happened to other initiates who did not complete school. They were worried, sensing the negative impact of initiation school. Throughout this study I did not observe any Mapulana males holding positive views of the influence of their cultural initiation on their formal schooling. This negativity was accompanied by deep thinking at the initiation school about their physical health, especially as it related to circumcision, an aspect well reported in the media. Although their physical health positively contributed to their masculinity, their fear was informed by the fact that they would be left behind in terms of formal schooling.

The actual value of initiation school did not feature in the views of the initiates. The fact that they were losing or missing out on important sections of their formal schooling, and that the teachers would not work with them specifically to catch up, emerged as a matter which could be related to negative influence. In addition, thinking that they would get attention from their educators when they returned from initiation left them feeling that they had a marginal status in society. The cultural gains or education as Mapulana men, as explained in Chapter 2, could not offset this loss. Therefore, a serious tension existed between modernity versus tradition, formal schooling versus initiation schools, and economic visions for the future versus cultural practices. Deep reflections also took place after the initiates returned from initiation schools. These young men contemplated their lives, not only as Mapulana, but also more broadly as South Africans and citizens of a global world.

The young Mapulana men who participated in this study also had clear views on social justice issues as it related to initiation and formal schooling. They had the view that initiation should take place in the lower phase (GET band) of secondary school rather than in upper phase (FET band). Tied to the above view, they

proposed that the operations of initiation schools should be organised to fit into the formal school year so as to have less of an impact on formal schooling. The sense here is that if initiation should happen it should be organised differently or better and it is deemed necessary for it to fit into the school year and Mapulana male learners' educational aspirations. A suspicion thus existed that initiation school was 'not what it is meant to be', was devoid of cultural value, and hence needless. In this regard, deep suspicion and partial rejection existed of initiation schools as the value of it was doubted and its impact viewed as being negative on their return to formal schooling.

A view also existed that parents or guardians of initiates should sign consent forms before the learners participated in the initiation school. There was also a sense that initiation schools were no longer of customary value only, but that a strong commercial connotation had crept in, as some individuals were making money out of them. The young Mapulana males who participated in the study also held the view that those who led and conducted initiation schools needed some form of formal training. All-in-all the participants in this study had divided opinions on the value and the way forward with initiation. What they were firm about was that initiation schools must not conflict with the normal school calendar. This view was based on the experience that male Mapulana learners found it difficult to meet minimum requirements to proceed to the next grade. In addition, very few of them obtained bachelor's or university entrance or matriculation passes because the cultural initiation process compromised their normal schooling.

On the other hand, initiation schools remain part of the Mapulana culture and it is the only cultural aspect that is entirely celebrated by the Mapulana population at large. In support of this sentiment, respondents were quick to say that male Mapulana cultural initiation remains the culture that they strongly believe in and in which they are deeply rooted. Much of this is can, in all probability, be explained by the idea of a rite of passage – in other words the transition from boyhood to manhood signifies the practical application of the theory.

On a different level, the above findings also speak to the reviewed literature. With reference to school dropouts of males who underwent initiation, Hakielimu (2010) argued that when a male passes through different traditional rites, psychological changes take place and he no longer wants to continue with his studies. Comparatively, in Zambia different tribes conduct initiation ceremonies to males with the onset of puberty. These include the Ngonis, Chewe, Nsenga, and Kunda. Here also, a large school dropout of initiates took place. In another context, that of Zambia, Colclough (2003) reported that, in a discussion with teachers, they mentioned that males' interest in schooling declined dramatically after being initiated. Mteweale (2012) accentuated Colclough's claim (2003) by arguing that the root cause of male dropout from school includes absenteeism related to initiation ceremonies. The reason for this dropout is because learners find themselves repeating grades, hence they become discouraged to pursue academics.

However, changing the status quo of initiation schools is not easy. From Lesotho, it is argued that the time spent in initiation is too short for initiates to learn about cultural rites, folk laws, and other topics covered. The work of Maharasoala and Maharaswa (2004) and that of Malisha, Maharaj and Rogan (2008) accentuates that initiation schools normally last for a period of six months in Lesotho. An additional factor pointed out by Van Rooyen et al. (2006) is that in some initiation schools the duration is dependent on the recovery time of circumcised boys. Circumcision and its impact are something that many of the participants in this study also picked up on.

