



First-year female university residence students' experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality in the context of gender-based violence in South Africa

by

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Thesis presented for the degree

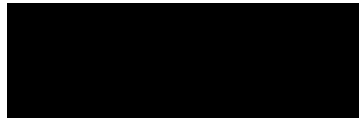
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

January 2021

As the candidate's supervisor, I agree to the submission of this thesis.

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DECLARATION

I, Sibonile Kabaya, declare that:

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my husband, Victor Kabaya, and my two children, Dylan and Ashley. Your love, support, and sacrifices throughout this journey inspired me to soldier on. The journey was long and exhausting, but your understanding, encouragement, and confidence in my abilities made things easier for me.

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ABSTRACT

Entering university for the first time is a major change for first-year female students at university, especially for those who live in university residences. There is increasing evidence of gender-based violence (GBV) on South African university campuses, although with little specific focus on first-year female students who reside in campus residences. Within this context, young women who come from different socio-cultural backgrounds have to negotiate their gender and sexuality constructions. This study explores first-year female university residence students' experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality in the context of GBV.

This study utilised a qualitative approach and an interpretive paradigm. The sample comprised 20 first-year female residence students, who were purposively chosen because they live in campus residences. The main data-generation methods used included focus group discussions, individual interviews, and a research diary. Data were analysed using thematic analysis. Social construction theories of gender and sexuality concepts such as gender and power, and sexual scripts and GBV were adopted to analyse the data.

The findings show that first-year university female residence students experience and understand their freedom in complex ways that are both liberating and enslaving. They can freely explore their sexuality, wear whatever they want, go out anytime, and consume alcohol without any restrictions or rules. However, some first-year university female residence students find it challenging to manage such freedom, and they end up longing for the support and control of their homes. As first-year female students try to adapt to the new environment, they find themselves not making the most of the freedom provided at university because the kind of freedom that is provided is gendered; where men can date multiple women and female students are judged for simply befriending male students.

First-year female residence students struggle to manage the cultural shift, since the culture at their home is often different from university culture. Under pressure to fit into the new culture at university, some first-year female students find themselves rejecting their previously held norms and adopting a new culture at university. Others struggle to fit in, and they often end up living a double life, where they wear clothes at university that are different from those that they wear at home. Other first-year female residence students reject the new culture and continue to uphold the norms that they learned at home.

Many first-year female students conform to heterosexual norms and enter into relationships with men, where they usually take care of their partners by doing domestic chores. In these relationships, men are typically responsible for making most decisions and, in some cases, are the sole decision makers. First-year female students often use sex to strengthen a relationship; however, they are too shy to express their sexual desires in these relationships. The response to the newfound freedom is therefore often a reversion to the patterns of gendered subordination of their home environments.

This study also found that first-year female students negotiate their gender and sexuality constructions within the context of gender, power, and violence at university. This study argues that within this new space, which is characterised by freedom and independence, the freedom of first-year students residing in university residences is constrained by prevailing GBV. Comprehensive approaches are required to create an enabling environment that addresses the transition into the university space and disrupt dominant heterosexist constructions of femininity and masculinity within which violence against women is normalised.

Keywords: Gender-based violence, gender, sexuality, female university students

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1.1 Background and focus of the study	1
1.1.2 Sexuality in the Zulu culture	3
1.1.3 Violence and higher education during apartheid.....	6
1.1.4 Violence and higher education in post-apartheid South Africa	8
1.2 WHY FIRST-YEAR FEMALE RESIDENCE STUDENTS?.....	10
1.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	11
1.4 OBJECTIVES.....	12
1.5 CRITICAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	12
1.6 THE RESEARCH SITE AND CONTEXT	13
1.7 BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS	14
1.8 CONCLUSION	15
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	16
2.1 INTRODUCTION	16
2.2 GENDER.....	16
2.3 SEXUALITY	17
2.4 GLOBAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY	17
2.5 SEXUALITY IN AFRICAN SOCIETIES	23

2.6	HISTORICAL CONTEXTUALISATION OF GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND VIOLENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA	28
2.6.1	A brief historical background of gender, sexuality, and violence in South Africa	28
2.6.2	Gender, sexuality and violence in democratic South Africa	31
2.7	GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND RELIGION IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT	34
2.8	UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES OF GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV).....	36
2.9	GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND GBV IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA	40
2.10	RISK FACTORS OF GBV	43
2.11	CONCLUSION	45
	CHAPTER 3: THEORIES AND CONCEPTS	46
3.1	INTRODUCTION	46
3.2	SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM.....	46
3.3	GENDER ESSENTIALISM.....	47
3.4	GENDER AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION.....	48
3.5	THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY	51
3.6	SEXUAL SCRIPT CONCEPT.....	51
3.7	(HETERO)SEXUALITY AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION	53
3.8	GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND VIOLENCE.....	56
3.9	GBV DISCOURSE.....	59
3.9.1	Masculinity, sexuality, and GBV	62
3.9.2	Femininity, sexuality, and GBV.....	66
3.10	GENDER AND POWER DISCOURSES.....	68
3.11	GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND CULTURE.....	71
3.12	GENDER, POWER, RACE, SEXUALITY, CLASS, INEQUALITY, AND VIOLENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA	73
3.13	CONCLUSION	75
	CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....	76
4.1	INTRODUCTION	76

4.2	RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN	76
4.2.1	Qualitative research.....	76
4.2.2	Research paradigm	77
4.3	CASE STUDY	78
4.4	RESEARCH CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND	79
4.5	RESEARCH SITE	81
4.6	SAMPLING METHOD.....	81
4.7	RESEARCH METHODS	84
4.7.1	Semi-structured individual interviews	84
4.7.2	Focus group discussions.....	86
4.7.3	Research diary	88
4.8	DATA ANALYSIS	89
4.9	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	91
4.10	THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY	94
4.10.1	Researcher reflectivity	95
4.10.1.1	<i>A married mother, a former high school teacher, and a PhD student</i>	<i>95</i>
4.10.1.2	<i>Being an African foreign female student researching gender and sexuality.....</i>	<i>97</i>
4.11	RESEARCH LIMITATIONS.....	98
4.12	CONCLUSION	99
CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: UNDERSTANDING GBV AND FITTING IN		100
5.1	INTRODUCTION	100
5.2	PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS.....	100
5.3	THEME 1: GENDER, POWER, AND VIOLENCE.....	101
5.3.1	Defining GBV	101
5.3.2	Victims and perpetrators on campus	103
5.3.3	Experiencing GBV: “It happens on campus”	113
5.3.4	Intimate partner violence (IPV).....	118

5.3.5	The stigma of reporting violence	125
5.3.6	Women befriending men for protection	127
5.4	THEME 2: FITTING INTO UNIVERSITY CULTURE	130
5.4.1	Pressure to fit in with particular appearances.....	130
5.4.2	Pressure to fit into particular behaviour	142
5.4.3	Fitting into two different cultures.....	150
5.4.4	Pressure to be in a relationship and to engage in sexual activities.....	152
5.5	CONCLUSION	159
CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: NEGOTIATING PARTNERS AND FREEDOM		160
6.1	INTRODUCTION	160
6.2	THEME 3: PARTNERS AND PARTNERING	160
6.2.1	Young women and heterosexuality	160
6.2.2	Young women challenging heterosexuality	164
6.2.3	Relationship pressure and expectations.....	167
6.2.4	Sex sustains relationships.....	175
6.2.5	Decision making within relationships	179
6.2.6	“Women are shy to express their sexual feelings”	183
6.2.7	Nurturing a partner.....	187
6.3	THEME 4: MANAGING THE FREEDOM OF UNIVERSITY LIFE	191
6.3.1	Freedom and independence.....	191
6.3.2	Freedom is difficult	198
6.3.3	Freedom at university is gendered	200
6.4	CONCLUSION	206
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS		207
7.1	INTRODUCTION	207
7.2	OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS.....	207
7.3	SYNTHESIS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION.....	208

7.3.1	Freedom and independence.....	209
7.3.2	Managing cultural displacement	210
7.3.3	Gender, power, and violence.....	212
7.4	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.....	218
7.5	CONCLUSION	218
REFERENCES.....		220
APPENDICES		246
Appendix 1: Ethical Clearance Certificate		246
Appendix 2: Gatekeeper’s Permission		247
Appendix 3: Informed Consent Letter.....		248
Appendix 4: Informed Consent Declaration		250
Appendix 5: Focus Group Discussion Confidentiality Declaration.....		251
Appendix 6: Semi-Structured Individual Interview Questions		252
Appendix 7: Individual Transcript (Anele).....		254
Appendix 8: Analysed Individual Transcript (Zethu).....		262
Appendix 9: Focus Group Discussion Questions		268
Appendix 9: Turnitin Originality Report		270
Appendix 10: Editor’s Confirmation Letter.....		271

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1:	Pseudonyms and biographical backgrounds of the participants.....	83
Table 2:	Six stages of thematic analysis.....	90

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DoE	Department of Education
GBV	Gender-based violence
IPV	Intimate partner violence
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender
LGBTQI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NSVRC	National Sexual Violence Resource Centre
SRC	Student Representative Council
STD	Sexually transmitted disease
STI	Sexually transmitted infection
UCT	University of Cape Town
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
UWC	University of the Western Cape
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 Background and focus of the study

Entering university for the first time can be quite stressful for many first-year female students, who come from different backgrounds. They might have to deal with the pressure associated with social change and issues related to identity and relationships. They also have to learn values that might be completely new to them and start making new friends, of the opposite sex in particular (Bojuwoye, 2002). It is a period where the majority are going through an emerging adulthood phase, which is often characterised by an exploration of gender and sexuality, and this may exacerbate their exposure to gender-based violence (GBV) (Maas, Shearer, Gillen, & Lefkowitz, 2015). As new students in a university environment, their exposure to traditional gender and sexuality stereotypes, such as male sexual aggression, sexual objectification of women, and compulsory heterosexuality, is likely to be high (Weinzimmer & Twill, 2016). According to Lorber (1994), through socialisation with their peers, young women may learn and internalise behaviours they think are appropriate for their gender and may accept behaviours that they think are appropriate for the different genders, such as the male gender stereotype that males are aggressive in sexual situations. Consequently, this may make them vulnerable to being dominated and/or abused.

My motivation to conduct this study emanated from my concern about the scourge of GBV across the globe, South Africa, and universities in particular. Worldwide, GBV is regarded as an urgent concern that negatively affects the general wellbeing of women and is mostly perpetrated by men (Gevers, Jama-Shai, & Sikweyiya, 2013). The World Health Organization (WHO, 2017) states that one in every three women experiences sexual or physical violence in their lifetime. Furthermore, approximately one-third of women universally have had an experience of sexual or physical violence perpetrated by their intimate partner (WHO, 2013). Sadly, South Africa is not exempt from the GBV problem, and it faces this dilemma on a large scale (Akande et al., 2019). Women are often abused by their partners or people close to them in their homes, churches, schools, and other social institutions (Gevers et al., 2013). It is roughly estimated that their intimate partner abuses one in every four women in South Africa, and their partners kill more women in South Africa than any other place across the globe

(Abrahams, Jewkes, Laubscher, & Hoffman, 2006; WHO, 2013). Some studies in South Africa have revealed that the pervasiveness of GBV, such as the abuse, rape, and murder of women, is soaring disturbingly (Abrahams, Mathews, Martin, Lombard, & Jewkes, 2013; Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell, & Dunkle, 2009). For instance, Jewkes, Vundule, Maforah, and Jordan's (2001) study found that approximately 30% of South African women experienced forced sex during their first sexual experience. It is also estimated that one in every three women is raped during her life, and one in every four women is likely to be beaten by her intimate partner (Moffett, 2006). Research in South Africa also shows that their partners kill a large number of women compared to other countries (Abrahams et al., 2006; Jansen van Rensburg, 2007). This is a quite disturbing figure, as it exposes the extent to which GBV is pervasive in South Africa.

Although the South African Constitution provides a clear framework aimed at creating an equal society in South Africa, it seems, however, to be an uphill battle to implement such laws, considering that the country is inhabited by people from diverse backgrounds (De Lange, Mitchell, & Bhana, 2012). In addition, the idea of "our culture" in the South African context is utilised to validate the domination of women and girls by simply controlling what they can or may not do (Moletsane, Smith, & Chisholm, 2008, p. 23). For example, in the Zulu culture, a Zulu woman is expected to maintain the culture by taking her place in the kitchen, taking care of the children, and remaining faithful to her spouse. Anger, fear, and hostility among men over gender equality are situated in the context of women's increased independence (De Lange et al., 2012).

Universities in South Africa have developed different programmes and interventions to induct young females or teach them about safety and wellbeing on campus. For instance, the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) has a sexual harassment policy and procedure and sexual violence policies in place to combat issues of GBV on campus. Security is provided 24 hours a day to protect students. There is also peer education, as well as a women's forum, which was launched in 2013 to support women by discussing the issues and challenges they encounter. Despite these efforts, the gender violence pandemic continues to spread in South African universities. Gordon and Collins (2013) assert that GBV is typical of South Africa and that South African universities are also characterised by such violence. For example, a female student at the University of Cape Town (UCT) was raped and murdered, and a female student at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) was murdered in 2019 (Fengu, 2019). Naidu (2018) indicated that female students reported 47 cases of rape across South African university campuses in 2018. In another report, 13 sexual violence cases at the UCT were reported

between January and April 2016, of which four cases of rape and one case of sexual harassment happened in campus residences (Ngcai, 2016). Another incident of GBV occurred at the UWC in August 2008, where a 22-year-old female student was violently stabbed to death by her boyfriend in her room (Clowes, Shefer, Fouten, Vergnani, & Jacobs, 2009). In 2007, a female undergraduate student at a South African university reported a rape that had happened in the campus residence (Collins, Loots, Meyiwa, & Mistrey, 2009). This further shows that as female students enter university to start their new, exciting journey, they are also entering an environment that is fertile for GBV (Ekore, 2012).

My previous study, on sexual harassment at university, revealed that first-year students are vulnerable to sexual harassment on campus (Kabaya, 2016). Many first-year female students are probably not prepared for what happens on campus, especially during the first few months of university, which contributes to some of the difficulties they encounter. For example, some male Student Representative Council (SRC) members claim to be influential in assisting with funding and accommodation, and they ask for sexual favours from first-year female students in exchange for assistance. This also urged me to conduct a study to explore further how first-year female residence students construct gender and sexuality, in light of their vulnerability to GBV.

This study is located in KwaZulu-Natal, where the dominant culture is Zulu. A background on sexuality in Zulu culture is presented in this introductory chapter since, according to Burr (1995), the manner in which men and women understand the world is historically and culturally specific. I also present a discussion on violence and higher education opportunities in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. These issues are discussed under the following subthemes:

- Sexuality in Zulu culture; and
- Violence and higher education opportunities in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa.

1.1.2 Sexuality in the Zulu culture

KwaZulu-Natal is known to be inhabited by many isiZulu speakers, and their culture regarding sexuality is believed to have existed for many centuries. According to Leclerc-Madlala (2001), one way they attempt to uphold their cultural values is through virginity testing. It is a culture that values abstinence from sex, as well as pride, dignity, and decorum. Girls and young women must be between the ages of seven and 26 to qualify for virginity testing (Moletsane, 2010).

In precolonial Zulu societies, virginity was highly regarded and the importance of a girl's virginity was reflected during *ilobola* (bride wealth transaction) negotiations when an additional cow was given to the mother of a young woman if the latter was found to be a virgin. The head, which was called *inkomo komana* (mothers' cow), was given as a token of appreciation from the in-laws for giving them a daughter-in-law who was regarded as untainted (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001).

Older women, elders, and traditional leaders believe that the only way to restore the tattered moral fabric of Zulu society that has resulted in the rise of unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and HIV/Aids, was through maintaining the cultural activity of virginity testing, which they thought was gradually getting lost. They believe that this practice was created to maintain female abstinence and to safeguard girls and young women from sexual abuse and STIs (Moletsane, 2010). The setting where virginity testing takes place varies from a private home setting to a village chief's hut or community centres, school halls, and sports stadiums, depending on the number of girls or young women to be tested. The process of virginity testing usually involves checking the colour and texture of the labia, which must be dry and must consist of a light pink colour. They also check for signs of sexual abuse, such as cuts and bruises, as well as sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) by checking whether a girl or young woman has pimples, sores, or smelly vaginal discharge (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001).

IsiZulu-speaking people value virginity testing, and the culture has been widely criticised by human rights activists, gender commissions, and women who fight for gender equality. They argue that the practice itself is a form of violence against women and violates the girls' and young women's rights (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001). They also believe that such a culture is imposed on girls and young women in order to control their sexuality or to justify why they should not participate in making decisions and in other activities (Moletsane, 2010).

There are other forms of controlling girls' and young women's sexuality besides virginity testing that were used in the past. For instance, a traditional puberty ritual known as *umhlanyane* was practised to promote and uphold virginity before marriage (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001). As this occasion often occurred when a girl was starting her menstrual period and was believed to be fertile and soon to start dating, she was taught how to be seated correctly and how to behave in a modest and dignified manner. This was done to ensure that she would not lose her virginity. She was also taught *ukusoma* (thigh sex), whereby she was required to provide sexual pleasure to her boyfriend by holding her thighs firmly together. In this way, her

boyfriend would be able to reach a sexual climax. Furthermore, a young woman is supposed to be readily available to provide for his sexual satisfaction and to show her love for him without losing her virginity. This practice of *ukusoma* shows that young women are responsible for creating a balance by ensuring that they satisfy their men sexually and protect their virginity until they get married (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001).

Female sexuality in Zulu culture is viewed in contradictory ways. On the one hand, a woman's body is regarded as a place for a man's sexual pleasure. Women are treated as sexual objects by men who believe that a woman's body exists to provide them with sexual satisfaction whenever they need it (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001). On the other hand, sexually active women's bodies invoke ideas of risk, disease, and being capable of making men weak, as well as bringing all kinds of adversity to society. This means that a woman is viewed as dangerous in the sense that she can infect men with diseases such as HIV/Aids and STIs. She is also blamed for all the bad luck that society encounters (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001).

The ideal Zulu man is one that engages in sexual relationships with multiple girlfriends, and many young men in Zulu society strive to achieve that status (Hunter, 2005). The Zulu term that describes men with multiple girlfriends is *amasoka*, and it brings a sense of pride to those who are called by that name. Only unmarried men are allowed to have multiple girlfriends (Hunter, 2005). Achieving the *amasoka* status among young Zulu men is valued as it prepares them for manhood, which often leads to them being labelled *umnuzane* (real men). Women who adopt this version by having many boyfriends are often criticised. They are required to embody cultural feminine ideals, such as being a modest and quiet woman whose place is in the kitchen to serve her husband, in-laws, and children. A young woman who is not married is expected to prepare to become a soft-spoken wife who is not rude to her spouse and whose responsibility is showing love to her husband by meeting his sexual needs whenever he pleases. She is also taught that her future husband is entirely responsible for controlling the sexual activities in the marriage. A modern woman who is self-confident, as well as active in chasing her sexual interests in the way that men do, is viewed as someone who misbehaves and who goes beyond well-established morals (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001).

Traditionally, the use of love potions called *umuthis* has been associated with men, and it seems that it was socially acceptable for them to utilise these substances (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001). Furthermore, there is an increasing belief in the Zulu culture that modern women are turning to the use of love potions to achieve an unfair advantage over men, and such behaviour by

women is usually criticised and labelled as immoral. Traditional medicine is used in many ways, such as to secure love that is failing, to stop a man's infidelity, to cause a fight between couples, to end a relationship or cause a divorce, and to entice a specific love interest (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001). The use of such traditional medicine by Zulu women reflect the lengths that they are willing to go to maintain or to be in a relationship. This is evidence that the feminine Zulu woman is supposed to be in a relationship and maintain that relationship.

1.1.3 Violence and higher education during apartheid

Current students navigate their everyday lives under social, cultural, and material conditions that are strongly connected to and shaped by the legacies of apartheid. One of the most insidious systems of political violence was seen during apartheid, and such kind of violence was meant to preserve the dominant white minority over the black majority. Apartheid was characterised by violence either by people fighting against one another or the use of brutal force by the apartheid state police. People were against the manner in which they were increasingly being subjected to the oppressive apartheid laws. They therefore resorted to the use of violence in a bid to fight for their freedom and rights. For example, the apartheid education system provided different educational services for African and white students (Muswede, 2017). For higher education institutions, white institutions were adequately funded with excellent infrastructure while African institutions lacked funds to improve the infrastructure and lacked resources. They were also situated in poverty-stricken rural areas where there was no or little chance of expanding them (Suransky & Van der Merwe, 2016). The kind of education that was provided to African students was meant to create people who would occupy lesser positions in the workplace. It was this setting that led to several violent student protests during apartheid. The oppressive apartheid education laws led to the Soweto uprising of June 1976, where students protested against the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction, as well as other oppressive laws relating to education. The 1976 Soweto uprising led to countrywide protests by students, which resulted in the burning of property and infrastructure that were perceived to represent discrimination and oppression. Such events left universities as spaces of violence, which led to an unstable government, high dropouts of students, increased student failure rate, and poor financial means to repair these institutions (Muswede, 2017).

The apartheid government capitalised on the physical violence that was ongoing in black societies by introducing militaristic control and structural violence of the economy. Introducing such strategies meant that black people were brutalised by poverty, controlled movement,

marginalisation, and military occupation (Gqola, 2007). Structural violence was reflected by differential access to social resources such as rights, security, and capital, as well as bodily and mental integrity between black and white people (Swartz, Harding, & De Lannoy, 2012). Black people could not access resources that white people were accessing. The majority of the black population were living in poverty because the apartheid system excluded them from education, employment, and healthcare (Swartz et al., 2012). Brutal discriminatory apartheid laws led to many black people being forcefully removed from areas where they lived to other areas. This led to a number of black people being subjected to harsh living conditions and further resulted in the malfunctioning of many black communities. The stresses that many black communities were subjected to compromised the way many of these communities were functioning and led to high levels of violence among these communities (Duncan, 2005). This resulted in the increase of violent crimes such as homicide, abuse of women and children, and taxi violence within communities. The social dislocation created by the apartheid regime led to the disruption of many children's schooling and many young men and women opted to drop out of learning institutions and leave the country to undertake military training.

Many young men and women's access to higher education was inhibited by repressive measures that were introduced by the apartheid system, such as house arrest, impressment without trial or fair trial, and psychological abuse and torture. Young men and women who fought against the regime were sentenced to death or life imprisonment. Children aged below 16 years were also subjected to the repressive measures and many were sentenced to prison, and by 1990, some were still awaiting trial (Duncan, 2005).

Masculinity was constructed around power and aggression, and heterosexual relations were characterised by male control and subordination of women. Women were therefore more vulnerable to sexual violence and unwelcome or forced sexual advances (Shefer, 2010). Female students at universities were subjected to campus-based gender inequality, and they were vulnerable to different forms of sexual violence and sexual harassment. The exposure of women to campus injustices led to feminists and gender activists rallying behind addressing issues of sexual violence and sexual harassment at university campuses in the mid-1990s (Bennett, 2009); that is, soon after the end of apartheid.

The apartheid system was known to be highly patriarchal, and men were central in making decisions, heading families, and occupying political and production spaces. The patriarchal system contributed to gender inequality, and inequalities were reflected in the higher education

system where only a few women were enrolled. In addition, the sexist and exclusionary policies that were put in place by the patriarchal apartheid system worsened the situation of women as they were prevented from contributing meaningfully to higher education (Akala & Divala, 2016).

1.1.4 Violence and higher education in post-apartheid South Africa

The years between the mid-1990s and 2005 experienced a huge transformation in the higher education sector as the new democratic government attempted to address some of the inequalities, such as segregation in educational opportunities, which were created by the apartheid government (Bennett, 2009). New policies were put in place, and acts were amended to attempt to address the imbalances. For instance, the Higher Education Ministry, in section 37 of the 1997 Higher Education Act, maintains that “all South African universities are required to comply with appropriate measures for the redress of past inequalities, but they may not unfairly discriminate in any way” (Department of Education [DoE], 1997, p. 37). This Act clearly shows the efforts that were made by the new democratic government to address the issue of segregation in higher education. Through restructuring processes and projects that were undertaken to improve the quality of life on campus for students and lecturers, many positive changes were seen in the higher education sector (Bennett, 2009). The DoE’s (1995) White Paper 1 emphasised the need for equal access and fair opportunities, as well as non-discrimination. The equity clause was included in higher education to facilitate the reform process and, at the same time, tackle prejudice and racism challenges. However, the prevalence of sexual violence and sexual harassment on university campuses was seen to be a stumbling block to achieving equality in higher education. On some campuses, faculty members sexually exploited female students and students experienced different forms of sexual violence. Furthermore, female students were sexually provocative, and a sexually aggressive form of masculinity was found to exist on campuses (Bennett, 2009). Although there are sexual harassment policies in place to deal with sexual harassment, the implementation of such policies is not taken seriously in some institutions.

Hegemonic masculinity is regarded as a practice that permits the perpetuation of men’s domination of women (Connell, 2005). The values, attitudes, norms, and practices associated with this kind of masculinity include being strong, heterosexual, and a provider (a main source of income) (Connell, 1995). The scourge of violence in post-apartheid South Africa is largely associated with dominant notions of masculinity that position men as having power over

women and thus justify the utilisation of violence to affirm power (Msibi, 2012; Bhana, 2005). The end of apartheid led to the provision of freedoms to people who were previously marginalised (Msibi, 2009). However, some groups of people's rights and freedoms continue to be violated even though there are laws and policies in place to protect them. Members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) communities at universities continue to face homophobic and gender violence from their peers because of their sexual orientation (Msibi, 2009). They experience violence because they do not epitomise a heterosexual student. Kessi, Cornell, and Ratele's (2016) investigation into "Race, gender and sexuality in students' experiences of violence and resistances on a university campus" in South Africa found that transgender students experienced symbolic violence in the sense that there were only a few transgender bathrooms that were not accessible during lecture times as they were far from their venues and some bathrooms were not located in places where they can be easily recognised. As a result, they were forced to use bathrooms that did not subscribe to their gender binary. Furthermore, the university was also guilty of enforcing symbolic violence in the sense that it continued to reinforce gender binary, which assisted in delegitimising the identity legitimacy of students who were non-gender binary. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI) students also experienced sexual violence from other students. The study also found that some LGBTQI students experienced physical violence such as rape and verbal insults.

The inequalities that existed "positioned men as defensive and prone to violence" (Msibi, 2009, p. 51). White men had to defend their privileges, while black men were rendered powerless and "emasculated," which led them to live dangerously (Msibi, 2009, p. 51). They used violence to assert their power. The end of apartheid meant that men had to relinquish their privileges and accept equal rights for women. This proved to be challenging for most men as they did not want to give up their privilege. As a result, they continue to use violence to assert their masculinities. Male students attempt to assert their masculinities through homophobia and gender violence at universities (Msibi, 2009). Such violence hinders equal participation in higher educational opportunities.

Students' experiences at university are largely influenced by "inequalities and broader social perceptions of being and belonging" that are deeply rooted in the history of apartheid and colonisation (Ngabaza, Shefer, & Clowes, 2018, p. 140). The slow pace in dealing with issues of social justice and transformation in higher education led to protests by students across universities. Students positioned themselves as agents of change, and this was seen in protests

such as the #RhodesMustFall movement, which resulted in the removal of statues that were offensive and the beginning of efforts to decolonise higher education. This movement was widespread, and it led to the formation of other hashtags such as the #FeesMustFall movement in 2015, where students protested for the reduction of fees in higher education. The protest resulted in government and universities deciding not to increase 2016 fees and efforts being made to fund students (Ngabaza et al., 2018). Various movements such as #RapeMustFall, a protest against the culture of rape, as well as #RURferenceList, a protest that was aimed at stopping the rape culture at Rhodes University, emerged. Under the #RURferenceList protest, a reference list of names of male students alleged to be perpetrators of sexual violence was anonymously published on the Rhodes student Facebook page. This led to many students protesting, who were livid about the culture of rape at the university (Staff Reporter, 2018).

1.2 WHY FIRST-YEAR FEMALE RESIDENCE STUDENTS?

I decided to focus on first-year female residence students because they are a unique study group with a newfound freedom, residing away from their families, often for the first time. Peel (2000) argues that although the magnitude of independence provided at universities is sometimes perceived as an opportunity that many first-year students aspire to, it is also viewed as a potential danger to students who are going through a difficult phase as they move from adolescence to young adulthood. Due to the lack of systematic supervision of students and the availability of alcohol and possibly drugs, university campuses have been found to be a high-risk environment for contracting HIV (Mulwo, Tomasselli, & Dalrymple, 2009), and female students are likely to be exposed to GBV. Furthermore, the independence brought about by attending university propels first-year students to make their own decisions, and they are often overwhelmed by this responsibility. Arnett and Hughes (2012) put forward the view that emerging adulthood is characterised by instability as many young adults learn to be independent. In addition, they have to contend with the views and influences of their peers and make choices, which might be positive or negative.

Some studies have revealed that female students, and first-year female students in particular, are vulnerable to GBV (Clowes et al., 2009; Gordon & Collins, 2013; Shefer, Clowes, & Vergnani, 2012; Bhana & Pillay, 2018). This may be due to their trust and naiveté (Shefer et al., 2012). First-year female students might also be at a stage where they are dealing with the transition from adolescence to young adulthood. They are often at a stage where they are going through some major changes, coupled with a great deal of confusion, conflict, and anger

(Kantanis, 2000). Arnett and Hughes (2012) mention that this period of emerging adulthood is characterised by identity exploration, instability, and feelings of in-between; that is, they may consider themselves as not adolescents, yet not fully adults. In addition, in this period of identity exploration, young adults delve into a variety of possibilities in areas such as romance (Arnett & Hughes, 2012). To many first-year students, university provides an opportunity to experiment, search, and discover, and this may include experimenting with sexual activities. Such experimentation may put them at risk of being violated. Bhana and Pillay's (2018) study on sexuality, gender, and risk in an HIV environment found that university life provides students with an opportunity to explore sexual life, but the freedom is often marked by age and gender hierarchy where male sexual power is asserted, over first-year students in particular. As first-year female students enter university, they are likely entering an environment where GBV is rife, and they may or may not be aware of their vulnerability to such violence.

1.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Extensive research on gender, sexuality, and GBV has been conducted in South Africa, especially in schools (Morrell, 2001; Petersen, Bhana, & McKay, 2005; Moffett, 2006; Jewkes et al., 2006; Ngabaza & Shefer, 2019). Although some research has been conducted in South African universities, I have not yet come across a study that has explicitly explored first-year female students' construction of gender and sexuality in the context of GBV. For example, Gordon and Collins (2013) explored GBV at a South African university and found that GBV is normalised at that particular campus, and female students constantly live in fear of being victimised; however, the study did not explore first-year female university students' experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality in the context of GBV. Another study, by Shefer et al. (2012) on transactional sex on a university campus, found that poverty was the main reason why some young women engage in transactional sex. Men, on the other hand, were viewed as economically privileged and could provide for young women's economic needs. The study did not explore young women's construction of gender and sexuality in relation to GBV. Bhana and Pillay's (2018) study found that the university environment provides students with an opportunity to express their sexuality and sexual freedom while caught up in a network of gender inequality, materiality, and fear, with negative effects regarding their sexual wellbeing. Students are able to experiment with and enjoy and exhibit their sexuality in an environment where sexual surveillance is limited. They can freely date, drink alcohol, and party without parental supervision (Bhana & Pillay, 2018). They also found that relationships are associated with pleasure, where pleasure and love are romanticised.

Female students associate pleasure and sexual life with falling in love. Some female students prefer to date older men. They engage in transactional relationships because they receive things such as cash, fast food, and alcohol. Bhana and Pillay's (2018) study also found that female students live in fear of being violated by their intimate partners or on campus. Their study, however, did not specifically focus on first-year female students who stay in campus residences. Their focus was on undergraduate female residence students. My study specifically focused on first-year female students who stay in campus residences.

The purpose of this study was to explore first-year female university students' experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality in the context of GBV. By exploring first-year female university residence students' experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality in the context of GBV, this study sought to add data to the current body of knowledge. In particular, it would contribute to understandings about specific challenges, negotiation strategies, and identity constructions of young women who enter university for the first time. It should also assist in informing induction programmes that aim to facilitate a smooth transition into university life.

1.4 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study were as follows:

1. To explore first-year female university residence students' understandings of GBV.
2. To explore how students experience being female, first-year, and resident at university.
3. To explore how first-year female university residence students construct their gender and sexuality in the context of GBV.

1.5 CRITICAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study sought to answer the following critical research questions:

1. What are first-year female university residence students' understandings of GBV?
2. How do students experience being female, first-year, and resident at university?
3. How do first-year female university residence students construct their gender and sexuality in the context of GBV?

1.6 THE RESEARCH SITE AND CONTEXT

This study was conducted at one of the UKZN campuses in the KwaZulu-Natal province. UKZN was established in January 2004 when two universities, namely the University of Natal and the University of Durban-Westville, were combined to form one university (UKZN, 2017). The university has a total number of five campuses and the head of each campus is known as the dean. The vice chancellor is the overall leader of the university. The institution is well equipped with modern-day technology. There are computer laboratories that are freely accessed by students at any time. Wi-Fi is easily accessible, as well as the library. Sports fields are available for extracurricular activities. The general infrastructure is conducive for learning to take place.

The campus where this study was conducted is located in Pinetown, which is approximately 20 km from Durban's central business district. The ongoing gender violence in this town is a cause for concern; for example, a teenage girl's body was found hanged in the bushes and her two stepbrothers and one stepsister were found by their mother hanged in their home in Pinetown (Singh, 2019). The teenage girl's stepfather pleaded guilty to the crime and was sentenced to four life sentences (Kubheka, 2019). In another separate incident that made headlines in November 2019, a well-known business man was stabbed to death at his home in Pinetown. He was found lying in a pool of blood with multiple stab wounds (Dawood, 2019). In the year 2019, the town had a total number of 31 people who were murdered, and 36 attempted murder cases, 136 assault with intention of causing bodily harm cases, and five sexual offences that were reported (South African Police Service, 2019). All these crimes were perpetrated by men and these statistics bring the total number of toxic forms of masculinity in Pinetown to 200.

The campus has a total of nine on-campus residences for both undergraduate and postgraduate students: four for male students, four for female students, and one residence for both male and female postgraduate students. First-year female university students live in the same residence as senior female students. There are also some off-campus residences that students utilise for accommodation. Some off-campus residences are close to the campus, while others are approximately 30 km from the campus. Buses are provided by the university to transport students to and from the campus. The campus comprises students from diverse race and class backgrounds. Female students who took part in this study were all black; 15 of them were from rural areas, while five were from urban areas. The participants were aged between 18 and 21.

1.7 BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

An introduction to the study is presented in this chapter. The background to and rationale for conducting this study is provided in this chapter, as well as the objectives of the study and the critical research questions. A clear outline of the chapters is also provided.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter provides a detailed literature review on gender, sexuality, and GBV. The chapter interrogates various perspectives regarding GBV, such as femininity and GBV, masculinity and GBV, risk factors of GBV, and students' experiences of GBV at university. These issues are discussed in the literature review because they are largely influential in shaping first-year female university students' experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality. The gap in existing research that is addressed by this study is also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 3: Theories and concepts

This study utilised Butler (1990) and Lorber's (1994) theories of gender and sexuality as a social construction and Burr's (1995; 2015) perspective on social constructionism. Concepts such as heterosexuality, sexual scripts, GBV, and gender and power are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 4: Research design and methodology

The methodology and research methods utilised to conduct this study are clearly outlined in this chapter. This chapter discusses the interpretive paradigm and the qualitative case study approach, which were employed as part of the research design. The methods used to generate data, which are individual interviews, focus group discussions, and a research diary, are also discussed in detail. This chapter clearly explains the two sampling strategies that I utilised to select participants, namely purposive and snowball sampling.

Chapter 5: Findings and discussion: Understanding GBV and fitting in

This chapter discusses the results of the study on first-year female university students' experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality in the context of GBV. The results were analysed using theories of gender and sexuality as a social construction (Butler, 1990; Lorber, 1994; Burr, 1995, 2015). Related concepts, namely sexual scripts, gender and power, heterosexuality, as well as GBV, were used to analyse the data. Two themes, namely gender, power, and violence, and fitting into university culture, are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 6: Findings and discussion: Negotiating partners and freedom

This is the second analysis chapter of this study. Two themes, namely negotiating partners, and managing the freedom of university life, are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and recommendations

The findings of the study and insights from the research are discussed in this chapter. Recommendations that emerged from the findings are also provided.

1.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented an introduction to the study. Aspects discussed include a background on GBV and constructions of gender and sexuality, and the rationale for conducting a study on first-year female university residence students' experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality in the context of GBV. A discussion on sexuality in Zulu culture, as well as violence in higher education during and post-apartheid, was provided. The chapter also outlined the research objectives and research questions. A discussion of the significance of the study, the research site, and the context was provided. Finally, the chapter presented a clear outline of the chapters.

The next chapter provides a detailed review of the literature related to this study.

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a detailed review of literature on gender, sexuality, and GBV. A historical background on gender and sexuality in the South African context is also provided in this chapter. The historical background is crucial for understanding the constructions of gender and sexuality in the democratic South African context. Literature on gender and religion; university students' experiences of gender and sexuality; and gender, sexuality, and GBV in South African higher education institutions is also discussed in this chapter. Finally, a brief discussion on risk factors of GBV is provided.

2.2 GENDER

Peralta (2007) argues that gender is behaviour that actively arises from intensely held and classically unreflective views around the vital natures of men and women. Gender includes numerous forms of masculinities and femininities; these masculine and feminine behaviours are socially constructed, and people are consequently judged by these normative standards (Kovac & Trussell, 2015). Gendered behaviour is mainly achieved in the presence of members of the audience. This means that a prevailing philosophy of what it means to be a man or woman is strengthened, reproduced, and reconstructed through consensus in a group, and social interaction that is informed by this accord (Peralta, 2007).

Different societal valuing of men and women's characteristics, and differences in perceived importance of varying behaviours associated with male and female gender roles, also have an effect on people's personal encounters of what it means to be a man or a woman (Bell, Turchik, & Karpenko, 2014). For example, De Lange et al.'s (2012) investigation, "Voices of women teachers about gender inequalities and gender-based violence in rural South Africa", found that female teachers were often frustrated by their roles and not being able to take part in making decisions related to family and community, as such duties were reserved for men and boys. Furthermore, their study also revealed that male teachers often showed their disrespect for the worth of women and their ideas by verbally abusing women. However, some people oppose, challenge, and transform gender by acting contrarily to what is required of them according to gender norms (Jaramillo-Sierra, Allen, & Kaestle, 2015).

According to Maas et al. (2015), gender differences in men and women can be explained by the sexual script theory, where men and women's sexual behaviours are controlled by the social norms of a particular society. Gender norms and expectations influence people's perceived level of control over different types of activities. As a result, young men and women may develop sexual scripts or highly structured sets of ideas with regard to sexuality and their sexual roles, which serve as a guideline for which sexual behaviours are deemed suitable for which people and with which partner (Kaestle, 2009).

2.3 SEXUALITY

Sexuality is a broader term used to refer to erotic, significant aspects of social life and social being, which include relationships, practices, desires, and identities (Jackson, 2006; Tamale, 2005), but which are also related to disease, violence, war, religion, power, and politics (Tamale, 2005, p. 9). It can also be defined as an array of practices regarded as sexual that are organised in societies on the basis of dominant conditions of reproductive heterosexuality (Rasera, Vieira, & Japer, 2004). The WHO (2017, p. 3) states that sexuality is a "key aspect of being human throughout life and it encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction". In addition, it is "experienced and expressed in thoughts, desires, fantasies, beliefs, attitudes, practices, values, behaviours, roles and relationships" (WHO, 2017, p. 3).

2.4 GLOBAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY

The social construction of gender influences the social construction of sexual behaviours that are deemed proper, and these vary for men and women (McCabe, Tanner, & Herman, 2010). As a result, men and women experience different sexual practices and understand their actions from different normative positions (McCabe et al., 2010). For instance, Chong and Kvasny (2007) conducted research in the United States of America (USA) on the social construction of gender and sexuality in HIV/AIDS discourse and found that the cultural patriarchy philosophy plays a crucial role in the spread of HIV, as it gives women greater responsibility for protecting themselves and their children from HIV infection. They are required to be responsible for condom use, abstinence, and faithfulness in dealing with the sexual practices of their male partners, rather than their male partners themselves. This further illustrates how male power is sustained through this patriarchal ideology.

Similarly, Maas et al. (2015) conducted research at a university in the USA on emerging adults' perceptions of gender's impact on sexuality and found that there are different sexual scripts for men and women. Men's sexual scripts focus more on pleasure, while women focus on the quality of a relationship. Female participants were mainly worried about their reputation in sexual matters; for instance, they thought that women who have sex with multiple partners are often labelled as sluts or whores, and they did not want to bear that label. They also believed that women should not engage in casual sex and that sex should be earmarked only for committed and loving relationships. In addition, both men and women accept social norms that encourage men to have multiple partners and that men have a strong sexual desire. They also felt that women were vulnerable to sexual danger by nature; such perceptions increase the vulnerability of women to violence. The focus of Maas et al.'s (2015) study was on understanding how males and females perceive gender to impact their sexuality.

Summit, Kalmus, DeAtley, and Levack's (2016) investigation on gender constraints on adolescent girls' sexual decision making conducted in the USA reported that female sexuality is acceptable within the narrative of committed relationships and a heteronormative context. Girls who were involved with many boys or who just hung out with many boys were often regarded as sluts. Those who were considered sluts were often humiliated, segregated, and taken advantage of by other boys. Sex was only acceptable when it occurred in the context of a committed relationship with only one partner. If a girl was engaging in sex, she was also supposed to keep it a secret to avoid being labelled a slut. However, the slut labelling often applied to girls only, and this was criticised by other girls who felt it was unfair that boys get praised for having sex with many girls while girls are condemned for the same action. The critics also felt that girls should be given room to make their own choices about sex since their sexual decisions are their own business.

Motivations and reasons for participating in sexual activities also differ by gender (McCabe et al., 2010). Doherty and Anderson's (2004) investigation in the United Kingdom, "Making sense of male rape: Constructions of gender, sexuality and experience of rape victims", examined whether men and women's narratives on rape generate or resist a rape-supportive social order with regard to the abuse of men. Doherty and Anderson (2004) found that rape was thought to be more damaging for heterosexual men compared to women or gay men, because it is believed to be a divergence from heterosexual norms. In addition, some men felt that acts of rape and consensual sex are the same, and therefore less stressful for gay men and

women. Furthermore, rape is constructed as a consensual sex act and its distressing effects for women and gay men were rejected by some participants.