5.3 Application and relevancy of the theoretical framework for the study

By virtue of bringing the findings from participants into conversation with the chosen theory, I observed that a rite of passage was applicable and worth adoption as a theoretical frame. It is relevant and applicable because it is understood as an occasion which enables one to make a transition from one stage of life to another. This transition is exactly dramatised by what happened

during the time when the initiates were engaged in the initiation school in the bush, including the process of customary circumcision. In the context of my study, I further argue that a rite of passage must also be seen as when the uninitiated (culturally called mashoboro) are considered as boys not men. Therefore, once they have undergone the initiation schooling process, their status of being boys is now converted (passage through) into men (which we culturally call banna). This means that there was a transition (passage) they have moved into and through. In the process, formal schooling is likewise a rite of passage as learners progress from Grade 1 to Grade 12, however, this is interrupted and superseded by initiation as a rite of passage. With regard to male Mapulana cultural initiation, a passage is further observed when a boy leaves fellow uninitiated boys (mashoboro) in order to join those in initiation. Metaphorically speaking, one can say the boy was transformed into a man and then his prestige in the community he leaves changes.

Therefore, it is for the reasons above that I see a clear link between the theory applied to this study and the findings. Moreover, methodologically speaking, the theory also spoke to my study. This it is due to the fact that a rite of passage is divided into three phases and I also collected data into three phases namely: initial status (learners' views before attending initiation schools), marginal status (learners' views during the operation of initiation schools in my study) and new status (learners' views after initiations were held in my study). The initial status signals the beginning stage before a Mapulana boy can be taken to the initiation school and he is called an uninitiated (leshoboro). Then in the marginal status, that is where the male is taken through initiation processes and adapts to the initiation environment which is away from home and formal schooling. It is in the bush where he starts to learn cultural rites through initiations, such as bravery, endurance, and overcoming difficulties. The new status is when the male Mapulana comes home from the bush where everybody, including his parents, will celebrate his coming back. The initiate is no longer considered a boy – rather he is considered a man. This consideration is under the pretext that the initiate has entered into the new status by being initiated in the Mapulana culture by

means of the initiation school and the associated circumcision and not medical circumcision. This elevates him to join fellow-initiated men.

On a personal level, for example, before I went to initiation school, I was nervous about walking around in the streets in my community in the evening, but after having gone to initiation school I gained self-confidence and a sense of bravery, which meant I could walk anywhere at any time, no matter how dark it may be. This came about after I stayed in the bush for initiation purposes for more than two months. On the basis of that, I told myself that I could not manage to stay in the bush where there are all sorts of animals (both dangerous and non-dangerous) but fail to walk alone in the streets where there are only people. Therefore, this initiation contributed to male empowerment on its own.

Based on the above rationalisations, I would confidently argue that rite of passage as a theory employed to frame this study was both relevant and practically applicable. The theory also imaginatively dramatised the processes of initiation before, during, and after initiation schools were held.

5.4 Contribution that this dissertation is being made to the literature

Based on the scholarly debates conducted and identified in Chapter 2 (literature review), I argue that my study makes some contribution to the literature. I am not aware of any literature that gave attention to the causes of the dropout rate in schools dominated by male Mapulana learners. Therefore, the contribution brought in by this study, based on the authentic voices of male Mapulana learners, is that their interest in schooling declined dramatically after being initiated because they found themselves repeating grades. This repeating of grades discouraged them from pursuing their academics, hence the high dropout rate.

Also, I think this study stresses the issue of the prolonged duration of initiation as a matter of serious concern. Principals of initiation schools overlooked this, hence a need for training/workshops by CoGTA for initiation principals, traditional surgeons, and caregivers emerged as a matter that should be

continuously/annually conducted.