According to Bell et al. (2014), traditional notions of what it means to be a man or woman continue to shape the majority of men and women's identity, behaviour, and emotional responses. Castañeda, Brindis, and Camey's (2001) research, which focused on sexuality and social constructions of risks in the rural areas of central Mexico, reported that participants' sexual behaviour was influenced by gender norms. The majority of young women who took part in the study regarded marriage as important. The sexuality of young women was controlled between the puberty and marriage periods. Virginity was encouraged and it was important to women as it increased their chances of getting married in the future. The risk of not getting married was too high as unmarried women were often badmouthed. Young women who engaged in sex outside marriage or got pregnant risked getting a bad reputation and eventually not getting married. On the other hand, men could engage in sexual relationships with women and if a young woman got pregnant, she was blamed and not the man. Young women who had condoms with them to use during sex risked their chances of getting married in the future. A woman having a condom with her suggested that she lacked sexual innocence. Men did not want to use condoms because they believed that they were strong and could therefore not get HIV. Men were initiated into sexual activities through having sex with sex workers. Others engaged in sexual activities with sex workers without a condom because they did not want to use them and they believed they were clean. They would offer the sex worker more money so that they did not have to use a condom.

A study conducted in Scotland by Hartley, Wight, and Hunt (2014), which focused on how the media influenced teenagers' constructions of gender identity through sexual/romantic relationships and alcohol consumption, reported that teenage girls had expectations in their romantic and sexual relationships and these included having a long-lasting relationship with a partner who does not cheat, who is not violent, and has no secrets. They also expected to have conversations and hold hands with their partners. Boys who participated in the study assumed that girls wanted an exclusive relationship where they were not allowed to have other girlfriends, and girls assumed that boys did not want long-term relationships and they wanted to boast to their friends about having a girl. Girls believed that boys only wanted sex in a relationship. Hartley et al.'s (2014) study also reported that more girls than boys were influenced by the media regarding relationships, love, and romance. Girls believed that the media influenced boys because boys watched pornography and that they learned sexual issues

through watching pornography. The study also reported how alcohol influenced girls' behaviour regarding sex. They believed that when a girl is sober, she is capable of saying no to sex, unlike when she is drunk. The participants associated girls who drink alcohol with parties, fighting, and sex.

McCabe et al. (2010) point out that gender differences between men and women might not be found in certain societies, because women's sexuality is progressively moving closer to that of men. Some women are attempting to challenge gender and sexuality norms that position long-term heterosexual relationships as important in women's lives and which further reflect positively on their femininity (Spronk, 2005). Spronk (2005) conducted an investigation on female sexuality in Nairobi and found that women with financial independence showed some agency by opting to live their lives apart from societal expectations. They did this by dating men without the need to justify their behaviour, which enabled them to freely develop their love and sexual lives (Spronk, 2005). This is a clear indication that in Nairobi, young female professionals are shifting the symbolic facet of womanhood that emphasises motherhood and wifehood and regards sex as a marital duty and defines women as sexual objects rather than subjects (Spronk, 2005).

Similarly, Moran and Lee's (2014) study on women's constructions of heterosexual non-romantic sex and the implications for sexual health in Australia revealed that women were becoming more agentic and taking charge of their sexual lives; they were moving away from traditional gender and sexuality that prioritise monogamous relations for women. The study revealed that notions of non-romantic sex were talked about within the discourse of hetero-monogamy and gender disparities. The participants in Moran and Lee's (2014) study recognised the hetero-monogamy discourse, which situates romantic relationships with men as significant in the lives of many women. They were, however, constrained by the narrative within this discourse, that women who engage in sex without being in a relationship were behaving inappropriately and women who are single and did not focus on seeking a relationship were viewed as diverging from the socially acceptable norm. In this discourse, sexual relations can only occur in heterosexual and monogamous relations and the reason why women engage in sex is because they want to create and uphold a relationship. The media was also blamed by the participants for supporting the notion that women should only have sex with a man if there was a chance that a relationship was going to form. These participants also criticised the notion that associates women with love, romance, and sex. They believed that women can engage in sex just to enjoy it, without being emotionally attached. Some even delayed engaging in sexual

activities if they realised that there was a possibility of the man wanting to be in a serious relationship. Within the gender difference discourse, men and women's sexual roles are not the same and are complementary. The participants were not able to criticise the notion; instead they showed their conformity to the passive role as they let the men initiate the sexual activity. Some talked about not being comfortable expressing their sexual desires to the man. Others were constrained by the idea of asking a man to use a condom, which led to some having unprotected sex. They justified that by invoking trust constructions as they said they trusted the man. One participant in Moran and Lee's (2014) study talked about a man removing a condom during sex and she felt violated but was unable to confront him about the issue. This often puts women's health and wellbeing in danger as they are unable to negotiate safe sex.

In some cases, heterosexuality is challenged even under strenuous circumstances. For instance, an investigation about women's movement conducted by Mahdavi (2012), which focused on constructions of sexual identities in post-revolution Iran, reported how Iranian youths talked about a sexual revolution, which means a change in the manner in which individuals "think, act or talk about sex" (Mahdavi, 2012, p. 226). This means that sex was discussed in a manner that was different from the way it was discussed decades ago. Young women in the study defined their sexual identities as fluid and they had their first sexual experiences, such as sleeping in one bed, kissing, and fondling, with a same-sex partner. Although these young women had sexual encounters with members of the same sex, they initially did not identify themselves as gay or lesbian. Instead, they confirmed that they were just being sexual and it was part of their sexual revolution. Some women confirmed that they engaged in same-sex relations to preserve their virginity, while others felt they were just extending their same-sex affection and bonds. Some young women acknowledged that they preferred being intimate with other women than with their male partners. Around 2005 onwards, a gay movement emerged, which was supposedly born from the sexual movement, and young people from various socioeconomic statuses joined it and they regarded themselves as LGBT activists. Social networks were used to connect with different groups and Internet and social networking sites were praised for playing a significant role in creating the gay movement. Although the gay movement was growing, there continued to be some challenges, especially from the government that criminalised same-sex relationships according to the Islamic religion.

Female sexuality is also said to have been completely changed by the introduction of contraceptive pills and other forms of birth control. This allowed women – especially those in modern Western societies – to enjoy the same sexual freedom as their male counterparts

(Milnes, 2004). Although women in such societies are presumed to be sexually liberated, the use of the contraceptive pill has been found to constrain women's ability to refuse unwanted sex (Milnes, 2004). Milnes (2004) states that women's sexual experiences are quite contradictory as far as sexual equality is concerned. For example, women engage in sexual activities that are similar to those of men, such as casual sex, adultery, and promiscuous behaviour, to show that they can freely express their sexuality without fear of negative repercussions. However, these kinds of sexual behaviour rarely lead to sexual encounters that can be labelled as liberating and fulfilling, as many women are still defined in negative terms. In addition, women who engage in casual sex often end up feeling used and manipulated. Those who opt to have sex outside monogamous relationships are often stigmatised by their peers, and their sexual reputation suffers. Because of the sexual double standards that still prevail in some societies (Milnes, 2004), women continue to face some challenges in their pursuit of sexual equality.

The issue of sexual double standards gives men greater sexual freedom as they are allowed to engage in sexual activities while young women are condemned or punished for behaving in the same manner (Arnett & Hughes, 2012), and this problem is prevalent in some American as well as African cultures (Petersen & Hyde, 2011). The double-standard phenomenon usually reflects in cases where some men boast about their sexual triumphs, while girls who engage in sexual activities with many partners are often criticised or viewed in a negative manner. Girls or young women who abstain from sexual activities are often praised or viewed in a positive manner (Arnett & Hughes, 2012). However, the meaning attached to sexual double standards differs across cultural groups and has changed over time to include more imperceptible distinctions; for instance, some women face pressure to look sexually attractive and demonstrate their sexual worth through an aesthetic expression of sexuality (Maas et al., 2015). Also, individuals sanction the sexual double-standards script differently; some reject it, others approve of it to a certain context, and others completely sanction it (Maas et al., 2015). Approving the sexual double-standards script has some negative consequences since it is associated with risky behaviours, such as consuming alcohol before or during sexual encounters and having multiple partners (Maas et al., 2015).

Varga's (2003) study, "How gender roles influence sexual and reproductive health among South African adolescents", revealed sexual double standards that exist between young men and women. A girl is supposed to be sexually available to her partner and allow him to make all decisions regarding sex. By doing this, she shows her partner that she respects him.

In addition, she is also supposed to exhibit traits such as being shy and faithful to her partner. A woman with multiple partners risks losing her dignity and respect from members of the community. She is also responsible for avoiding getting pregnant by using contraception or other methods such as encouraging her partner to use a condom or other methods such as the withdrawal method. On the other hand, men are encouraged to have many partners. Masculinity is defined within the realm of *isoka* (being popular with women and being successful). Men are supposed to have multiple partners and to show that they are dominant in a relationship, which they justify by sexually coercing their partners, as well as making all decisions in their relationships. A man who gets infected with an STD is often praised as it is a sign of having many girlfriends. Another sign of masculinity is having money and material possessions.

Chong and Kvasny (2007) note that in some cases female sexuality is created around conservative descriptions of pureness, abstinence, morals, self-discipline, and denial of sexual satisfaction. As a result, this patriarchal belief mandates women to be faithful, to abstain from sex, and to be self-disciplined, instead of addressing the sexual practices of men. To illustrate, Petersen et al.'s (2005) study on youths in South Africa showed that young boys hold on to patriarchal ideologies that view violence as a method used by men to discipline women if they become assertive or too independent. In addition, young men believe that women who wear revealing clothes are responsible for inviting men to rape them. This is further worsened by the view that men have strong sexual desires that cannot be controlled (Barker & Ricardo, 2005), and that their sexual desire is stimulated once they see a woman dressed in clothes that they deem provocative or revealing.

2.5 SEXUALITY IN AFRICAN SOCIETIES

Sexuality in Africa is often viewed around vulnerability and the oppression of women/girls rather than pleasure and agency (Hoang & Yeoh, 2015). In most cases women are regarded as beings who are not supposed to be sexually experienced. Young women's sexuality is usually framed around a romantic narrative; where a girl meets a boy, they fall in love, and then live happily ever after (Milnes, 2004). This narrative depicts women as vulnerable, whereas men are portrayed as active, adventurous, and heroic (Milnes, 2004). These gendered sexual behaviours promote male promiscuity and female monogamy, which may result in terrible consequences for young women, as they usually do not question such romantic narratives (Milnes, 2004). Additionally, failure to question such romantic narratives constrains women's decisions to negotiate their sexual relationships and safeguard their own sexual wellbeing.

Strong feelings of love for a sexual partner might make an individual reluctant to risk destroying the relationship, and the amount of control a man has in a relationship is exacerbated by the perception that women have that love in relationships is unequal (Kaestle, 2009).

Bhana and Anderson's (2013) study, titled "Gender, relationships dynamics and South African girls' vulnerability to sexual risk", found that prevailing constructions of male sexuality often constrain girls' agency. Having sex with a virgin is a sign of victory among teenage boys, and it grants them power, as well as the achievement of manhood. Although some girls attempt to show their agency by criticising boys who are fixated on having sex with virgins, they are often guilty of uplifting the virgin status, which often leads to them recreating male investments in female virginity. This shows how young women comply with patriarchal structures that position men as dominant and women as subordinates. They also position their sexualities around unequal power relations. This is reflected where men pressure young women to have sex during the early stages of a relationship and set conditions for having sex, and young women often capitulate because they fear losing their boyfriends or that their boyfriends will cheat on them. It was also revealed that young men still control condom use in their relationships, even though some young women expressed their desire to use condoms. Girls are not able to control condom use in their relationships, and this is a clear indication of how power is assigned to these young men. As a result, the inequalities in sexual relationships among young men and women are sustained.

This study is of interest to me because it highlights how young women's experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality put them at sexual risk. In this study, I sought to examine first-year female university residence students' constructions of gender and sexuality in relation to GBV, which include their experiences of gender and sexuality, as well as their understanding of GBV.

A study by Leach, Machakanga, and Mandoga (2000) on the abuse of girls in Zimbabwean junior secondary schools found that the behaviour of boys towards girls was mainly determined by identities of masculine and feminine. They were also taught the control and dominance of girls are norms at an early age. This unequal distribution of power in sexual relationships has been found to be the most probable cause of intimate partner violence (IPV), especially in South African communities, which are strongly patriarchal (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010).

However, norms that subordinate women are often challenged in some African studies. In an investigation carried out by Singh and Myende (2017) in South Africa on female university

students developing resilience to IPV, some participants questioned norms regarding love that position women as subordinate and powerless in heterosexual intimate relationships. They further presented their agency by alienating themselves from romantic ideas of a predetermined man who is perfect, whom a woman should just accept as their partner without questioning, even in violent circumstances. They further questioned the notion that women remain in abusive relationships because they do not want to lose their men whom they love very much. Instead, they suggested that women should focus on improving their general wellbeing rather than sacrificing it by staying in an abusive relationship. They also situated love and partners as choices where there is a possibility of negotiation; those who comprehend love as dynamic and negotiated are therefore capable of taking better control of their lives.

Most narratives regarding sexuality in Africa paint a bleak picture of the continent at large. For instance, homophobia, genital mutilation of women, corrective rape, sexual violence, promiscuity, and transactional sex often appear in African sexualities (Hendriks & Spronk, 2020). Shefer et al.'s (2012) study showed that some female students engage in transactional sex to acquire social status among their peers. However, their search for a successful, modern life may further put them at risk of having unprotected sex, which may further lead to the spread of HIV infection, since the man is often in control of the decision to use a condom or not (Mulwo et al., 2009).

However, Masvawure's (2010) study on female students and transactional sex at a university in Zimbabwe revealed that young women utilised transactional sex to demonstrate their agency. The study reported that some young women utilise their transactional relationships to compete for an elevated social status in their peer groups, and to show that they are of high status. This shows that not only those who are economically disadvantaged engage in transactional sex, but also those with a sense of agency; that is, the capacity for action and being capable of carrying out such actions by choosing to behave differently (Skafter & Silberschmidt, 2014).

Some studies present young women/girls as vulnerable to sexual violence and sexual harassment. Muhanguzi, Bennett, and Muhanguzi's (2011) study on the experiences of girls and boys in secondary schools in Uganda revealed that girls who reject boys' sexual advances often face sexual harassment, which is used to legitimise masculine power and the subordination of women. In addition, learners interact through gendered sexual expectations and power imbalance. Girls lack sexual autonomy in sexual relationships and are often abused by boys. Boys often believe that masculinity is about controlling heterosexual interactions

through the satisfaction of their own desires and selecting their partners at their own will. Girls are often viewed as inactive recipients of sexual advances from boys and as compelled to meet boys' sexual needs. The participants in Muhanguzi et al.'s (2011) study were girls and boys in secondary schools.

The way African people perform and experience sexuality is mainly shaped by their culture and society (Tamale, 2017). In some African countries, female sexuality is constructed as submissive, emotional, and nurturing, while men's sexuality is mainly focused on pleasure (Muhanguzi, 2011). However, the depiction of female sexuality as lacking agency, i.e. being weak and vulnerable, has been critiqued as wrong by some scholars who acknowledge that female agency exists (Arnfred, 2004; Mahcera, 2004). Studies have shown that there are women who directly and indirectly criticise gender roles by openly pursuing sexual pleasure as recognition of their womanhood (Spronk, 2005), and this facet of the feminine sense of self is incongruent with the concept of femininity. Bell's (2012) investigation on young people and sexual agency in rural Uganda found that young women expressed that love and affection were the primary reasons they start new relationships. Love was strongly related to the need to engage in sexual activities and feeling warm, satisfied, and adventurous, as well as appreciating life with someone and discussing their problems. The agency of young women was also seen in cases where they used their sexual relationships to acquire financial and material support from their boyfriends. They felt that this kind of support would help fill in the gaps faced by their parents in providing for their basic needs. In addition, they also presented their agency through using different types of contraceptive strategies to prevent unwanted pregnancy, and to keep their sexual relations secret, since they were often discouraged by social expectations. They often used condoms and mythical contraceptives such as herbs, or having sex during days that they thought were safe, usually soon after menstruation.

Women's sexuality in Africa is viewed by some researchers as both emancipatory and oppressive (Tamale, 2005). For instance, Tamale's 2005 study, titled "Eroticism, sensuality and 'women's secrets' among the Baganda: A critical analysis", revealed how the Ssenga institution (a cultural/sexual initiation institution responsible for educating young girls and women about issues of sex, which includes premarital training, and sex and procreation lessons) among the Banganda people of Uganda carried emancipatory messages relating to the autonomy of women and their economic independence. Call-in radio sessions revealed how women were taking charge of their sexuality. Women talked freely about issues related to women ejaculating and how to achieve orgasm through stimulating the clitoris. One woman

expressed that she was married for 15 years and never experienced orgasm in those years until she engaged in an extramarital affair. She realised that a woman can reach an orgasm and this led to her having a relationship that was sexually fulfilling. The women in the study challenged dogmas that privilege men over women and the issue of identifying women with maternity, as well as the use of sex as a tool for reproduction. Instead, they viewed sex as a tool for pleasure and leisure; hence the erotic was empowering to these women. Women were encouraged to get rid of traits such as shyness and embarrassment when they were in their bedrooms. They were taught love-making techniques, and herbs that tighten and lubricate the vagina were prescribed for them. However, the traditionalists and authorities were opposed to the *ssenga* operating on university campuses. They regarded them as encouraging promiscuity and immorality at university. They believed that young women should not be taught issues of sex and ways of attracting men.

To show the agency of women regarding sexuality, Arnfred (2017) reported about the initiation rituals in northern provinces of Mozambique. In her study, young women were taught to be masters and experts in sexual issues and given instructions on how to seduce a man and engage in sex that is pleasurable. Although the whole process of preparing a young woman's body, such as *labia minora* elongation (which usually starts early before puberty up to the initiation ceremony) is done to improve sexual pleasure for both partners, i.e. the man and woman, body tattoos (meant to stimulate sexual pleasure for both men and women), and strings of glass beads (meant to sexually arouse a man), might have been construed in the patriarchal context as a form of subordinating women for men to gain pleasure, young women presented their agency as their sexuality was focused on pleasure. They were the ones who initiated the sexual activities and they were pleased with their abilities. They also enjoyed the sexual experiences just like their male partners and in this case they came out as agentic and men as the ones who were seduced.

Many young women are increasingly taking charge of their sexuality. For instance, Opiyo's (2017) research, titled "The 'G-string' as a space for sexual and political imagination: Rethinking discourses of youth, power and globalisation in Kenya", reported that many young university women admitted that daring clothing, such as a G-string, gives a woman confidence and a sense of personal and sexual impudence. It further shows an identity of being candid and up to date. The young women also made it clear that such kinds of clothing are important because it catches the attention of young men and improves their sexual being. However, a few female students in the study believed that wearing a G-string was bad and immoral.

Sexuality in some African societies is usually discussed within the realm of secrecy and privacy, and a number of behaviours related to sexuality are usually stigmatised (Tamale, 2011). This is seen in some Zimbabwean societies, where discussing any subject related to sex, whether in families or communities, is forbidden and regarded as taboo. Words that involve male and female sex organs, such as penis, vagina, or sexual activity, are considered vulgar and cannot be uttered in a public context unless they are discussed among peer groups; male peers in particular (Madongonda & Chitando, 2009). Women who are HIV positive are often stigmatised, and being HIV positive is often associated with moral failure (Manyonganise, 2017). Manyonganise's (2017) study revealed that parents of HIV-positive children had a negative attitude towards sex. They were ashamed and not comfortable discussing sexual issues with their HIV-positive children and they did not allow their girls to have any sexual desire at all. The study also found that young HIV-positive virgin girls isolated themselves and could not explore their sexuality because of the shame associated with being HIV positive.

Izugbara, Ochako, and Izugbara's (2011) investigation on gender scripts and unwanted pregnancy among Kenyan women notes that in Kenya the decency of a woman is mainly judged by her sexual behaviour, and a responsible woman is largely constructed in terms of childbearing within marriage, nurturing of children, and domesticity. As a result, the use of sexuality in any context other than marriage is regarded as inappropriate and disreputable, and the behaviour of women who fall pregnant outside marriage is often regarded as improper and unfeminine (Izugbara et al., 2011).

2.6 HISTORICAL CONTEXTUALISATION OF GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND VIOLENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.6.1 A brief historical background of gender, sexuality, and violence in South Africa

The social construction of gender and sexuality within specific cultural and historical contexts is clearly revealed in this brief background. According to Hunter (2005), in some precolonial societies in the period before the 1930s, both men and women could engage in sexual relationships with more than one partner. However, women who were seen as exceeding the boundary were often reprimanded and referred to as an *izifebe* (loose woman). In addition, in Zulu society, manhood was associated with bravery and good fighting skills. Men with such skills amassed wealth in the form of cattle, and the number of cattle they had also determined the number of wives they could marry. Creating a thriving homestead was quite important

during this period, and the more wives a man had, the wealthier and more respected a household head (*umnumzana*) he became. What was important during this period was mainly building the homestead and childbirth, which was often controlled by the practice of non-penetrative sex (Hunter, 2005). Furthermore, courtship was associated with marriage; therefore, if a man started courting a girl, it meant he was supposed to marry her. Unmarried men were often referred to as *isoka*. Fertility was also often regulated among unmarried people. One of the practices that they could freely use was a form of non-penetrative sex called *ukusoma* (thigh sex), which was used to prevent unwanted pregnancy. However, unmarried men who engaged in thigh sex with several women were often rebuked and labelled *isoka lamanyala* (participating in a filthy, shameful act). A man was supposed to get married and build his homestead instead of having many girlfriends. Married and unmarried men with multiple girlfriends were often called by the parents of the girl they were dating to account for their plan to marry their daughter. Hunter (2005) notes that enormous value was also placed on premarital virginity among young women, and virginity testing was therefore practised. As a result, the purity of girls was often supervised by older women who regularly tested their virginity.