I have observed with great apprehension from the reviewed literature that a high number of fatalities in male initiation schools are recorded every year. This is an aspect that was expressed in the views of the participants in this study. The contribution that this study makes is that the initiates should firstly be taken to hospital for medical circumcision by a qualified medical doctor. Then, the following year, the initiate may be taken to cultural initiation to learn all customary rites. This will reduce or prevent the high fatality rate we are witnessing in male initiation schools. Moreover, this study advises that the age and school grade of a learner needs to be looked at when taking male Mapulana children for initiation.

Another contribution that this study makes is with regard to the importance of respecting the constitutional rights of male Mapulana learners. I say this because parents who took their boys to initiation, or others who coerced them, were many a time doing so without the consent of the child. Their decisions as parents were final and forceful. Also, this study makes one understand the importance of formal education. The study has highlighted that post-1994, issues of belonging to the indunas or tribal authorities are being challenged. This means a clash between culture and tradition, and modernity and a rights culture. In this regard, what is clear is that formal education surpassed, in the view of the participants, informal education when they were thinking of a better future. Most importantly, this study contributes to bringing about the observed disjuncture between culture and democracy, formal and informal schools, legal and customary, as well as Western and African schools. From all the points made above, it is clear that the study has contributed to the body of literature.

5.5 Personal and professional reflections on the study

What, then, did doing this study mean to me? In my rationale and motivation for doing this dissertation, as explained in Chapter 1, I pointed out that I wanted to gain an understanding about the Mapulana population who were not consciously

aware of the influences that initiation schools have on the schooling of their male children. This study was, therefore, a personal quest driven by the fact that my experience as a Mapulana and a teacher revealed to me that unofficial education acquired in those cultural schools and how it is learnt is not given the same value and meaning as official education. To me this was a problem worth investigation.

This quest has developed me personally and professionally. On one level, I have gained an in-depth understanding of the intricacies surrounding the administration of initiation schools. As such this study has broadened my knowledge and understanding underpinning issues such as parental involvements, the disjuncture between culture and democracy, formal and informal schools, and legal and customary as well as Western and African schools. Doing this study has also assisted me in refining and shaping my critical thinking skills as well as my academic research skills. I must admit that when I started this dissertation my thinking about the practices, cultural rites, and administration of initiation schools were very narrow and simplistic. However, by researching this topic and the engagements at conferences, through the research cohorts we had in the Department of Humanities Education, and with my supervisors have helped to shape my thinking. Furthermore, through this study I went to places and engaged with people with whom I otherwise would not have engaged. This has greatly enriched my life. In engaging with people, I also had to learn to overcome challenges, for example, issues around obtaining my data as well as dealing with the emotions of the participants in this study.

Doing this study was hopefully not only helpful to me to improve my qualification but also enriched both my personal and professional growth as it relates to research. This encompassed deeper knowledge about the complications or influences of African social practices outside of formal education.

5.6 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study I was tempted to develop recommendations for

improvements of initiation schools.

In the findings of this study, there was a loophole where parents' or guardians' participation in the administration of initiation schools was entirely overlooked.

Most, if not all decisions taken by principals of initiation schools were paradoxical in the sense that they did not show compliance to policies governing initiation schools. I also observed that SMTs were neglected even though they are one of the important stakeholders and ought to have been involved. Involvement of SMTs is primary because initiates will still need to go back to normal school after cultural initiation. In this regard I recommend:

- Children's futures are the prerogative of their parents. I therefore recommend that parents should raise this problem with principals through SGBs and that it be brought to the MDoE. Parents should also make submissions regarding the duration that initiation schools should take. This will, in my view, improve parents' relationship with CoGTA, through the indunas.
- I further recommend that the above-mentioned authorities come to an agreement that the prospective initiates undergo medical circumcision before they go into cultural initiation performed in the bush. This recommendation will help initiates to return to normal schooling more easily. In so doing, this will avoid a curriculum backlog and avoid initiates overstaying in the initiation schools. Instead of staying three months (at most), the initiates may stay three weeks, like in the Limpopo province where their initiation or khoba, only lasts for three weeks. This will enable initiates to return home before the reopening of normal schools.
- I also recommend that boys between the ages of 12 and 15 years or those learners who are between Grades 8 and 11 should be allowed to undertake initiation. Grade 12 learners must be excluded as they have external examinations which require their undivided attention and focus.
- I recommend that the SMT helps male learners who were away for initiation (initiates) with catchups, such as afternoon or Saturday lessons. These strategies can capacitate the initiates to catch up with the curriculum taught in their absence. These strategies can also assist in the decrease of the post-initiation dropout rate since they would have found

assistance to pass to the next grade or met the minimum requirements for tertiary institutions.