Hunter (2005) also notes that the period between the 1930s and 1950s brought some significant changes to the meanings attached to *isoka* (unmarried man) and women with multiple partners. This period was characterised by mass migration of men from the rural areas to urban areas in search of employment in the diamond and gold mines. The widely accepted phenomenon of multiple sexual partners transformed drastically during this period among African people. The law (*umthetho*) did not allow women to have many partners; in fact, they were only allowed one partner, and only unmarried men (*isoka*) were allowed to have many partners. This brought about a new meaning of the word *isoka* (which previously meant unmarried) to now mean a young man who is popular among women. During the 1950s, an *isoka* figure was basically an unmarried man who was popular for his skill in dating many women. To validate their manhood, men engaged in penetrative sex instead of thigh sex, which further put them at risk of STIs such as syphilis. Furthermore, the *isoka* masculinity had a great influence as it strengthened some married men's position of wanting to engage in extramarital affairs. They often engaged in such activities, although they had adopted the doctrine of Christianity that only allowed monogamous marriages. Wives were often against the behaviour of their husbands who engaged in extramarital affairs. Women were pressured by the Christian values and moral code to act with purity. These changes can be attributed to men's desire to maintain

patriarchal ideals and to further control women's sexuality (Hunter, 2005). Such patriarchal notions hinder certain behaviours and the free expression of sexual desire.

A large number of women also migrated from rural areas to urban areas in search of sexual relationships, since men were becoming scarce in the rural areas. They also sought employment, often as domestic workers; those who failed to get jobs ended up brewing and selling beer (Glaser, 2008). This mass migration of women into urban areas led to uncontrolled sexuality in the urban areas, which was a cause of concern for the apartheid government (Glaser, 2008). A large number of women ended up engaging in prostitution because they could not find jobs. Those who brewed and sold beer for survival were forced to sell their bodies as a way of attracting customers. The government was even more worried about people of different races engaging in sexual relationships, which was then deemed unacceptable. For example, domestic workers often engaged in sexual relationships with married and single men. They were often vulnerable to abuse by the majority of African men and some white men. The idea of domestic workers staying on the premises of their employers was assumed to cause sexual immorality and destroying many families (Glaser, 2008). Furthermore, Christian society regarded sex outside marriage as immoral, supporting the Christian family model that regards husbands as the provider and family head, while wives were homemakers who abided by their husbands' authority. As a result, sexually active single women were regarded as toxic to the moral fabric of society (Glaser, 2008).

In rural areas, some women engaged in extramarital affairs with a certain level of implicit approval (Glaser, 2008). They often had a secondary lover, often referred to as *isidikiselo* (the top of the pot), with the first man often referred to as *ibhodwe* (the main pot). These metaphors clearly reflected the women's desire for sexual relationships and support while their husbands were busy working in the urban areas. Women who took part in these extramarital affairs were often criticised and labelled as an *izifebe* (a loose woman). From a man's perspective, being labelled as *izifebe* and having a child outside marriage could position women as not deserving of respect, and therefore not desirable to marry (Hunter, 2005).

The emergence of male *tsotsi* gangs (young gangsters) in townships (suburbs mainly occupied by black people) was witnessed during the late 1940s, and they affirmed a certain hostile kind of masculinity (Glaser, 2008). This kind of masculinity was associated with high levels of sexual harassment and coercion, as well as multiple sexual conquests, which gave them status (Glaser, 2008). Delius and Glaser (2002) note that these gangs were often involved in criminal

activities to make money, which they would use to lure women. Girls were often forced into relationships with these gang members, and those who refused their gangster's proposal were usually at risk of being raped or abducted. If a girl accepted a gangster's proposal, she would automatically become his property and was not allowed to flirt with any men. She was also supposed to provide her gangster boyfriend with sex whenever he wanted it, and penetrative sex was the only kind of sex that they engaged in, which led to many girls falling pregnant (Delius & Glaser, 2002). However, some young women would willingly start a relationship with a gangster to protect themselves from other gangsters, who often molested, harassed, and abducted girls.

The period also marked free and consensual sexual exploration among teenagers in urban areas. Young lovers often engaged in penetrative sex. The freedom and independence that was offered by the city often influenced these young men and women's sexual behaviour. They were against *ukusoma* (thigh sex, which was often supported by conservative adults) and abstinence (which was supported by Christians who were against sex outside marriage). The young men and women viewed thigh sex as old-fashioned; young men were only interested in penetrative sex, to the extent that girls who refused to do it were often beaten (Delius & Glaser, 2002).

In the 1970s, a new culture of comrade culture, which exploited women, emerged. The comrades who engaged in the struggle felt that they had the right to demand sex from women, and that women should freely give it to them as a reward for their bravery in fighting against apartheid (Delius & Glaser, 2002). Although the comrades were against gangsters and the abduction and rape of women, they brought another kind of sexual exploitation of women that was similar to that of the gangsters. They developed their own kind of sexual subordination and coercion. Girls were required to attend nocturnal meetings and all-night vigils, where comrades would demand sex from them, and they had no choice but to give in to their demands. Those who rejected these demands were often raped or severely beaten. Furthermore, the comrades did not want the girls to use contraception, because they felt that they had a duty to father many children, who would become soldiers and replace those who had died in the struggle (Delius & Glaser, 2002).

2.6.2 Gender, sexuality and violence in democratic South Africa

Ideas of gender and sexuality are not separate facets of experience and identity, but are reciprocally constitutive, changeable, and contextually dependent (Sennott & Angotti, 2016).

Because sexuality is a socially created phenomenon, the meanings, motivations, and values attached to sexual expression differ across populations and cultures. This means that behaviours and principles regarding sexuality, such as desires, sexual practices, beliefs, and moral codes, differ across South African societies (Leclerc-Madlala, 2003). For example, the sexuality of many young women in some South African urban areas is characterised by exchanging sex for material things such as jewellery, cell phones, and expensive clothes, and apparently this kind of behaviour has nothing to do with poverty-survival tactics, but reflects the need to attain a modern and prosperous lifestyle (Leclerc-Madlala, 2003). Leclerc-Madlala's (2003) study on transactional sex and the pursuit of modernity in a Durban township revealed that a number of young urban women engage in multi-partner relationships in an attempt to meet their needs for food, shelter, etc., as well as for attaining sexual equality. Such transactional sexual activities are not viewed negatively as prostitution by other members of society; rather, the meanings are regulated by a similar set of meanings that reinforce sexual exchange practices for reasons of survival.

In some cases, because of the high unemployment rate and poverty in many South African societies, women are often forced to engage in transactional sex, usually with many men (Hunter, 2005). They often engage in relationships with older men, referred to as sugar daddies, to alleviate poverty. According to Hunter (2005), nowadays unemployment means that some men are not able to attain *umnumzana* (household head) status through marriage or being the main source of income. Instead, they attempt to achieve their manhood through engaging in sexual relationships with many women. They even compete among themselves regarding the number of women each man has, and penetrative sex is taken for granted, which is risky. Furthermore, many young men and women are not even cognisant of the existence of *ukusoma*. The term *isoka amanyala* is more likely to refer to a man who cheats on his girlfriend with her best friend, rather than a man who engages in sexual relationships with many women (Hunter, 2005).

Weeks (2003) notes that sexuality beliefs are usually informed by gender norms; for instance, what is suitable and what is not, and for whom specific behaviours are and are not accepted. In addition, expectations about sexuality are often informed by gender norms regarding, for instance, what is proper and improper (Weeks, 2003). In the South African context, the sexual practices of women are often determined by dominant gender norms of emphasised femininity that promote self-discipline, decorum, and respect. As a result, women who attempt to participate in contemporary femininities by demonstrating sexual agency and defying male

authority are usually criticised in public, especially if the behaviour is regarded as abnormal or risky (Sennott & Angotti, 2016). However, these norms are quite debatable, especially when perceived to be archaic and as undermining the pleasure and protection of women in sexual relations. For example, Sennott and Angotti's (2016) study reports that young women were reviewing norms that control gendered sexual practices by verbally challenging older women who characterise the behaviour of young women who wear miniskirts as purposefully inviting sexual attention and violence from men. These young women completely and entirely reject these claims of the older women. These views clearly reveal the dominant norms that control women's behaviour and clothing in the public domain.

Several South African societies promote abstinence through virginity testing; however, this practice is often blamed for regulating female sexuality in order to sustain patriarchy (Bhana, 2016). Girls and young women in different townships in KwaZulu-Natal are frequently tested for virginity (Bhana, 2016). Furthermore, the most popular ceremony is the annual Reed Dance, where girls and young women aged between eight and 25 years are required to wear their traditional dress, called *imvuluno*, and carry a reed, which represents their virginity, and give it to the king. This notion of virginity, which engenders pride, respect, and dignity, is still valued despite it facing some criticism (Bhana, 2016).

According to Shefer and Foster (2001), in a number of South African societies women's sexuality is often viewed within the discourse of male sexuality, where the male sex drive is key to the construction of both male and female sexuality. This discourse regards sex as inherently masculine, a male domain, and an activity that is male-centred. What is significant is the notion that men need sex, are focused on sex, are always ready to engage in sexual intercourse, and that sex is a strong biological need. In contrast, for women sex is tied to relationships, commitment, and love. Women are constructed as less sexual than men, as creatures who are able to control their physical desire, and as desiring a devoted relationship in order to explore their sexuality safely. As a result, men are constructed as relishing sex more than women. This heterosexual discourse clearly constructs men as active subjects and women as passive objects (Shefer & Foster, 2001).

Because gender is regarded as social constructions of masculinity and femininity (Lorber, 2000), men and women in South African societies are often expected to act according to their prescribed versions of masculinity and femininity. In some South African communities, those who fail to conform to prescribed dominant gender norms are violated. Members of the LGBT

community are attacked and discriminated against because of their sexual orientation, which is viewed as unorthodox. Some men rape lesbian women and justify their violent behaviour by claiming that it is a way of healing their abnormality (Anguita, 2012). In addition, heterosexual men in South Africa regularly attack homosexual women, to teach them to act like an African woman and to communicate to them that they are not welcome or accepted within their community.

2.7 GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND RELIGION IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

The introduction of Islam and Christianity in South Africa brought with it views about sexuality that were regulatory and moralistic (Mathe, 2013). The kind of Christianity that was taught by missionaries promoted love between married couples and stigmatised traditional practices that promoted the agency of young women and men. Sex outside marriage was considered shameful. However, studies have shown that many who had adopted the doctrine of Christianity did not entirely accept some of its components, such as issues to do with male infidelity and monogamy. Many married men were secretly involved in extramarital affairs. Migrant male workers often had both city and rural wives. Some Christian wives accepted male infidelity (although they were not happy about it), especially if their husbands kept the extramarital affair a secret (Delius & Glaser, 2002). Women who became pregnant outside marriage were severely punished, either by being given a seat in the back of the church or by being excluded from the church community. Their moral reputation was tainted, and they were considered outcasts in the Christian community (Delius & Glaser, 2002).

In contemporary South Africa, religion and tradition have greatly shaped societal views about sexuality (Harrison, 2008). Certain churches are working to promote abstinence among young women, many of whom do not heed the message. Some have even attempted to bring back virginity testing practice; for example, a church in Mandeni organises virginity testing every year. Religious leaders attempt to control sexuality among African people by claiming that it is damaging (Tamale, 2017). They place on the forefront the dangers associated with sexuality while issues of pleasure are not discussed. Women are especially encouraged to control their sexuality. Certain sexual behaviours are controlled through the notion of evil (Tamale, 2017).

Religion also continues to shape some young men and women's behaviour. For instance, Kyei and Ramagoma's (2013) study, titled "Alcohol consumption in South African universities:

Prevalence and factors at the University of Venda, Limpopo province”, reported that some students steered clear of consuming alcohol because they believed that such conduct might lead them to engage in behaviour such as fornication. Blignaut, Vergnani, and Jacobs’ (2014) study, titled “Correlates of sexual activity versus non-activity of incoming first-year students at a South African university”, found that young Muslim male and female university students’ sexual behaviour was influenced by their religion; they therefore did not engage in sex with their partners.

Regarding marriage, extramarital affairs are often questioned and criticised by both Christianity and Islam (Harrison, 2008). For example, Sennott and Angotti’s (2016) research, which was conducted in South Africa, reported that a woman who had engaged in an extramarital affair had her behaviour questioned by a group of women under a religious doctrine and societal beliefs about marriage. From a biblical standpoint, they questioned the position of the wife as a Christian because they believed that her supposed adulterous behaviour was in contrast with religious beliefs about the sacredness of marriage.

Homosexual and extramarital affairs by women are barred and heavily criticised in the Islamic world. As in the Christian world, although there is a significant change in attitudes towards homosexuality of late, it is still considered taboo. The generally acceptable norm with regard to marriage is a monogamous marriage between partners of opposite genders (Weeks, 2003).

In South Africa, homosexuality has been criticised and often regarded as behaviour that is not African by some black leaders, who blame white colonisers for bringing what they think is an illness to the country (Anguita, 2012). However, the white minority regime during apartheid distanced itself from homosexuality, which was regarded as deviant and a risk to the tradition of white Christians. Same-sex relationships were forbidden during the apartheid regime, which imposed heavy penalties on those who practised such acts. The police were given total power to arrest any person believed to be homosexual (Anguita, 2012).

Religion is used in South African societies to transmit sexist gender roles that promote the dominance of men and the subordination of women, as well as resting the burden of averting sexual violence upon women (Anguita, 2012).

2.8 UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES OF GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

Life at university for first-year students might be very stressful, since it is a new environment for most of them. As students enter university, many of them are at a stage where they are going through some major changes, coupled with a great deal of confusion, conflict, and anger (Kantanis, 2000). It is also a period whereby the majority are going through a phase of emerging adulthood, which is characterised by identity exploration, instability, and feelings of being in-between; that is, they may consider themselves not as adolescents, yet not fully adults. During this period of identity exploration, young adults may explore a variety of possibilities in areas such as romance (Arnett & Hughes, 2012). Most young men and women are probably sexually active and likely to engage in sex beyond the context of a faithful relationship (Reddy & Dunne, 2007). In addition, their sexual views are more open, and gender role formation is usually related to dating. Young men and women might also be subjected to traditional gender stereotypes in new domains and settings, together with more progressive views on sexuality and gender roles in a new environment such as university classes (Singh, Mabaso, Mudaly, & Singh-Pillay, 2017). This is a phase where their views about sexuality are often challenged, which leads to them interrogating their previously held ideas (Arnett & Hughes, 2012).

University campuses are constructed as spaces of sexual exploration (Shefer et al., 2012). Sexuality among students is a natural human expression, and is explicitly associated with sexual relations, especially sexual intercourse (Perez-Jimenez, Cunningham, Serrano-Garcia, & Ortiz-Torres, 2007). The exploration of sexuality that takes place proposes that young men and women entering university are likely to have different views of sexuality than older students who already have a few years of exploration behind them. For instance, Perez-Jimenez et al. (2007) found that two different sexualities prevail among university students: one which is linked to love, where a long-term, stable relationship is possible, and one related to just having sex, which is strongly associated with pleasure and does not regard what another person is feeling.

The independence brought about by attending university propels students to make their own decisions, and they are often overwhelmed by this responsibility. They also have to deal with peer pressure, which may result in them making choices with dire consequences. For example, students may tolerate unacceptable behaviour, such as sexual harassment, in a bid to sustain social acceptance by the peers of their group (Conroy, 2013). Perez-Jimenez et al. (2007) note

that peer pressure is influential in university students' constructions of gender and sexuality; for example, some students enter university as virgins but when they get there, they discover that everyone is having sex. As a result, they end up having the urge to experiment as everyone else is doing.

Alcohol use, which is a common indicator of sexual activities, especially risky ones, has been found to be prevalent among university students. The practice of consuming alcohol among students facilitates certain kinds of gender expression within specific contexts where male students use it to express masculinity (Clowes et al., 2009). Young men at university may use alcohol to evade stigmatisation, as well as to conform to specific gender norms (Paul, McManus, & Hayes, 2000). Desiderato and Crawford's (1995) study, "Risky sexual behaviour in college students: Relationship between number of sexual partners, disclosure of previous risky sexual behaviour and alcohol use", in the USA revealed that the rate and amount of alcohol drinking among college students were related to the number of sexual partners that one had. Those who engage in heavy drinking are the ones who usually have multiple girlfriends and engage in sexual activities with many girlfriends. Similarly, Blignaut et al. (2014) found that the likelihood of engaging in risky sexual activities was high among male students who engaged in alcohol and drug use. Male students in their study acknowledged that they engaged in sexual activities after consuming alcohol and that some had more than one partner. It was further found that there was a strong relationship between alcohol use and risky sexual practices as many students did not use condoms during their sexual practices. The behaviour of consuming alcohol is regarded as an act of "doing" gender (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 127), where men socially create their identities of masculinity. Additionally, men may use alcohol to convey their superiority over women, who are often forbidden from consuming alcohol. The fear of being mocked and categorised as feminine or weak is significant in young men's construction of masculinity. As a result, young male students may engage in alcohol consumption to assert their masculinity (Bach, 2017).

Alcohol use among college peers has been found to be related to GBV, and female students are mainly the victims (Singh et al., 2017). Reducing problems related to alcohol consumption at universities continues to be a difficult mission, and female university students face a great risk of being abused as a result of alcohol consumption. Wechsler, Dowdall, Davenport, and Rimm's (1995) research on gender-specific measures of binge drinking among college students in the USA revealed that 19% of female students reported drinking excessive amounts of

alcohol (binge drinking) three or more times in a two-week period. This puts them at greater risk of violent victimisation that may inevitably affect their lives at university.

There are high incidences of risky sexual practices among students on university campuses, because norms of sexual indulgence and numerous partners are quite dominant (Paul et al., 2000). The sexual culture among students at some universities is characterised by high rates of multiple concurrent sexual partners (Mulwo et al., 2009). College men who are believed to have a high self-esteem have been found to have multiple sex partners (Paul et al., 2000). Self-esteem is regarded as an essential preventative measure for young male students against the possibility of rejection encountered in sexual activities (Paul et al., 2000). Perez-Jimenez et al.'s (2007) study, titled "Construction of male sexuality and gender roles in Puerto Rican heterosexual college students", revealed the double-standards phenomenon regarding how sexuality is expressed among university students. They found that male students who engage in sexual activities with more than 10 women are often praised and regarded as heroes, while female students who engage in the same activities are usually considered prostitutes.

It is also presumed that violence in educational institutions may be precipitated by male students who aim to reveal their masculine identity, which is exacerbated by peer pressure (Leach, 2002). The construction of male and female identity is largely influenced by peers who in some circumstances encourage others to conform to certain gender norms, thus making female students vulnerable to GBV (Leach, 2002). Young people at universities usually receive gender signals from their peers that remind women to be feminine and men to be masculine. The university setting has been found to be an environment that is usually inhabited by a number of students who hold the idea that to be masculine means being aggressive and dominant, while to be feminine means being submissive and dependent (Leach, 2002). Due to this, young female students who have internalised these gender stereotypes may be less likely to insist on using protection during sex or to refuse unwanted sex. Young men may be likely to force their resisting female partners into having sex, since the male gender stereotype is viewed as more hostile in sexual activities (Maas et al., 2015). These internalised gender stereotypical behaviours are also reflected in circumstances where abused women often excuse violent male behaviour (Leach, 2002). They blame themselves for behaving in a way that threatens a man's sense of control, which often leads to them accepting and enduring physical punishment (Jewkes & Morrell, 2012). Sexual assault is also rife in universities because of male students' attitude towards sex and women, which is shaped by their stereotypical views about women's sexual behaviour; for instance, they may perceive a refusal of sexual activities

by a woman as a sign that she wants to engage in sex, and these views maintain sexist ideologies about scoring, while some may further use alcohol as a tool for sexual conquest (Weinzimmer & Twill, 2016).

The university environment shapes women's sexual practices, because it constitutes students from diverse backgrounds with different experiences (Budnick, 2016). Female students may adopt different sexual scripts as they interact with each other at university; for example, the prevailing sexual script on many university campuses in the USA is hooking up, which manifests in behaviours ranging from making out to casual sex. In addition, same-gender relationships are popular among university students. Another phenomenon that has been found to be common among university students is that of young women, who are considered to be straight, kissing. This is a reiteration of stereotypes about experimental college women (Budnick, 2016). However, such behaviour has been acknowledged as a means for queer female students to explore and legitimise their sexuality without embracing stigmatised and segregating lesbian identities (Budnick, 2016).

Educational settings have been found to be in favour of men, as well as dominated by men, and they provide a framework whereby different forms of discrimination against female students grow (Bakari & Leach, 2008). In addition, the prevalence of violence in educational institutions can be attributed to men and women's acceptance of institutionalised forms of violence where lecturers and students perpetrate it, authorities tolerate it, and both victims and perpetrators normalise it. University students, in particular young women, across the globe are at risk of being victimised during their time at university (Cantalupo, 2014). Koss, Goodman, Browne, Fitzgerald, Keita, and Russo's (1994) research, which focused on male violence against women at home, at work, and in the community in the USA, revealed that 27.5% of female students in universities experience sexual and physical assault such as rape and attempted rape, and 11.9% encounter verbal threats to engage in sexual intercourse, while 14% are verbally intimidated into unwanted sexual contact. Cantalupo (2014) points out that sexual violence is prevalent in American universities, and approximately 20% to 25% of female students encounter it during their life at university. A Spanish investigation by Vidu, Schubert, Munoz, and Duque (2014) on students' views about GBV found that female students encounter sexual harassment from professors during their first year at university. This resulted in some of the students not attending lectures, which negatively affected their studies.

It has also been found that female students on college campuses usually encounter rape from their fellow students, and are less likely to report such incidences or hold the perpetrator liable for the crime (Renzetti, Curran, & Maier, 2012). A significant number of female students in universities are drastically exposed to sexual violence such as sexual harassment, rape by their acquaintances, and sexual assault, among others, and they have different ways of coping with such devastating experiences (Farmer & McMahon, 2005). Humphrey and White (2000) argue that undergraduate female students are at high risk of being sexually assaulted by people they know, and that those who encounter sexual assault during their adolescent period are more at risk of being victims of sexual coercion during their college life. There are some negative consequences that women at universities face after experiencing such victimisation; for example, some female students may choose to withdraw from their studies, which consequently affects their career plans (Renzetti et al., 2012). In addition, some female students may not report such actions because of cultural gender norms that hinder women from discussing such behaviour by men.

Osborne (1992) points out that universities comprise an environment that is sexist, hostile, and misogynist, which adversely affects female students' integrity. In addition, she asserts that GBV, such as sexual assault and sexual harassment by male lecturers, are damaging forms of violence experienced by female students, especially during their first year. Ekore (2012) agrees as he states that the university environment is a rich ground for sexual harassment that usually affects women, who face stigmatisation if they report it. Humphrey and White's (2000) study on the vulnerability to sexual assault from adolescence to young adults among female university students revealed that the risk of being sexually victimised is higher during the first year and subsequently decreases. This might further affect the female students psychologically, cause emotional disturbances, and lower their self-esteem (Renzetti et al., 2012).

2.9 GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND GBV IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Social institutions are significant socialisation sites that directly and indirectly strengthen gender norms regarding gender and sexuality (Lindsey, 2015). Educational institutions are often regarded as agents of socialisation, and play an important role in influencing young men and women's sexual identities. Through such institutions, gender differences are created in many aspects of sexuality. Students often interact through gendered sexual expectations and power disparities, negotiating the deprivation of female sexual independence and compulsory

heterosexuality and norms that regard women as sexual objects meant to satisfy male sexual needs (Muhanguzi et al., 2011).

In South African higher education institutions, heterosexuality is the most recognised form of relationship and ideal students are represented as those who engage in heterosexual relations, and those who do not fall under this category, such as the LGBTQI community, are often alienated and excluded and, as a result, do not feel a sense of belonging (Kessi et al., 2016). Young women often face pressure within their peer groups to prove their femininity by having a boyfriend (Morrell, Moletsane, Abdul Karim, Epstein, & Unterhalter, 2002). Power is usually invested in students who engage in heterosexual relations. Those who do not conform to acceptable performances of gender and sexuality often have limited power in mainstream society (Khalid, 2015). They are often ridiculed and stigmatised because they do not behave according to acceptable gender norms. Nduna, Mthombeni, Mavhandu-Mudzusi, and Mogotsi's (2017) study on LGBTI experiences in institutions of higher education in Southern Africa found that institutions of higher learning are still heteronormative, which often leads to the marginalisation and discrimination of LGBTQI students.

Higher education institutions are viewed as settings with "less sexual surveillance" that enables students to "enjoy and exhibit sexuality" (Bhana & Pillay, 2018, p. 5). Bhana and Pillay (2018) found that the university environment provides young women an opportunity to redefine their sexuality outside the secrecy realm as they can freely date whomever they want. Relationships are often linked with pleasure in ambiguous ways. Love and pleasure are spoken about in romantic ways, where falling in love is the main factor in a relationship.

The sexuality of some young women at university is framed around trading sex for financial materials, which often puts young women at risk of being violated. Van der Riet, Akhurst, and Wilbraham's (2019) research on promoting students' sexual and reproductive health in peer-led programmes at two South African universities found that female students who engage in transactional sex encounter violence from their partners and those who faced abuse from their intimate partner were afraid to leave the relationship because of the stigma attached to being single.

Some university students engage in transactional sex to assert their agency, which may expose them to GBV. Shefer et al.'s (2012) study showed that some female students engage in transactional sex to acquire social status among their peers. However, their search for a successful, modern life may further put them at risk of having unprotected sex, which may

further lead to the spread of HIV infection, since the man is often in control of the decision to use a condom or not (Mulwo et al., 2009).

Sexuality in South African higher education institutions is usually interconnected with alcohol consumption and partying (Bhana & Pillay, 2018). Female students can freely drink alcohol and go out to party, unlike at their homes where there are usually some restrictions (Bhana & Pillay, 2018). Because many students in universities indulge in partying and drinking, first-year students are often exposed to such activities and their need to socialise may put them at risk of experiencing GBV such as rape, especially during their first weeks at university (Weinzimmer & Twill, 2016). Mashegoane, Moalusi, Ngoepe, and Peltzer's (2002) study on sexual sensation seeking and risky sexual behaviour among South African university students reported that students who consume alcohol were likely to engage in risky sexual behaviours. Female students were less likely to negotiate condom use in their relationships. Male students assumed a dominant position in their relationships and they had more than one sexual partner.

Sexuality in educational institutions usually revolves around control and resistance, and sexual identities are negotiated and produced as a result of peer interactions (Muhanguzi et al., 2011). As they socialise, young men and women learn heterosexual codes that are required for them to achieve manhood and womanhood. South African universities have been identified as key areas for the construction of masculine and feminine identities (Leach, 2002). Male students assert their dominance by using violence, and female students are afraid of their male partners. Femininity is usually constructed around obeying prevailing norms regarding gender and sexuality. The reason why young male students engage in sexual relationships is to express masculinity and their power over young female students (Morrell et al., 2002; Robinson, 2005). Male students often exercise their dominance in sexual relationship by controlling their female partners (Bhana & Pillay, 2018), while assertive female partners are usually regarded as hostile (Jewkes, Morrell, Sikweyiya, Dunkle, & Penn-Kekana, 2012). In their investigation on coercive sexual practices and GBV on a university campus, Clowes et al. (2009) found that heterosexual relations among students were characterised by coercion and unequal practices.

Gender plays a significant role in male and female students' participation in certain South African university spaces. For example, Ngabaza et al.'s (2018) study, "Students' narrative on gender and sexuality in the project of sexuality and belonging in higher education", found that the university bar was a highly masculinised space with the potential of being violent and a

place where male students often engaged in one-night stands with women. Female students who visited the bar often felt intimidated and in some instances were sexually harassed by some male students. It was a place where female students were treated as sexual objects, and viewed as immoral and readily available for sex. LGBTQI students who entered the bar often felt marginalised, excluded, and unsafe. A study conducted by Jagessar and Msibi (2015) on homophobia in the residences of a university in KwaZulu-Natal found that there were certain spaces, such as “The Parliament” (Jagessar & Msibi, 2015, p. 68) situated outside the male residence, where male students usually sat and make derogatory comments to students who pass by. Gays and lesbians were often stopped and asked questions about their sexuality that made them uncomfortable. The Parliament is a space that is considered to be for male students only.

In their study, titled “Understandings of gender-based violence amongst female students at a South African university”, Gordon and Collins (2013) found that young women were not safe on the university campus and lived in constant fear of being sexually victimised, which negatively affected their day-to-day actions and behaviour at university. GBV was constructed by the young women as something that was inevitable and university residences were viewed as unsafe.

An online survey carried out by Singh, Mudaly, and Singh-Pillay (2015), titled “The ‘what, who and where’ of female students’ fear of sexual assault on a South African university campus”, revealed that the form of violence that was most feared by the majority of female students was sexual assault, and this distress is likely higher among female students as some of them are not really aware of what constitutes sexual assault. The survey also revealed that most cases of violence that take place at universities are among those in intimate relationships. It was also found that on campus, university residences are the most unsafe places for female students, and most of those who reside in campus residences are at risk of being raped. Because of the intimidating campus atmosphere, some gays and lesbians are also scared of revealing their sexual orientation. These results clearly show the pervasiveness of violence on campuses.

2.10 RISK FACTORS OF GBV

Several risk factors are associated with the perpetration of GBV. Alcohol and drug use have been found to increase the risk of individuals perpetrating GBV (National Sexual Violence Resource Centre [NSVRC], 2004). A report titled *Stop violence against women in South Africa:*

Know your epidemic – Know your response (Mazars, Mafolo, Jewkes, & Shamu, 2014) uncovered similar results. It states that there is a relationship between alcohol drinking and men perpetrating sexual assault and IPV, and that women who consume alcohol are more vulnerable, with lower chances of them reporting the case. In addition, being intoxicated is a risk because it precipitates loss of inhibition, weak problem-solving abilities, increased sexual risk-taking behaviour, and less thought given to the end result. Paul et al. (2000) concur as they state that alcohol consumption could lower effective assessment and upfront communication, which may lead to difficulties in refusing sex. Furthermore, alcohol drinking may further grant men consent to express culturally bound norms that tolerate male domination over women (Mazars et al., 2014). Kovac and Trussell (2015) note that violence and sexual assault are related to college drinking environments, and the most used drug for date rape is alcohol.

Gender inequality is another factor that can cause the perpetration of GBV. Findings from the *World report on violence and health* revealed that there are higher chances of sexual violence occurring in societies with inflexible and conservative gender norms (NSVRC, 2004). These are societies that hold ideologies that view male supremacy as strong through emphasising physical strength and male honour, and cases of rape are usually high in such societies (NSVRC, 2004). Mazars et al. (2014) reveal that patriarchal gender norms play a significant role in the perpetration of violence against women, because they recognise men and boys as having a higher social value, power, and status than women and girls. Furthermore, sexually violent men usually target women and girls because they are viewed as having lower status or power, and in many cases feel that they can commit such crimes with impunity. Lesbians may also be targeted because they are regarded as challenging traditional male power, since they live outside a sphere of male control (Mazars et al., 2014). In addition, Mazars et al. (2014) indicate that gender norms that encourage men to have many sexual partners also put women at risk of being subjected to IPV and rape (Mazars et al., 2014).

The NSVRC (2004) report on sexual violence and health found that there is a high likelihood of men committing sexual violence in societies where the culture accepts the notion of male honour and entitlement and fails to punish those who perpetrate sexual violence. As a result, this ideology of male entitlement denies women's right to refuse sex and fails to recognise cases of marital rape as a dilemma (NSVRC, 2004). Mazars et al. (2014) report that sexual entitlement is a great motivator for men to commit rape crimes. Male sexual entitlement is accepted in some societies, which is seen in cases where ideas such as women and girls being

liable for their own rape are often expressed. These ideas encourage men to perpetrate violence against women with impunity.

Poverty is another risk factor that has been found to increase the vulnerability of people to GBV, whether in educational institutions, prostitution, or sex trafficking and the drug trade (NSVRC, 2004). This also shows that people at a higher risk for GBV are those with the lowest socioeconomic status. This supports the report by Mazars et al. (2014), which revealed that the perpetration of rape is more common among men who live in relatively poor communities. Studies in South Africa have revealed that lack of money among many people in South Africa has motivated some women to engage in sexual relations in pursuit of a better life and to satisfy their day-to-day needs (Wamoyi, Wight, Plummer, Mshana, & Ross, 2010; Leclerc-Madlala, 2003). This shows how sexuality has been reconceptualised as a source that can be used for economic reasons, and that this need to sustain such standards of living exposes women to GBV (Mulwo et al., 2009). Petersen et al. (2005) note that the commodification of sex or transactional sex is the main cause of sexual abuse both within and outside the family.

2.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a detailed scholarly review of literature on gender and sexuality. Global constructions of gender and sexuality were discussed, as well as sexuality in Africa. A historical background on gender and sexuality in the South African context revealed how male and female sexuality differed from the precolonial period until democracy. The chapter also discussed gender and religion, university students' experiences of gender and sexuality, and gender, sexuality, and GBV in South African higher education institutions. Various studies on gender and sexuality have been conducted in universities. Much of the research has identified female students as being most vulnerable to GBV and residences to be hot-spots for GBV on campus, I have not yet come across a study conducted at the university level that focused on first-year female residence students in particular. My study explores the complex connections between gender, sexuality and violence for students who are entering a new environment that has limited restrictions and limited guidance.

CHAPTER 3:

THEORIES AND CONCEPTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I discuss the theories and concepts that informed the design and analysis of this study. To understand first-year female university residence students' constructions of gender and sexuality in the context of GBV, I drew on social constructionist perspectives on gender and sexuality, mainly theorised by Butler (1990) and Lorber (1994). I also drew on Burr's (1995; 2015) theoretical contributions to the field of social constructionism.

3.2 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM

According to Burr (2015), the social constructivist perspectives maintains that people should take a serious position towards the way they comprehend the world and themselves. This perspective advises people to be sceptical about their presumptions of how the world seems to be. For example, the categories with which people understand the world, such as gender and sex, do not automatically signify real division. Furthermore, based on the way people observe the world, there seem to be two categories of people, which are men and women. The social constructionist perspective urges people to question whether these two classes merely reflect a separate type of people that naturally occur. Some people become aware of the gloominess of such categorisations when they pay attention to practices such as gender reassignment surgical procedures and the discourse around explicitly categorising human beings as men and women (Burr, 2015). The social construction theory holds that how we figure out the world and the categories and ideas we utilise are usually culturally and historically specific (Burr, 1995); the growth of the sexual self therefore takes place within a particular context rather than in isolation. Also, the meanings attached to gender and sexuality are situated in certain discourses, and language is significant in making meaning within various discourses. Therefore, in this study, I begin with the premise that first-year female university residence students' constructions of gender and sexuality are influenced by their historical and cultural context through the use of language.

The social construction perspective is challenged by symbolic interactionists (Baldwin, 1988; Bourdieu, 1990) and other feminists (Tamale, 2005; Bennett, 2011), who argue that people

make choices based on their own reflections. As a result, they challenge the portrayal of a woman, African women in particular, as passive and oppressed. They regard women as sexual agents who achieve their sexual autonomy through sexual experiences, need for pleasure, media exposure, formal education, as well as sexual health (Fiaveh, 2017). For instance, Fiaveh's (2017) study, titled "Daddy, today we have a match! Women's agentic strategies in initiating sexual intercourse in an urban Ghanaian community", found that women made sexual choices. They gained sexual consciousness from the media and that awareness equipped them with knowledge to define their own sexuality and to further promote a platform for the sexual practices of women and sexual agency. Young women made the first sexual move in their relationships to gain affection, intimacy, and sexual pleasure.

Symbolic interactionists focus on the relationship between meaning, "internalised interpretation of meanings and the external interpersonal behaviour which can be utilised as a frame for understanding how people create symbolic worlds which influence sexual behaviour" (Longmore, as cited in McCabe et al., 2010, p. 253).

3.3 GENDER ESSENTIALISM

The gender essentialism dogma positions men and women as different by nature or as "having different essences" (Hill, 2006, p. 40). There is something different that makes someone a woman or a man (Hill, 2006). There are only two options of gender within this theory, which are men and women (gender is thus dichotomous) (Hill, 2006, p. 40). Men and women by nature possess natural inclinations and tendencies; what they become is therefore not necessarily a result of cultural or social influences. For example, by being a woman, this inevitably means she should have a uterus and be subjugated or nurturing (Witt, 1995). The theory maintains that there is a common characteristic that binds women together and that characteristic needs to be satisfied for someone to be regarded as a woman (Witt, 1995). Constructing female sexuality within a discourse linked to reproductive biology whereby sex is used for reproducing rather than desire often leads to the cultural assumption that women have an inactive, balanced, and controlled sexuality; they should therefore be responsible for controlling the uncontrollable sexual needs of their male partners (Milnes, 2004). An essentialist view of gender promotes gender inequality through the domination of women, differential role assignment, as well as privilege allocation. Gender inequality is further maintained by patriarchal views of femininity and masculinity, as well as rigid religious and

cultural systems. In my study, I established that gender essentialist views played an important role in some female participants' constructions of gender and sexuality.

3.4 GENDER AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

The essentialist view of gender is often rejected by feminist theorists who argue that gender is not established by biology but is rather a social construct (Butler, 1990; Lorber, 1994; Connell, 1995; Burr, 2015). Gender is something that an individual does and does repeatedly through interaction with others (West & Zimmerman, 1987). It is a dynamic social structure because it is not inherent in individuals but present in social transactions that are defined as gendered (Butler, 1990). Connell (1995) argues that men and women act and think in the manner they do because of the masculinity and femininity concept they adopt from their cultures. Particular characteristics of what constitutes masculinity and femininity and the rigidity of prescribed gender roles differ by religion, race, and other cultural dynamics. For instance, in some societies, young adults often hold dangerous gender stereotypes that give certain features and characteristics to men and women, consequently putting others at risk of being violated (Arnett & Hughes, 2012). Gender is constructed through dynamic language relations (Connell, 1995). Burr (2015) notes that human beings construct their different versions of knowledge through day-to-day interactions, and the most crucial aspect of these daily interactions is language. As human beings converse with one another, the world gets constructed.

Gender theorists such as Lorber (1994) stress that gender is socially constructed, and social construction begins at an early age in people's lives. It starts with the assignment of sex categories based on what one's genitals look like once he/she is born. Once the category is established, a baby is dressed in a way that shows his/her category and parents often do this to avoid being constantly asked about the gender of their child. As soon as the child's gender is clear, people start to treat one gender differently from the other, and children respond differently to the way they are treated by behaving and feeling differently. When they reach a stage where they start to walk, they will start referring to themselves as members of their gender. During this phase, sex is not really relevant until they reach puberty. By the time they reach puberty, their sexual feelings, needs, and habits would have already been influenced by norms and expectations that are gendered (Lorber, 1994).

Gender is viewed as a "complex, multi-level social construct that defines what it means to be a female or male in a specific situational framework" (Mantell et al., 2009, p. 143), and this

may have an impact on the manner in which “sexual interactions are negotiated” (Mantell et al., 2009, p.143). In addition, “society and culture are responsible for defining the expected behaviour of men and women, and they also influence how sexual relations are negotiated” (Mantell et al., 2009, p. 143). Connell (1995, p. 79; 1987, pp. 184-185) contends that gender consists of “multiple forms of masculinities and femininities”. In addition, masculine identities are not exclusive to males; even feminine identities are not unique to females. This therefore means that a person could perform both masculine and feminine identities at different times (Connell, 1995). In her explanation of the meaning of gender, Butler (1990) makes a clear distinction between sex and gender in a bid to challenge the biology-is-destiny phenomenon. She maintains that gender is socially constructed; it is therefore neither a result of sex nor as static as sex. If gender is socially constructed, then it cannot be concluded that it follows from sex. It also does not mean that the construction of a man means totally ensuing a male body or construction of a woman means completely following a female body (Butler, 1990). Butler (1990) further states that the assumption of a binary system of gender indirectly maintains the belief in a mimetic relationship of gender to sex where gender represents sex or is constrained by it. If gender is socially constructed, it therefore means that it is a free-floating artifice where a female body might indicate masculinity, and a male body might signify femininity.

Butler (1988) also argues that the concept of gender is something that is not “internal, but a repetitive performance of gestures, acts and desires evident on the surface of the body” (Butler, 1990; Jenkins & Finneman, 2018). This means that gender is constructed and produced by repetitive performances in society and culture. It is a “cultural interpretation, purporting that being a woman involves compelling the body to measure up to historical ideas of a woman and prompting the body to turn into a cultural sign, and this is sustained and repeated like a corporal project” (Butler, 1988, p.582). This notion of “project” suggests a force of an extreme will. Since gender is a project whose aim is to survive culturally, the term “strategy” better indicates a situation of duress under which gender performance always and variously occurs (Butler, 1988, p. 522). Gender, as a survival strategy, is therefore a performance with clear punitive ramifications. Separate genders, for instance, male and female, are part of what personifies people in modern society, those who do not act according to their gender are usually punished or ostracized within the culture since the power structure gives precedence to the preservation of gender binary (Butler, 1988).

Butler (1988), nevertheless, in her theory of performativity, makes room for agency in the subject in the sense that the manner in which performativity is repeated might shift the same

gender norms that allow the repetition itself. This means that it is only in carrying out repetitive acts that subversion of identity is likely. Subjects can therefore strengthen a new tactic to doing gender by repeating actions, behaviours, or needs that defy dominant gender expectations (Jenkins & Finneman, 2018).

Gendered social transactions, as explained by Butler (1990), put men and women under the pressure of validating gendered societal prescriptions such as men are supposed to be tough, strong, self-reliant, and independent, while women are to be soft and passive. Connell's (1987) concept of hegemonic masculinity has been widely used to explain both men's domination over women and the power of some men over other (often minority groups of) men. Connell (1987, p. 188) also suggests that we have "emphasised femininity", which is constructed as a counterpart, or subordinated other, to hegemonic masculinity, "performed especially to men" and focused around an internalised subordination and subjugation in relation to dominant masculinities.

Gender is a social process that involves interactions and is shaped within institutions, such as families, schools, etc. (Weinzimmer & Twill, 2016). University settings are therefore appropriate places to explore female students' constructions of gender and sexuality. Furthermore, gender is viewed as a dynamic system of meanings created and built on the social roles of women and men (Rasera et al., 2004). Additionally, through social acts, this structure is created and recreated; hence gender is not static. This was clarified by Lorber (1994), who states that modification of gender roles is possible. For instance, in some Western countries, there are fathers who are actively taking care of their little children and males and females are doing the same jobs. People in any society experience different gender socialisation during their childhood and adolescence period; thus when they reach early adulthood, such as the majority of university students, they hold different expectations for men and women (Arnett & Hughes, 2012).

For example, in some societies, those who reach the adulthood stage and become parents may adopt gendered parenting roles where distinct expectations for fathers and mothers are stipulated.

Jaramillo-Sierra et al. (2015) draw on Butler's (1990) concept of doing gender and explain that men and women in diverse societies and social settings do gender within the family, work, or any other area of their lives. Butler (1990) views gender as an unstable identity that is instituted by a stylised repetition of acts. This therefore means that gender is an identity that is

constructed, and a performative achievement that the ordinary social spectators come to believe and to perform in the form of belief.