- Based on the views of the male learners in this study, I recommend as an intervention strategy that the SMT can hold annual parents' meetings before the month of May ends. They should discuss initiation as part of Mapulana culture with parents; parents need to play their role in conscientising principals of initiation schools to not prolong durations.
- The Department of Education must work hand-in-hand with the Department of Health, CoGTA, and law enforcement agencies to prevent male Mapulana learners from being left behind in the curriculum. It must be ensured that learners' health comes first, and that the initiation principals strictly adhere to policies governing initiation schools. This will help in reducing the fatality rate and protecting learners' curriculum. Parents and principals of initiation schools consider the school calendar as a basis for initiation period of time.
- I further recommend that special programmes, such as extra learner teacher support material, be made available to schools with learners who practice initiation as their culture.
- I also recommend the monitoring of the implementation of the laws by principals of initiation schools. If any principal is found guilty, the law must follow its course. Supplementary involvements are to be constituted as a forum where doctors, nurses, police, traditional leaders, and government officials can meet to visit initiation schools and shut down all illegal initiation schools under operation.

5.7 Conclusion

The purpose of my study was to understand the views of male Mapulana learners on the influences of cultural initiation on their schooling. I have found that a general trend was that male Mapulana cultural initiation schools do have a negative influence on their schooling. However, initiation schools remain Mapulana pride and it is the only culture which is entirely celebrated by the Mapulana population at large. Male Mapulana cultural initiation remains the culture that they strongly believe in and they are deeply rooted in. However, this culture negatively influences the normal schooling of male Mapulana learners, and this poses a serious challenge to the culture itself.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethical clearance Mpumalanga DoBE – submitted to principals as well



education
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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Litiko le Tefundvo, Umnyango we Fundo

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Mr Mahlogonolo Mashile
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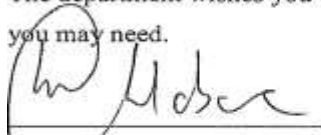
RE: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: MR MAHLOGONOLO MASHILE

Your application to conduct research study was received and is therefore acknowledged. The title of your research project reads: “**Mapulana male learner’s perception of their cultural initiation practices on scholastic progress**”. I trust that the aims and the objectives of the study will benefit the whole department especially the beneficiaries. Your request is approved subject to you observing the provisions of the departmental research policy which is available in the department website. You are requested to adhere to your university’s research ethics as spelt out in your research ethics.

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

For more information kindly liaise with the department’s research unit @ 013 766 5476/5148 Or a.baloyi@education.mpu.gov.za

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


MRS MOC MHLABANE
HEAD: EDUCATION

29, 07, 18
DATE



Appendix B: Ethical clearance UP – submitted to principals



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	CLEARANCE NUMBER: HU 18/11/02
DEGREE AND PROJECT	MEd Male Mapulana learner views on the influences of cultural initiation on their schooling
INVESTIGATOR	Mr Mahlogonolo Mashile
DEPARTMENT	Humanities
APPROVAL TO COMMENCE STUDY	26 March 2019
DATE OF CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	15 July 2020

CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE: Prof Funke Omidire

CC Ms Bronwynne Swarts
Prof J Wassermann
Mr X Khohliso

This Ethics Clearance Certificate should be read in conjunction with the Integrated Declaration Form (D08) which specifies details regarding:

- Compliance with approved research protocol,
- No significant changes,
- Informed consent/assent,
- Adverse experience or undue risk,
- Registered title, and
- Data storage requirements.