It is also regarded as a framework through which men and women assess their value, often experiencing both internal and external pressure to be man or woman enough (Bell et al., 2014). It comprises a range of interrelated components such as gendered personalities, feelings, principles, expectations, norms, roles, settings, and organisations that gradually shift and evolve within cultures (Russo & Pirlot, 2006). It is behaviour that actively arises from intensely held and classically unreflective views around men and women's vital natures.

3.5 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Gender and sexuality are inextricably linked. Butler (1990) provides valuable inputs about gender and sexuality in her theories about sexuality as a socially constructed set of social processes that create and arrange the structure and expression of desire. Through gender interpretation, sexuality identities are enforced; they cannot be selected voluntarily. Burr (2015) notes that the meanings attached to gender and sexuality are situated in certain discourses, and that language is significant in making meaning within the various discourses. Men and women create gendered sexual meanings as they interact with each other.

Sexuality is socially constructed and is considered a strong medium in which gender relations are affirmed and created (Skafter & Silberschmidt, 2014; Chong & Kvasny, 2007; Hoang & Yeoh, 2015). Chong and Kvasny (2007) argue that this sexuality phenomenon is largely influenced by both direct and indirect rules, enforced by the social definition of gender, ethnicity, economic status, age, etc. Sexuality is not fixed. It involves active social interactions, which means that it is relational; what is sexual to one person in one context may not be to another person in another context (Jackson, 2006; Hoang & Yeoh, 2015). It interweaves questions of power and identity, as well as of structure and agency. In other words, as they engage in various sexual activities, people maintain, challenge, and comply with a variety of power norms and social hierarchies. As they do so, they create a sense of self and build their own social standing in relation to others (Hoang & Yeoh, 2015).

3.6 SEXUAL SCRIPT CONCEPT

The notion of social constructionism is quite significant to the sexual script concept (Wiedermann, 2015). In their sexual script concept, Gagnon and Simon (1973) argue that social

behaviour, which includes sexual behaviour, is socially scripted. Human behaviour is regarded as sexual and meanings attached to the behaviours, including what makes them sexual, which originate from figurative scripts that have been learned and assimilated by people as a result of their participation in a social group (Simon & Gagnon, 1987). Scripts are tangled in “learning the meaning of internal states, organizing the sequencing of particular sexual acts, interpreting different situations, setting the limits of sexual responses and linking meanings from non-sexual facets of life to specifically sexual experience” (Gagnon & Simon, 1973, p. 73). Certain scripts have requirements based on age; for instance, “You cannot participate in X up until you are Y years of age or by age Y you must have achieved X” (Wiedermann, 2015, p. 9). There are basically three levels of sexual scripts, namely cultural, interpersonal, and intrapsychic scripts. According to Irvine, (2003, p. 489) cultural scripts are shared relations that stipulate suitable sexual rules, objects, and relations. They are specific cultural regulations on “how, when, where, why and with whom to be sexual”. Intrapsychic scripts are influenced by culture and they “take form in the inner world of needs, fantasies and wishes” (Irvine, 2003, p. 489). Interpersonal scripts are interaction patterns that permit people to function in sexual circumstances. They are created by merging some aspects of cultural, intrapsychic scripts and the imagined expectations of the partner (Irvine, 2003). This process changes “the social player from being an actor to being a partial scriptwriter influencing the materials of appropriate cultural situations into scripts for behaviour in certain contexts” (Simon & Gagnon, 1984, p. 53).

Maas et al. (2015) point out that sexual scripts are indirect rules developed by individuals in the context of social and cultural norms in relation to appropriate sexual behaviour. These sexual scripts encourage women to focus more on improving the quality of their relationships, while men focus on individual pleasure. These gendered sexual scripts of inactive female sexuality may prove to make it difficult for women to share their sexual preferences or concerns with their partners (Kaestle, 2009). In addition, these scripts may cause women to think that men desire a large amount of sexual activities, and that in order to keep their men to themselves, they have to provide more sex to them. As a result, women may continue to engage in unwanted sexual activities with their partners in a bid to salvage their relationships. In contrast, men may also continue to participate in sexual activities even though they do not desire to do so, in an attempt to defend their masculinity. Sexual scripts, especially those framed around myths and stereotypes that view perpetrators of violence as strangers only and not acquaintances, also place women at risk of being violated (Kramer, 2015).

According to Renzetti et al. (2012), there are different sexual scripts for men and women, boys and girls, with regard to how a sexual experience is meant to progress and how it should be construed. In some cases, boys are supposed to make the move, while girls are supposed to set the boundaries regarding the extent to which a sexual episode can proceed (Renzetti et al., 2012). Furthermore, young men and women and boys and girls often experience different feelings with regard to their sexual encounters. Young women and girls have been found to experience guilt and less pleasure after having sex, unlike young men and boys. In contrast, young men engage in sex to seek status and gain experience, while women engage in sexual activities to seek their partner's affection and approval (Renzetti et al., 2012; Hyde & Jeffee, 2000). However, in some cases, as women get older, they tend to be more candid about normative discourses on male power and double standards on morality (Spronk, 2005). This is largely because of career development among women. Spronk (2005) argues that in some societies, women's social position is strengthened by their professional status, as a developing career and improved financial position increase their self-esteem. This status enables some women to make decisions on sexual matters that are outside the acceptable social norm and further strengthens their agency.

3.7 (HETERO)SEXUALITY AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

The definition and understanding of sexuality can be viewed from various perspectives, such as biological or societal perspectives. From a societal perspective, sexuality is socially constructed and is regarded as a set of social processes that create and arrange the structure and expression of desire (Butler, 1990). Through gender interpretation, sexuality identities are prescribed; one cannot therefore decide out of their own accord. Butler (1990) clarifies the social construction of sexuality through the concept of gender performativity, which refers to validated repetition of behaviours, in the discourse of heterosexuality. This concept of performative gender illustrates how sexual identities arise from recurring actions.

Holland, Ramazanoglu, Scott, Sharpe, and Thompson (1990) maintain that sexuality is a historical creation that brings together a multitude of diverse mental, biological, and cultural practices, which include gender identity, human body differences, procreative capacities, desires, erogenous practices, institutions, and beliefs, which need to be connected together and which might not have been connected together in some cultures (Weeks, 2003). This is in agreement with Foucault's (1986) view that there are a range of factors that influence sexual behaviours and beliefs. Foucault (1986) defines sexuality as a relationship of various

components and discourses, a string of meaning and a social tool with a history entrenched in the period before the advent of Christianity and Christian past, but attaining a contemporary conceptual unity within the modern world. Society is responsible for shaping our various relationships, emotions, and desires. This is a clear indication that even though sexuality is often associated with the body, it is also socially created, and these constructions influence people's behaviour, as well as organising and giving meaning to collective sexual experiences through ideologies, definitions, and sexual identities (Vance, 1999). The description of sexuality from a societal perspective clearly indicates that people learn various sexual orientations, whether heterosexual or homosexual, within social relations such as culture, families, and friends (Foucault, 1976).

Sexuality is concerned with the social and historical organisation of the erotic. Some forces shape and influence the erotic possibilities of the body, and these forces differ from society to society. This therefore indicates that biology is not fundamental in shaping patterns of sexuality (Butler, 1990). Sexuality is socially constructed, and society is responsible for shaping people's complex and multiple emotions, desires, and relationships. It is society that produces its complex practices. For instance, the erotic is used in some cultures to create a well-defined division between those who can be embraced in society and those who can by force be barred from the community (Butler, 1990). For example, in some South African communities, the LGBT community is often stigmatised because of their sexual orientation, which is often regarded as deviant. Black lesbian women in some South African rural and urban areas are often targets of rape because they are viewed as defying patriarchal gender norms (Nel & Judge, 2008).

Sexuality develops from different social practices that assign meaning to the activities of human beings; from definitions given by society and definition of one's individuality and role in life, from struggles between those who are influential in defining and regulating sexuality and those who resist. It is therefore a product of people's struggle, negotiation, and human agency. People often learn through social interaction appropriate and inappropriate ways to behave sexually, and the rules differ by context (Butler, 1990).

Sexuality also refers to people's understanding of sex, particularly their comprehension of what is suitable, desired, and natural (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001). People usually learn at a very young age that engaging in sexual activities with members of the opposite sex is the only acceptable way and that sex with people of the same sex is viewed as unusual (Weeks, 2003).

In contemporary culture, the term sex assumes an intimate link between being biologically male or female. It can also be understood as a pleasurable physical activity (Holland et al., 1990); that is, sexual intercourse between men and women or to have sex (Weeks, 2003). Holland et al.'s (1990) study revealed that the majority of young women perceived sex as vaginal penetration by the penis, ending with a male orgasm. This definition hinders young women from asserting their desires and needs that may be different from those of men. Holland et al.'s (1990) study further revealed that some young women were not even interested in vaginal intercourse because it did not give them the pleasure that it is supposed to give or provide an orgasm. However, they stated that they were only doing it to please their partners since their partners preferred it. A study conducted by Kaufman and Stavrou (2004) on the economics of sex and gifts among young people in South Africa reported that young women did not view oral sex as a sexual activity that is real, but rather as a form of teasing by girls. The only sexual activity that they considered real was penetrative sex.

There are also some symbolic meanings of sex that are linked to gendered power relations, and they are often useful in influencing sexual interactions (Holland et al., 1990). Heterosexual relations are viewed as central to producing male domination and unequal gender power relations (Shefer & Foster, 2001). Men's power is established through the use of force in sexual matters, and this is exacerbated by patriarchal norms that promote the utilisation of violence within acceptable limits and in certain contexts (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). In heterosexual relations, the male-driven sexuality discourse is usually central in defining male and female sexuality (Shefer & Foster, 2001). Within this discourse, males' desire for sex is viewed as essential. Men are regarded as needing sex, focused on sex, always ready to engage in it, and in the end, it is an irrepressible biological desire (Shefer & Foster, 2001); actions such as luring women with presents or exchanging money or any other service in exchange for sex is therefore, to a large extent, a culturally appropriate practice (Holland et al., 1990). Women's control of the safety of their sexual practices is usually constrained by the misperception of their sexuality concept, which they associate with love, romance, and caring (Holland et al., 1990). Young women in Holland et al.'s (1990) investigation generally perceived sex as a useful tool to use if you want to prove your love and trust for your partner; love is thus used to validate sex. In this case, women usually define sex in the context of men's needs and desires; consequently regarding themselves as passive vessels of men's sexual desires. Those who attempt to challenge such male definitions by revealing their sexual desires and needs often acquire negative reputations, such as being called sluts (Holland et al., 1990). Women who are

sexually active and who engage in sexual activities with different men are at risk of having negative identities attached to them, while heterosexual women who are linked to social relationships as wives or girlfriends often acquire positive identities (Holland et al., 1990). In other cases, women are often urged to socially attach themselves to men for them to be successful as conservative feminine women, which often hinders them from seeing that such relationships are not equal (Holland et al., 1990).

3.8 GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND VIOLENCE

Having discussed theories on social constructions of gender and sexuality, I examine theorisations of how gender and sexuality relate to violence. Gender and sexuality are things that people do in well-defined circumstances; things that people do again and again; small acts constantly repeated; and productions that create the effect of the natural, the original, and the inevitable (Butler, 1990).

Gender plays a crucial role in human sexuality, especially with regards to terms of sexual frequency, relationships rules, and sexual orientation experiences (Gil-Llario, Gimenez, Ballester-Arnal, Cardenas-Lopez, & Duran-Barca, 2017). It continues to play a crucial role in how young men and women interpret and deal with sexual negotiations. Individuals learn gender roles, which leads to the development of gender disparities in sexual activities. These gender differences, especially in heterosexual behaviours, start at an early age and continue throughout people's lives. Male adolescents usually engage in sexual activities at an earlier age than female adolescents (Maas et al., 2015). The gender disparities between men and women are associated with socio-cultural influences on them. Men and women often experience sexuality differently due to social pressure that differs across countries and cultures (Gil-Llario et al., 2017).

Gender differences also manifest in circumstances where women are objectified for men to view, and are further reinforced by historical and cultural norms that suggest that men are highly skilled in issues of sexuality (Kramer, 2015). Such norms state that men, by nature, find pleasure in sexual interactions, while women are not expected to be knowledgeable on issues regarding sex (Kramer, 2015). Such sexual double standards suggest that men are granted more sexual autonomy than women.

Butler (1990) and Connell (1995) stress that differences in men and women's sexual behaviours are brought about by social norms that govern proper behaviour for them. For example, women

are supposed to be submissive, and men are to be aggressive in sexual matters, which may likely encourage men to pressure their unwilling sexual female partners to have sex. In some cases, discussions by men on violence show it as an enforcement of the patriarchal masculinity narrative where men justify their act of violence, especially when they feel that they have been provoked and disrespected. Men may think that they have the right to discipline their female partners, who supposedly disrespected them, and their female partners may even accept whatever punishment was given to them because they feel that they deserve the punishment (Boonzaier, 2008). Shefer et al.'s (2000) study, which was conducted at a South African university, revealed that acts of violence, for instance use of force as well as male dominance in sexual relationships, were viewed as a norm in heterosexual relationships. This shows that young women may not be able to negotiate safe sex because of how gender imbalances play out in sexual relations (Jewkes & Morrell, 2011). Mantell et al. (2009) point out that the terrain of gender norms in South Africa is diverse and complex and that gender disparities are continuing at various levels in the economy, social institutions, households, and sexual relationships.

However, in some instances, it has been noted that there are some women who defy gender norms of sexuality, and sex becomes a field in which they demonstrate their power and safeguard their gratification (Skafter & Silberschmidt, 2014). Furthermore, the resurgence of economic freedom and independence among women may also have further positively contributed to their ability to negotiate sexuality issues with their partners (Skafter & Silberschmidt, 2014). An investigation that was conducted in Rwanda by Skafter and Silberschmidt (2014) revealed the agency of some women. The study showed that some women identified sex as a resource they use to challenge and manipulate male dominance and to make decisions and practise safe sex. For example, women made sure that they sexually satisfied their men in bed and then they would ask for financial material or resources, knowing fully well that their men would not refuse their request since they had been gratified sexually. In addition, the interviews held with women revealed that they engaged in sexual activities for pleasure, not mainly for reproduction, and that it was a man's duty to make sure that he satisfied his woman. Some women even left their husbands if they failed to satisfy their sexual desires, and others engaged in extramarital affairs to get sexual satisfaction.

Particular characteristics of what constitutes masculinity and femininity and the rigidity of gender roles prescribed differ by religion, race, and other cultural dynamics. In certain societies, young adults often hold dangerous gender stereotypes that place certain features and

characteristics on men and women, consequently putting others at risk of being violated (Arnett & Hughes, 2012). Different societal valuing of men and women's characteristics and differences in the perceived importance of varying behaviours associated with male and female gender roles also affect people's personal encounters of what it means to be a man or a woman (Bell et al., 2014). However, there are some people who oppose, challenge, and transform gender by acting contrarily to what is required of them according to gender norms (Jaramillo et al., 2015). Gender norms also create power differences that enforce the subordination of women and men who do not conform to what is viewed as appropriate. These power differences are key to the vulnerability of women to GBV and may further stop them in their attempts to protect themselves (Reddy & Dunne, 2007).

Gender has been found to be significant in determining behaviour because its meaning in people's relations attracts certain behaviours and generates social subjects (Rasera et al., 2004). For example,

in a sexual relationship, a man might be urged to take full charge of all sexual matters and may feel that they are free to have sex with other women, while on the other hand require their female partner to act in accordance with their expectations and remain faithful (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010, p. 2).

In these relationships, male dominance is generally regarded as normal and accepted (Reddy & Dunne, 2008). A survey conducted in South Africa by the National Primary Health Care Network revealed the dominance of boys in sexual relationships, whereby boys are responsible for determining when and how sex occurs, and girls frequently experience violence such as rape and assault in their relationships (Reddy & Dunne, 2008).

In some cases, some young men in universities may use violence such as sexual harassment to declare power and dominance over female students (Conroy, 2013). This clearly shows that gender is a robust philosophical device that strengthens hierarchical relations between men and women. These categories are often referred to as gender order. Usually, in this gender order, women are supposed to be sexually docile and obedient; contrary to the ideal masculine role of freedom, sexual desire, and activity (Gilchrist & Sullivan, 2006).

3.9 GBV DISCOURSE

GBV is largely regarded as a global crisis that has far-reaching consequences. This form of violence is considered the main obstacle to gender equity worldwide (Boonzaier, 2008). According to the United Nations' (UN) report of the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), GBV is any action that ends in or is likely to end in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or pain to women, and this may include threatening, force, or arbitrary denial of freedom, whether happening in public or in private (UN, 1995). This includes behaviour such as stalking, IPV, rape, and forced sex (Russo & Pirlott, 2006). Leach (2002) concurs with this definition, as she states that GBV is any form of violence that is directed against a male or female because of their gender. This kind of violence can also be physical; for example, forced sex or rape and assault, or verbal, emotional, or psychological abuse. Forced sex and sexual violence are issues of great concern in South African society, with the level of sexual assault in South Africa being among the highest in the world. Traditional gender regimes and practices in South African societies have contributed to the rise of sexual assault in South Africa (Mitchell & De Lange, 2015).

However, GBV is not an uncontested term. Some researchers argue that all violence is gendered and that it is more useful to use the term gender violence rather than gender-based violence (Parkes, 2016; Leach & Humphreys, 2007). They maintain that the term gender is often incorrectly associated with girls and women and that the term gender-based violence has the effect of reproducing violence as a singular focus on women and girls. While I am aware of this argument, I use the term gender-based violence while focussing on female students within the broader context of sexuality, race, age, class, and institutional power. Dunne, Humphreys, and Leach (2006) contend that there is implicit and explicit gender violence. Implicit violence is usually related to day-to-day "institutional structures and practices" (Dunne et al., 2006, p. 76) and these practices are not easy to identify and deal with as they are considered normal; for instance, the use of corporal punishment in some schools, while explicit gender violence is related to "overtly sexualised experiences" (Dunne et al., 2006, p. 76) and it entails "sexual desire and the erotic" (Dunne et al., 2006, p. 81). Explicit violence can either be physical or verbal in nature and it comprises behaviour such as sexual harassment, coercion, abuse, assault, and rape (Dunne et al., 2006, p. 81).

Another kind of violence is symbolic violence, which is defined as violence that is not physical but "power which manages to impose meanings and to impose them as legitimate by concealing

the power relations which are the basis of its force” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 4). It is mainly embedded in language pertaining to the “imposition of a certain universe of meaning” (Zizek, 2008, p. 2). The concept of symbolic violence provides insight into how people, especially those who are coerced and dominated in the gender order, buy into their own subjugation (Bourdieu, 2002). Bourdieu (2002) points out that symbolic violence is a practice whereby social groups and individuals that are dominated accept ways of thinking that strengthen the arbitrariness of social order, which further justifies the normalisation of social structures. For instance, rules and procedures supposedly intended to reduce violence mainly focus on the prospective behaviour of victims (for example, don’t wear a miniskirt or you may get raped), rather than the prospective perpetrator’s behaviour (for instance, do not rape a woman even if she is dressed in a miniskirt). Concentrating on the victim strengthens the notion that the victim’s duty is to protect herself from being raped, rather than the perpetrator’s duty to not engage in raping women. This idea of constructing the prevention of rape in a discursive manner leads to the dominant group reinforcing the notion that encourages the compliance of women and the need for them to protect themselves from violence; instead of the need for men to prevent themselves from raping women.

Globally, GBV is generally perpetrated by men against women (Gevers et al., 2013; Boonzaier, 2008). Men’s perpetration of violence has been attributed to patriarchy, which aims to sustain and perpetuate itself through the subordination of women (Connell, 2003). Men also use violence as a tool for the construction and reproduction of dominant gender relations, in particular certain versions of dominant masculinities. For example, Bakari and Leach’s (2008) study, which was conducted at a Nigerian college, found that male students and staff frequently sought to reaffirm male dominance by sexually exploiting female students. With regard to men in position of power, Bakari and Leach (2008) note that they might not need to use physical violence to maintain control over women; instead, their tool of controlling women is through sexually exploiting them. Kramer (2015) argues that the discourse on GBV is predominantly constructed as a male activity, with the male mainly regarded as an aggressor, and the woman largely viewed as a victim (Kramer, 2015). However, some men have been found to be victims of GBV, especially those who are viewed as deviating from socially acceptable gender norms, and some women can be perpetrators of such acts (Kramer, 2015). Some men regard forced sex as an appropriate act, consequently exposing women to GBV (Wood, 2009).

However, Morrell (2002) elaborates on the usefulness (or not) of victim/perpetrator categorisation. He argues that violence is a phenomenon that is gendered. This is because it is

largely connected to issues of power where in many cases people may use it to enforce, shift, or resist power. Generally, men are beings that are regarded as having more power than women and as a result the relationship between the two exists in a gender order or a structural list of gender power relations (Connell, 1987, p. 99). Morrell (2002) distances himself from literature that mainly focuses on victims. His focus is on answering the question of whom violence is a dilemma for. The first answer is that violence is mostly a challenge for women, and this reasoning assists in disaggregating the notion of a victim. It indicates that women endure the ultimate costs of violence, such as sexual assault and rape. This answer also provides a “gender explanation for violence, that men perpetrate violence as a greater patriarchal exercise in the domination of women” (Morrell, 2002, p. 38). The second answer to the question is that violence is an obstacle for both men and women, and this approach is important because it permits people to view violence as a dilemma for both the perpetrator and the victim. In most cases, men commit acts of violence and this is a problem for them as perpetrators, and yet they are also victims in the sense that violent acts are perpetrated by men against other men, in which case they are victims. Their participation in violence is regarded as an issue of masculinity, and the matter is made complex by the view that not all men exhibit violent behaviour and only a few demonstrate violent behaviour towards women. This point is therefore vital because it compels analysis outside the notion that violence is a result of patriarchal domination, and it also compels analysis to go further than the clear-cut binaries of men/women, perpetrator/victims, and stresses reflection on men and violence, and masculinity as domination (Morrell, 2002, p. 38). The third answer to the question is that violence is a dilemma for certain groupings. This answer is an attempt to move further from general explanations that universalise violence and attempt to find social forces that are involved in and mostly influenced by violence. For instance, main variables in South Africa are race and class, where black people are mainly found in the working class as semi- or unskilled workers and jobless (Morrell, 2002, p. 39). Socially marginal groupings are usually the most affected by violent acts (Morrell, 2002).

The term gender-based violence emanates from the view that violence of such a nature is moulded by gender roles and status in society (Russo & Pirlott, 2006). In addition, it is a multifaceted combination of gender-related cultural beliefs, views, norms, and social institutions that indirectly or directly support violence such as IPV. Martin-Storey (2016) also points out that those who differ from established gender norms are more likely to encounter violence than those who conform to them. Various factors such as gender roles and

expectations, sexual objectification, male entitlement, and differences in power and status legitimise, render invisible, sexualise, and help maintain violence against women (Russo & Pirlott, 2006). Bakari and Leach (2008) conducted an investigation on sexual violence in a Nigerian college, which revealed that female students were often treated as sexual objects. They were humiliated by derogatory language, and male students believed that women existed only for men to enjoy. Such treatment of women was often considered normal because of gender norms that legitimised such behaviour.

The issue of gender norms that condone violence is also seen in cases where women are violated because of the way they dress, especially those who wear clothes that are often considered by society as inappropriate and provocative. In most cases, women who are presumed to be inappropriately and provocatively dressed are usually held accountable for the violence they encounter (Renzetti et al., 2012). For example, Bakari and Leach (2008) found that male students held female students liable for violence, such as rape, perpetrated against them because they dressed in a manner that was viewed by men as provocative. They even justified such violence by claiming that women sexually harassed them with the way they dress and therefore deserved to be victimised. This indicates how most cases of sexual violence are still framed around typical myths and stereotypes that view men as aggressors and women as victims who bring about their abuse by virtue of their dress code (Kramer, 2015). Many societies tolerate and maintain violence against women in different ways; for example, by praising men's aggressive behaviour, refusing to intervene in domestic rows, and advising women not to take legal action against men who beat them (Wood, 2009). Some children may grow up thinking violence against women is acceptable, especially those raised in families where violence exists (Wood, 2009). This clearly reflects that the pervasiveness of sexual violence is largely dependent on cultural norms (Kramer, 2015), especially those that endorse violence against women as normal.

3.9.1 Masculinity, sexuality, and GBV

Connell (2000) states that masculinity is not biologically determined but is socially constructed. Furthermore, it is neither fixed nor programmed in humans' genes; hence it is continuously produced and reproduced in societies. Gendered social transactions, as explained by Butler (1990), put men and women under the pressure of validating gendered societal prescriptions such as that men are supposed to be tough, strong, self-reliant, and independent, while women are to be soft and passive. Multiple structures of masculinities were described by Connell

(2002), which are by and large organised in a hierarchy and structured along lines of domination of mainly men over women, authoritative men over less authoritative men, and older men over younger men. One form of masculinity that Connell (1995) describes is subordinate masculinity, which is exhibited by men who act in a manner that threatens the validity of hegemonic masculinity. The other version of masculinity that Connell (1995) suggests is complicit masculinity, where men accept the patriarchal system in society and yet they do not feel the pressure to support patriarchy. Marginalised masculinity is another form of masculinity and is basically defined as “the interplay of gender with other classes such as class and race, which creates further relationships between masculinities” (Connell, 1995, p. 80). For instance, marginalised masculinities were seen during apartheid where black men were often marginalised by the system as they were not allowed to own means of production or to enter into professions that were highly paid. Instead, they were employed in poorly paid lower positions, while white men took on well-paid dominant positions within the hierarchy of masculinity. Because they filled such lower positions at work, this often led to a number of African men to assuming a position of power in their households. This resulted in the rise of African patriarchy situated within the domain of unchallenged domination of men over women (Morrell, 2001).

The notion of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1987) is often utilised to understand the domination of men over women and the power of some men over minority groups. This form of masculinity is largely linked to the subordination and oppression of women (Connell, 2005; Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Furthermore, the dominant masculinity epitomises the prevailing cultural model of ideal manhood, and men use this frame to evaluate their success. This kind of masculinity is responsible for organising and justifying the subordination and control of women by men in countries like South Africa, which is highly unequal (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Hegemonic masculinity is the socially dominant gender construction that plays a significant role not only in oppressing women but also in the subordination of other types of masculinity (Connell, 1995; Courtney, 2000). However, this version of masculinity is neither the most common nor comfortable as it sometimes creates tensions or causes some men to reject hegemonic masculinities linked to their culture (Connell, 2000).

One phenomenon that can be used to maintain and strengthen hegemonic masculinities is sexual harassment (Conroy, 2013). Sexual harassment is utilised to jog women’s memory about the dominant gender script (Conroy, 2013). Because violence, such as sexual harassment, is in line with views of hegemonic masculinities, some men may fail to label certain behaviours as

sexual harassment and view them as normal (Conroy, 2013). In addition, those who are perceived as not conforming to dominant gender norms, for example gays, may face sexual harassment from men as a way of steering them in the right path.

In some societies the dominant masculinity philosophy requires men to be dominant, aggressive, and strong, and to denigrate traits associated with femininity; this increases their risk of perpetrating violence against women (Chen & Wei, 2013). For example, boys may use verbal and physical violence to affirm their power and control over girls and some men may regard coerced sex such as rape as acceptable (Miller, 2008). Hunt and Gonsalkorale's (2014) study on the links between masculinity, in-group bonding, and gender harassment, which was conducted at an Australian university, revealed that male undergraduate students who felt that their masculinity was being threatened or questioned by female students often used sexual harassment as a way of increasing their gender conformity.

Men's identity, confidence, and social value are often related to their sexuality (Ouzgane & Morrell, 2005). As a result, some men engage in behaviours that are totally different from those of women, such as having multiple sexual partners and aggressive sexual behaviour, to improve their self-confidence, to dominate and control women, and to be regarded as real men real (Ouzgane & Morrell, 2005). Men's violent control over women, their demand for sex, and celebration of multiple partners are often shaped by dominant masculinities (Bhana, De Lange, & Mitchell, 2009). Bhana et al.'s (2009) investigation reports that failure by men to control women often leads to violence against women. Men mentioned the use of violence to put women who fail to respect them in their place. They expect women to perform their household roles, and failure to do that was regarded as a sign of disrespect, which often led to the use of violence. Wright (2013) argues that some men strive to declare and sustain their power over women at workplaces through the sexual objectification of women. To exert their power over women, men often sexually harass women at work. In some traditional cultures, manhood is mainly achieved by acquiring some sexual experience (Arnett & Hughes, 2012). Reddy and Dunne's (2008) study on heterosexual masculinities found that sexual experience was considered a goal for young men in acquiring this concept of masculinity, and that it was a crucial part of their identity. What was natural and significant to their sexual identities was forced sex, which was also legitimised by society. Given that young men's sexual desires are viewed as uncontrollable, some forms of coercion were also understood as unavoidable. Petersen et al. (2005) found that men and boys are often influenced by social norms that

encourage them to have many partners. As a result, those who do not have partners opt to rape women to achieve a masculine status.

South African masculinities value aggressive traits such as physical strength, bravery, and toughness, and hierarchical authority is accepted; but above all, they stress that men are capable of exercising control over women and other men (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). In addition, when it comes to relationships with women, the prospect of establishing control creates a space for the use of sexual and physical violence against women, and all this is done in order to attain and demonstrate masculinity. In addition, the use of mild violence by men is largely accepted, and in some instances women tolerate it, since it is usually not regarded as an indication of weakness or a lack of self-control (Jewkes, 2010). Petersen et al. (2005) concur, as they state that men and boys understand sexual violence as a tool used to straighten women out if they become too assertive or dominant. In some cases, heterosexuality is quite dominant, to the extent that some men, because they dread being suspected as being homosexual, indulge in hypermasculinity such as aggression and boldness through which women are denigrated in the construction of powerful heteronormative boundaries (Reddy & Dunne, 2008). This shows that in their quest to be considered proper men, boys need to openly separate themselves from feminine and feminised forms of masculinity (Reddy & Dunne, 2008), consequently putting women at risk of being victimised.

To demonstrate masculinity, young men often engage in toxic forms of masculinity such as heavy drinking and having multiple sexual partners, as well as discussing women in belittling ways (Wood, 2009). Jewkes and Morrell (2010) state that heavy alcohol drinking is another risky practice that is prominent among young men and boys for them to be regarded as proper men. As a result, those who fail to abide by the rules of risky drinking, whether by losing control of their lives or ruining their lives through excessive use of alcohol, are often ridiculed by their peers. In this regard, dominant masculinity can be regarded as a cultural ideology that is associated with dangerous sexual practices and the use of violence and other behaviours that are controlling of women (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). In some instances, young men lose their sense of value and dignity by engaging in things that they never would have thought of doing when they are alone, because they want to be accepted by members of their group (Wood, 2009).

3.9.2 Femininity, sexuality, and GBV

Connell (1987, p183) also describes a form of “emphasised femininity” that is mainly distinguished by obeying the subordination of women and accommodating men’s interests and desires. This means that women subscribe to unbalanced structuring of relations, do not object to them, and eventually collude with men in gender power disparity (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Jewkes and Morrell (2012) point out that a woman’s worth is normally assessed by men; as a result, most women, especially those who aspire to be successful, accept control by men owing to immense pressure they face to conform to prevailing social norms. In some societies, women are constructed as being obedient, submissive, and passive subjects and are persuaded to act in accordance with men’s demands for sex, regardless of their own desires (Mulwo et al., 2009). These constructions of femininities put women at risk of being victimised, as they fear expressing their desires in sexual matters (Mulwo et al., 2009). Reddy and Dunne’s (2007) investigation revealed that young women constructed sexuality as satisfying men’s needs and desires, and that their main focus was to satisfy their men’s needs rather than their own. The study revealed some inequalities between men and women with regard to making some sexual decisions, which often put women at risk of being victimised. Some different sexual standards for men and women with regard to sexual behaviour emerged, which posed a further sexual risk for women.

In most societies, femininities revolve around constructing women as weak and defenceless and, as a result, those who experience violence such as sexual assault or harassment may be forced to accept the incident and move on with their lives (Bell et al., 2014). Some women tolerate violence perpetrated against them by excusing men’s aggressive behaviour, and they put up with such behaviour just to keep their man (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Such action is viewed as a sign of dominant femininity, which promotes traits such as that women must be strong during adversity and should be able to welcome and tackle any kind of stress that comes into their lives (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010).

Women are often treated as sexual objects, which means that they are defined in terms of their sex and sexuality (Wood, 2009). This treatment of women as sexual objects also emanates from rape myths that rationalise and legitimise sexual abuse. Petersen et al.’s (2005) investigation on sexual violence and youths in South Africa found that young men and boys continue to maintain views that they are not able to control their sexual desires and that it is women’s responsibility to control those desires by wearing clothes that do not show off their bodies; if

they wear such clothes or walk around at night, they are asking to be raped. Because of this stereotypical norm, women are judged based on their appearances and actions in whatever they do, whether in the workplace or in educational institutions, which further exposes them to GBV (Wood, 2009). In addition, this treatment of women as sexual objects is also used to define and harass lesbians, who are viewed as not conforming to traditional gender norms. Research has shown that some women at universities are often treated in gender-stereotyped ways, such as being complimented on the way they look and being offered high marks in exchange for sexual favours, which makes their sex more noticeable than their intellectual abilities and ambitions (Wood, 2009). In some cases, women are required to be sexually desirable to men and to remain pure, and those who fail to act accordingly may be sexually harassed by men (Conroy, 2013). Because women are socialised to value the way they look and search for male attention, they may feel conflicted when distressed or intimidated by male attention (Conroy, 2013).

According to Wood (2009), some institutions, such as families, are guilty of maintaining violence against women by treating certain forms of violence as insignificant. This is usually done by dismissing the protests of victims of GBV, or labelling such protests as unacceptable; such responses identify the victim, instead of the perpetrator, as being wrong (Wood, 2009). In some cases, women are raped by men because of certain mythologies about perpetrators and victims; for example, some societies believe that women like to be taken by force, or that they say no to men's sexual advances to give the impression that they are respectable, when in actual fact they mean yes (Renzetti et al., 2012). It has also been noted that some women who experience violence such as rape, especially by their partners, fail to label such acts as rape. Instead they tend to justify or excuse the perpetrator's behaviour by stating that men have a natural sexual aggression and they are therefore not accountable for the rape (Renzetti et al., 2012). In addition, some women who encounter such sexual violence tend to blame themselves because of risky behaviour such as alcohol consumption.

There are other forms of femininity that are shaped around strategies of resistance or combined compliance, resistance, and cooperation (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Forms of femininity that either emphasise compliance in part or entirely are normally viewed as cultural ideals of femininity; hence they are rewarded by some societies (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). However, those who take on femininity based on resistance or present resistance acts can be ostracised or condemned. Because femininities are largely linked with being passive or submissive, women who resist sexual advances from men may face the risk of being violently punished, as they are believed to be contravening gender norms (Heise, Ellsberg, & Gottmoeller, 2002).

Women who refuse to comply with men's sexual needs are often raped. Some face the dilemma of being coerced into engaging in sex, where failure to comply may result in severe physical or social consequences (Heise et al., 2002). In some cases, women who experience certain forms of violence are even encouraged to comply with social prescriptions for femininity by standing by their man (Wood, 2009). Women who do not conform to emphasised femininities are often marginalised and stigmatised, and endure acts such as the gang rape of lesbian women and other forms of homophobic violence (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010).

3.10 GENDER AND POWER DISCOURSES

Gender is partly negotiated through relations of power; it is about the power that men have over women, as well as about power that men have over other men (Kimmel, 2000). One notion that represents power and authority is hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1990). It is a dominant gender construction that subordinates femininities and other forms of masculinity and it influences and mirrors men's social relations with women and other men. Chong and Kvasny (2007) note that power is an essential aspect to both sexuality and gender. It helps to structure everyday social relations – relations that create inequalities between men and women (Courtney, 2000). The power imbalances in gender relations that benefit men explain the unequal power balance in heterosexual relations (Chong & Kvasny, 2007). In his theory of gender and power, Connell (1987) maintains that gender disparities in society have led to men taking control in making decisions, which include decisions regarding sex. This unequal balance of power is usually seen in cases where male gratification takes over female gratification, and where men have too much control, compared to women, on issues around when, how, and with whom sex takes place (Chong & Kvasny, 2007). For example, Skafter and Silberschmidt's (2014) study conducted in Rwanda showed that women's sexual agency is usually constrained in cases where they are required to obey their spouse without questioning their actions. They are also often required to be available any time for sex, and refusal to have sex is usually unacceptable since it is considered their marital duty.

Sexuality interweaves questions of power and identity, as well as structure and agency. In other words, as men and women engage in various sexual activities, they maintain, challenge, and comply with a variety of power norms and social hierarchies. They create a sense of self and build their own social standing in relation to others (Hoang & Yeoh, 2015). A patriarchal societal system has been largely blamed for violence against women because it promotes power and control struggles between men and women. Feminists believe that violence between men

and women is a manifestation of prevailing power structures of male dominance and female subservience, and such power disparities often result in violent behaviours in sexual relationships (Shorey, Cornelius, & Bell, 2008). These power differences between men and women in societies might influence decisions about sex, which include the rate of occurrence and nature of sexual practices. Vast male power may lead to them having control over sexual initiation and refusal, as well as making some women incapable of successfully negotiating the use of condoms (Pulerwitz, Amaro, De Jong, Gortmaker, & Rudd, 2002).

Gender norms also create power differences that enforce the subordination of women and men who do not conform to what is viewed as appropriate. These power differences are key to the vulnerability of women to GBV, and may further prevent their attempts to protect themselves (Reddy & Dunne, 2007).

Women often adopt hegemonic gendered constructions, which may end up putting them at risk of being violated or of accepting any kind of violence perpetrated against them (Boonzaier, 2008). Some studies have revealed that women, especially those in abusive relationships, try to make sense of violence perpetrated against them by making excuses for their partners' violence, and they internalise traditional cultural expectations that encourage nurturing their romantic partners (Boonzaier, 2008; Wood, 2001). In addition, this cultural ideology of perfect love and romance further entices women to stay in abusive relationships (Boonzaier, 2008). The power imbalance between men and women limits women's sexual independence and increases men's sexual autonomy (Chong & Kvasny, 2007); thus increasing the vulnerability of women to GBV. For example, young women are at risk of rape and forced sex because they are assumed to be HIV negative or because of the myth that having sex with a virgin is a remedy for HIV-infected men (Chong & Kvasny, 2007; Petersen et al., 2005). However, the modern economic freedom and greater autonomy among some African women in urban areas may have positive effects regarding the ability of women to negotiate sexual protection with partners (Mantell et al., 2009).

In many African societies, the ability of young women to negotiate safe sexual practices is compromised by these transactional relationships, which further amplify the risk of violence perpetrated by men (Zembe, Townsend, Thorson, & Ekstrom, 2013). Furthermore, these transactional relationships are often marked by concurrent multiple sexual partnering, which puts women at further risk of HIV and STIs. Because the youth phase is usually characterised by limited economic means, there is a great demand for material possessions, and because of

peer pressure, many young women are pressured to engage in relationships with older men or young wealthy men to ensure their economic survival and security. These kinds of sexual relationships are often characterised by the exchange of gifts and/or favours for sex. There are some negative ramifications of the power imbalances in such relationships, which include, for example, sexual violence (due to coercion or force), unwanted pregnancy, and HIV infection. The men often gain sexual leverage, which allows them physical and sexual privileges to the woman's body (Kaufman & Stavrou, 2004). Kaufman and Stavrou (2004) investigated the economics of sex and gifts among young people in urban South Africa and reported that young women regarded gifts such as chocolates, flowers, clothes, jewellery, lingerie, and meals in restaurants as important in a relationship, and that such gifts determined the kind of sexual activity. For example, kissing among young African and white women was regarded as an act of intimacy, and could be exchanged for a drink. As for the men, if a gift was given, it meant sex was to follow; in addition, they did not expect a girl to request that a condom be used, and when a girl did so, the men would resort to using force, ranging from gentle chiding to outright threats. Boys felt that if a girl accepted a gift from a man, then she had no right to ask him to use a condom, and that if she requested that a condom be used, she might end up being slapped.

Women who are in relationships that are unequal typically rely on their partners to provide for their financial needs (Wingood & DiClemente, 2000). In cases where men fail to provide for the financial needs of their female partners, because they have fewer resources, they often feel the need to exercise their power through the use of violence. Violence towards women is an act usually adopted by men who feel that their masculine identity is threatened by their failure to provide their partners with economic support, since manhood is associated with the ability to meet the financial needs of women (Jewkes, 2002). Economic challenges undermine the customary gender roles that make men the breadwinners. As a result, men who lack that economic authority are inclined to use violence as a way of exerting control over women – and that is why rape is widespread in South Africa (Anguita, 2012). Patriarchy, especially in African societies, is often blamed for IPV.

Sexuality is crucial in the construction and upholding of power relations that exist between men and women, and sexual differences play a significant role in the domination of women (Weeks, 2003). Holland et al. (1990) point out that negotiation of practices and desires happens in social contexts where power is deeply rooted. In such contexts, men usually exercise their power over women, which may lead to risky sexual practices (Holland et al., 1990). Power imbalance and control play a key role in promoting violence in sexual relationships (Shorey et

al., 2008). These gender power imbalances between men and women often hinder women from negotiating safe sexual encounters. Women's constraints in terms of negotiating safe sex or refusing it are exacerbated by the socially constructed ideology of masculinity that identifies men as creatures who badly need sex (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001).

There are different rules for men and women with regard to sexuality, and these rules are often formed in a manner that subordinates the sexuality of women to men's (Weeks, 2003). Women's sexuality has been described as nurturing, receptive, and connected to reproduction. However, some women have strived to take charge of their sexuality by defining themselves as self-determining, erotic human beings (Weeks, 2003). Attempts were also made to advance women's access to birth control and abortion as a way of attempting to separate sexuality from reproduction, as well as women's gendered role as mothers and wives (Vance, 1999).

Sexuality has been found to be instituted in a world that is mainly gendered. Female sexuality is seen to be inevitably a creation of men's historically rooted power to define and classify what is essential and appropriate (Weeks, 2003). The world is generally viewed through the lens of male sexuality; women's sexuality therefore is often judged through the discourse of male sexuality (Weeks, 2003). In addition, in modern societies, the binary divisions between masculinity and femininity, as well as heterosexuality and homosexuality, position sexual subjects and structure sexual desire in a manner that subordinates women and further ostracises the transgressor. For example, in some societies, sexuality that is deemed normal is structured around intercourse where a penis penetrates the vagina (Cranny-Francis, Waring, Stravropoulos, & Kirkby, 2003). Male heterosexual desire usually defines what counts as real sex, and is often constructed through the binary oppositions of gender, consequently producing hierarchies that systematically organise women's oppression (Cranny-Francis et al., 2003). The power that men have over women has been described as patriarchal; heterosexual, penetrative sex in particular therefore symbolises the epitome of male dominance and the subordination of women (Allen, 2003).

3.11 GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND CULTURE

Tamale (2011, p. 16) argues that "gender and sexuality go hand in hand and they are creatures of culture and society". Cultural and subjective meanings that continuously change and differ depending on time and place are vital to the construction of gender (Kimmel, 1995). The way people understand gender depends on "where and when they live; thus these understandings

are culturally and historically relative” (Burr, 2015, p. 3). Foucault (1986) argues that gender can be viewed as a set of culturally and socially created behaviour, personality, and attitude related to one’s sex in any society and is upheld by gender structure and symbolism. This therefore means that people have limited choice in issues regarding who they are and individual plans and motivations therefore count for virtually nothing in the social reality scheme.

Women and men often think in the ways that they do because of the masculinity and femininity traits that they adopted from their respective cultures. People in society often use gender stereotypes as their meanings in the construction of gender, and these gender stereotypes are traits that are believed to be typical of either men or women (Courtney, 2000). Society generally agrees on ideal feminine and masculine characteristics and people are urged to conform to these characteristics. For example, some societies view female sexuality as passive, while male sexuality is considered to be hostile, active, and sadistic (Cranny-Francis et al., 2003). This results in the majority of people conforming to and embracing the prevailing norms of masculinity and femininity (Courtney, 2000). Kimmel (2001) argues that our gendered identities are both voluntary and coerced, which means that people are often compelled, coerced, sanctioned, and usually beaten for them to submit to certain rules. For some people, becoming a male or a female in society is easy and effortless, while for others, becoming a man or a woman is incessant agony – a nightmare in which they bottle up some aspects of themselves to please others or to stay alive. Furthermore, this is a clear indication of how society and history are responsible for the context or the instructional guide that men and women are supposed to follow to create their identities.

Butler (as cited in Hey, 2006, p. 440) views gender as a result of an illusion sustained by constant repetition of cultural norms that materialise that which they govern. These behavioural norms, for instance, how “girls should talk and walk, dress them to look like a typical woman, function to organize the fictive solidity of gender and this fiction is created by uncontrollable repetition” (Hey, 2006, p. 440). For example, Summit et al.’s (2016) research on gender constraints on adolescent girls’ sexual decision making revealed that the type of dress a woman wears and her appearance determine whether she is a slut or not. Young girls who often wear revealing clothes are usually regarded as sluts. These gender norms play a significant role in establishing what will and will not be logically human and what will be regarded as real or not (Jenkins & Finneman, 2018).

3.12 GENDER, POWER, RACE, SEXUALITY, CLASS, INEQUALITY, AND VIOLENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

The social structuring of gender, power, race, sexuality, class, and inequality is constructed concurrently and is interconnected (Weeks, 2003). For instance, men exercise varying degrees of power over women and they also exercise varying degrees of power over themselves (Courtney, 2000). Masculinities are configurations of social practices produced to subordinate women as well as other men. Dominant masculinities usually subordinate lower-status marginalised masculinities such as gay, rural, or lower-class men (Connell, 1995). Relations between different kinds of masculinities are usually constructed around practices that exclude and include as well as threaten and exploit (Connell, 1995). As a result, men whose social status lack dangerous means use easily reachable resources such as physical dominance and violence to structure, negotiate, and maintain masculinities. Men often use violence to assert their control and dominance over women in situations where women rely on them entirely for their own and their children's economic survival (Campbell & Mannell, 2016). If their partner is the sole breadwinner, with access to employment, land, and money, women may find it difficult to leave the relationship or marriage because of the possibility that they may become economically destitute or socially isolated because of the loss of social status and lack of financial means. In such settings, women may also accept violence perpetrated against them by their partner (Campbell & Mannell, 2016).

Connell (2005, p. 84) argues that "violence is part of a system of domination and at the same time a measure of its imperfection". Many black South Africans' day-to-day lives were dominated by structural violence that was imposed through intimidation and terrorisation. Structural violence enforces a pattern of relations and practices that are deep-rooted in and dominate everyday living. People are born and socialized into it as victims and perpetrators and in the absence of a major social change, they play out their assigned roles. It is difficult to distinguish because it is very much part of social reality and ... day-to-day practices (Bulhan, 1985, p. 136).

Structural violence became part of people's social reality and everyday lives during apartheid. Their lives were mainly masculinist in nature and further characterised by domination, violence, and unfair rules and regulations (Wardrop, 2009). To maintain apartheid, the apartheid regime brutalised and threatened black communities into accepting their subordinate position (Duncan, 2005). The level of violence that was enforced by the apartheid system led

to the tolerance of violence, and this culture was adopted in democratic South Africa. The advent of democracy gave people hope as new laws were put in place to promote equality and to address the injustices of apartheid. However, the legacy of violence still lingers in democratic South Africa as many South Africans experience structural violence, which manifests in the culture of entitlement. Because a culture of violence was inherited from apartheid, the life of many South Africans who live in either townships or suburbs is imbued with exposure to violence, as well as constant fear of violent behaviour such as rape and murder. This kind of violence is perpetrated by men who believe that their masculinity is being threatened (Wardrop, 2009).

Exclusion during apartheid was based on race and class (Triegaardt, 2006). Inequalities existed between black and white men during apartheid (Msibi, 2009). The regime's racist practices excluded black South African people from participating effectively in the economy. The economy was owned by the white minority. Black South Africans were excluded from the labour system and opportunities to do professional jobs. Instead, they were utilised in the labour market to provide cheap labour. This resulted in poverty among black South African people and high economic inequalities, and post-apartheid South Africa inherited these challenges (Adato, Carter, & May, 2006) and the country is regarded as one of the most unequal countries in the world. High levels of poverty and inequalities are found in education, health, and basic infrastructure such as sanitation, safe water, and housing. The unemployment and crime rates are high (Hoogeveen & Özler, 2005; Triegaardt, 2006; Francis & Webster, 2019). Poverty and inequality in democratic South Africa have many dimensions, which include gender, race, geographical distribution, and age. People who are mostly affected by poverty are black Africans, women, people in rural areas, and young men and women (Triegaardt, 2006). Men, especially breadwinners, who battle to live up to their socially prescribed role of providing for their families, may control women through the use of violence just to show that they have power (Campbell & Mannell, 2016).

The apartheid system was highly patriarchal and South African women, despite their race, were exposed to a patriarchal and capitalist society. Men, whether black or white, were decision makers, bread winners, and power holders. Their authority was not questioned (Morrell, 2001). Because of women's exposure to the sexist system, women were usually the most victimised (Maitse, 2000). Because many working-class black South African men were marginalised and deprived by the unequal labour system, the family became the only domain where they could confirm their masculinity. They asserted their masculinity through the use of violence towards

women, whom they wanted to obey them. They believed that using violence towards women was a “socially sanctioned project to keep women within their boundaries” (Moffet, 2006, p. 140). This resulted in high levels of sexual violence towards women, girls, and children (Wood, 2005), as well as GBV (Moffett, 2006). In democratic South Africa, men use sexual violence “to keep women submissive to social norms regulated by hegemonic, powerful and yet threatened patriarchal structures” (Moffett, 2006, p. 139).

During apartheid, mixed marriages were prohibited under the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act and the Immorality Act. These Acts were created to prevent the interbreeding of people considered to be of different races. In the 1980s, the apartheid regime attempted to quell the crisis of apartheid by revoking these statutory laws but was greatly condemned by extreme right-wing groups who believed that abolishing these laws would undermine the concept of apartheid.

3.13 CONCLUSION

This chapter examined the theories and concepts that I utilised to frame my study and to analyse my data. The chapter outlined the connection between gender and sexuality and showed that the construction of gender might have an impact on sexual relations and gender violence. The gender and power discourse, and the intersectionality of gender, power, race, and violence were discussed. Concepts such as social construction of (hetero)sexuality and sexual scripts were discussed in this chapter. In addition, it revealed that male and female sexual behaviours are brought about by social norms that govern appropriate behaviour for women and men. The next chapter discusses the methodology utilised to conduct this study.

CHAPTER 4:

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed in detail the theoretical framework used in this study. This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the research design and methodology used to conduct this study on first-year female university residence students' experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality in the context of GBV. Creswell (2009, p. 3) argues that "research designs are plans and research procedures that span the decisions from wide-ranging assumptions to in-depth methods of collecting data and analysis". Nieuwenhuis (2016) states that methodology is the bridge that brings researchers' philosophical standpoints (on epistemology and ontology), methods, and tools together. Methodology is quite important in research because it bolsters the research design (Wisker, 2009). Research methodology comprises the procedures that I undertook to collect data, and analyse, describe, and explain phenomena during the research process.

Three critical research questions guided me in unpacking the purpose of this study:

- What are first-year female university residence students' understandings of GBV?
- How do students experience being female, first year, and resident at university?
- How do first-year female university residence students construct their gender and sexuality in the context of GBV?

I begin by explaining the overall approach to the study. I then discuss the paradigm that I utilised in this study and then explain the methodology I employed, as well as the sampling strategy and the interview process. Ethical considerations are also discussed. A detailed discussion of how my position as a researcher influenced my study is also provided, as well as the data-analysis procedure and the limitations of this study.

4.2 RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN

4.2.1 Qualitative research

The purpose of this study was to explore first-year female university residence students' construction of gender and sexuality in a context of GBV, which was achieved through the use

of a qualitative research approach. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011), qualitative research emphasises the importance of participants' lived experiences. Mason (2009) contends that qualitative research allows the researcher to research various aspects of the social world, which includes the texture of their daily lives; the experiences, understandings, and thoughts of the participants; the ways that social processes, customs, and relationships work; and the significance of meanings generated by them. I utilised qualitative research because its aim is to gain insights through exploring a variety of social settings and people who live in these environments (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). The main interest of qualitative researchers is to understand how people organise themselves in their settings and how they make sense of their environments through symbols, social structures, and social roles. Furthermore, central to qualitative research is the ability to extract meaning from data, which is the meaning people attach to their lived experiences and situations (Nieuwenhuis, 2016).

It was appropriate for me to use a qualitative method in my study, because of its realistic, holistic, and inductive nature (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2009). I made use of the qualitative method because it recognises the importance of listening, and the world is viewed from the participant's perspective; their voice, fears, and practices are therefore heard (Knowles & Cole, 2008).

4.2.2 Research paradigm

Babbie (2014) defines a research paradigm as a framework for observation and understanding, which influences what we see and how we comprehend it. Bryman (2010) describes it as a collection of views and injunctions that have a significant impact on what is to be studied, how research should be conducted, and how to interpret research findings. This study employed the interpretive (naturalistic) paradigm, which acknowledges studying phenomena in their natural settings and making an attempt to understand or interpret them in terms of the meanings people attach to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The paradigm recognises the existence of multiple truths and the subjective nature of reality (Check & Schutte, 2012; Cohen et al., 2011). This means that within this paradigm, reality is actively constructed and reconstructed by individuals according to their own understanding and knowledge of the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Reality is mainly influenced by personal feelings and opinions and is generated from a person's prevailing circumstances at a particular time, as well as their life experiences and interactions with society (Check & Schutte, 2012). Situations are not static but fluid and vary with time as individuals continuously construct the social world they live in (Cohen et al., 2011).

Cohen et al. (2011) maintain that the researcher's role within the interpretivist paradigm is to understand, explain, and interpret participants' social reality; I therefore sought to understand, explain, and interpret the phenomenon under study. I used this paradigm because it involves taking seriously people's personal experiences as the nature of what is real to them, interacting with participants in a bid to attempt to understand their experiences, and paying particular attention to what they tell the researcher (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Kelly, 2006). Furthermore, this paradigm focuses on harnessing and spreading out the power of standard language and expression to assist us in comprehending the social world we dwell in.

Using the interpretive paradigm and the qualitative approach was crucial in acquiring a deeper understanding of first-year female university residence students' experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality in the context of GBV, as the phenomenon was studied through the participants' viewpoint regarding the social world they live in. Both the interpretive paradigm and qualitative approach acknowledge the subjective nature of truth, as individuals' reality is constructed based on their personal experiences, feelings, and beliefs.

4.3 CASE STUDY

According to Kumar (2014), a research design is a road map that an individual follows while conducting research, in an attempt to answer stipulated research questions objectively, truthfully, reliably, and economically. To answer the above-stated research questions, this study utilised a case study research design, which is a qualitative study design. Strydom and Bezuidenhout (2014, p. 178) define a case study as "a thick and detailed description of a social phenomenon that exists within a real-world context. It recounts a real life by rigorously describing the scenario in which the phenomenon occurs". Kumar (2014) states that there is little consensus among researchers on what constitutes a case; arguing that a case can be an individual, a group, a town, a city, a community, an event, an instance, or a community, and for it to be called a case study, the total study population needs to be treated as one entity. A case in this study was first-year female university residence students from a selected UKZN campus, and they further became the basis of a detailed, holistic, and comprehensive exploration of their experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality in the context of GBV. Because a case study focuses on one thing, which in this case are first-year female university residence students, it makes it possible to generate a large amount of data and then to scrutinise the data (Salkind, 2014).

According to Kumar (2014), the focus of attention in a case study is mainly on the case in its unique complexity, not the population as a whole. This single case therefore assisted in providing insight into events and circumstances that prevail in a group from which the case was drawn. I utilised a case study design because it is well known for producing detailed data (Kumar, 2014), and it promotes the use of several different methods, such as focus group discussions and individual interviews to acquire essential data (Salkind, 2014). I also used a case study because it provides both an overview and detailed understanding of the phenomenon being studied, although it is not possible to make generalisations to populations beyond cases that are related to the one being studied (Kumar, 2014). In addition, a case study was utilised because it strives towards a complete understanding of how participants interact and relate with one another in a particular status quo, and the meanings they attach to the aspects being studied (Maree, 2007). In addition, it gives a voice to common people (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014). Its objective is to accurately represent the case and to discern symbolic realities that strengthen the exclusive voice of those whose experience in and view of the world are unknown, suppressed, or neglected (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014).

Utilising a case study in this research enabled me to gather as much information as possible to gain a better grasp of female students' experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality in the context of GBV. In addition, this approach allowed close collaboration between me and my participants, and they were able to share their views freely (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). Although there are many advantages to using a case study, one disadvantage that I encountered is that it is time consuming. A great deal of time was spent on bringing participants together for a group discussion. Scheduled sessions for a group discussion were cancelled and postponed many times by the participants. Another disadvantage that has been identified, as previously mentioned, is that the findings of a case study cannot be generalised (Kumar, 2014), since a small sample is used. I did not find this to be a significant issue in my study, since I was aware that this was a qualitative study based on a small sample, from which I did not intend to draw generalisations.

4.4 RESEARCH CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

First-year female students who reside in campus residences located at a selected UKZN campus, which is situated in Pinetown in the KwaZulu-Natal province, were selected to participate in this study. To contextualise the research, I start by providing a brief summary of

the history of the province and the Pinetown area, as well as describing the university from which I obtained the participants.

The KwaZulu-Natal province was established in 1994 when the old province of Natal was merged with the old homeland of KwaZulu. During apartheid, the homeland of KwaZulu was known as the home of the Zulu people and it was an independent homeland governed by Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi. The capital of KwaZulu was known as Ulundi (South African History Online, 2019). The start of democracy in South Africa led to the establishment of the KwaZulu-Natal province. King Goodwill Zwelithini is currently the king of the Zulu people and he is based in Ulundi. As the Zulu king, under the democratic government of South Africa, he has representative power over his people. The capital of KwaZulu-Natal is Pietermaritzburg. All participants who took part in this study were from KwaZulu-Natal (South African History Online, 2019).

Pinetown is a town located in KwaZulu-Natal and it is well known for its rich historical background. It is part of the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality. The town was named after Sir Benjamin Pine, who was the then governor of Natal. Pinetown was founded in 1850. The town was known as a health resort in the Victorian period. A concentration camp was built by the British in Pinetown during the Second Boer War to accommodate Boer women and children (Van Heyningen, 2009). This town was essentially the base of a number of German settlers and that is why the neighbourhood comprised areas such as New Germany and a German Lutheran church. The largest monastery was constructed in Mariannhill, south of Pinetown, and this monastery was quite influential in expanding the Catholic Church in KwaZulu-Natal (South African History Online, 2020).

Pinetown comprises mainly black people and a few white people. During apartheid, the Group Areas Act forced people to be separated according to their race and the designated area for many black people was the Clermont area near Pinetown. Many black people moved from rural areas to Clermont to seek employment in Pinetown. The surge of people moving to the Clermont area contributed to the settlement patterns found in the Pinetown area today. The majority of black people are found in areas surrounding Pinetown, such as Clermont, while white people are found in areas such as Ashley and New Germany, which were historically white residential areas. The Pinetown central business district is dominated by Indians and black people. The Westville area was historically an Indian area. The coloured population is quite small in Pinetown. The term “coloured” is a term used in the South African context to refer to multi-racial people or people whose parents are from different racial backgrounds

(Traeen, Martinussen, Vitters, & Saini, 2009). This might be a result of the segregation apartheid policies that separated people of different races.

4.5 RESEARCH SITE

This study was conducted at one of the UKZN's campuses in the KwaZulu-Natal province. The UKZN was founded after merging the University of Durban-Westville and the University of Natal in 2004 (Balfour & Lenta, 2009; UKZN, 2017). The University of Durban-Westville was an Indian institution during apartheid. It was located in Westville, and the institution was initially created for Indians because there were only a few universities that enrolled non-white students (Mashige, 2010). Before the establishment of the University of Durban-Westville, Indian students used to travel far to a facility at Salisbury Island known as the University College for Indians, and the apartheid government realised the need to create another university for Indian students.

The University of Natal was established in 1910 as the Natal University College situated in Pietermaritzburg and later expanded to include a campus in Durban in 1931. It was a white-dominated institution during apartheid. Edgewood campus was incorporated into the University of Natal in 2001. It was formerly known as the Edgewood College of Education and a whites-only institution (UKZN, 2017).

The campus is located in Pinetown, in an area called Ashley, which is approximately 20 km from the Durban central business district. It is the main site for teacher education at the university. It provides pleasant and modern facilities to its increasing number of students. As discussed in Chapter 1, the campus has a total of nine residences for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. Only first-year female university students who reside on campus were selected to take part in this study. I chose to conduct my study at this site because it was a convenient location for me, since I am a registered PhD student at this campus. This campus includes students from diverse cultural, racial, and class backgrounds. The majority of students at this particular campus are African. As first-year female students enter this university campus to carry out their studies, they enter an institution that has students from different backgrounds and they learn to adapt to this new environment.

4.6 SAMPLING METHOD

Producing excellent research not only relies on utilising a suitable methodology and instruments, but also on selecting an appropriate sample (Cohen et al., 2011). Sampling

involves selecting participants from a whole population to take part in research; factors such as time and resource constraints may deter researchers from generating data from a whole population. In addition, as argued by Cardwell (1999, p. 202), the entire population is “too big to work with”, and a representative sample that comprises a small group of participants must be utilised instead.

Since this is a qualitative study that utilised a case study for the research design, it was ideal to use purposive sampling to select cases for this study (Kumar, 2014). Purposive sampling involves choosing participants who possess rich information that would assist in answering the research questions (Patton, 1990). Babbie (2014) states that purposive sampling is about choosing a sample based on the knowledge of a population, its elements, and the purpose of the research. In this study, it is purposive because only first-year female university residence participants were selected to take part in the research.

A qualitative study sample should not be so small that data saturation cannot be achieved or so large that it would be challenging to extract thick, rich data (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). The emphasis should be on including enough participants in the sample to reach data saturation. This means that data are generated to a point where no new information is being acquired by the researcher or it is negligible; that is, when it has reached the saturation point (Kumar, 2014). For data saturation to be achieved, Punch (2011) suggests having between two and 10 participants. A small sample can be adequate to provide accurate and comprehensive data in a specific cultural context, as long as the respondents have a specific degree of knowledge regarding the topic under study (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). In contrast, Creswell (2008) recommends 10 or more participants. To reach data saturation, I purposively selected 21 first-year female university residence students from a particular UKZN campus. The participants were purposively selected from campus residences for convenience. As a PhD student at this campus who resides close to this campus, it was convenient and less costly for me to meet students on this campus since I travel to this campus two to three times per week. One participant opted to withdraw from the study after participating in a focus group discussion, and I was left with 20 participants who participated in the individual interviews. For ethical reasons, I did not question why she opted to withdraw. I had explained to all participants before they signed the informed consent letter (see Appendix 3) that they were free to withdraw at any time if they felt uncomfortable with participating and that they would not be penalised for their decision to withdraw. A sample of 20 participants enabled me to generate comprehensive and in-depth data on their experiences

and constructions of gender and sexuality in the context of GBV. The sample was small enough to be manageable, while the number was large enough to attain data saturation.

I also utilised snowball sampling since the topic is of a sensitive nature. Snowball sampling involves identifying individuals who will further locate other willing participants who qualify to take part, and they will further locate others and so on (Cohen et al., 2011). Babbie (2014, p. 201) defines snowball sampling as a “strategy often used in field research in which a participant who has been interviewed might be requested to recommend additional participants to be interviewed”. I approached and explained my study to five first-year female university residence students with whom I am well acquainted and who reside in the campus residence, and they agreed to assist. It was not an easy task for them to find female students who were willing to take part in this study. They reported to me that some students were scared and others were too shy to participate. However, they managed to identify a few more participants who were willing to participate in this study. I gave them a clear explanation of what the study was mainly about, and further asked the participants who were identified to assist in locating more first-year female university residence students who would be willing to take part in this study. I took their telephone numbers for further communication regarding the individual interviews and focus group discussions. The sample is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Pseudonyms and biographical backgrounds of the participants

Participant	Sex	Age (years)	Race	Home area
Boni	Female	19	African	Enyoni (rural area)
Busi	Female	19	African	Emthwalume (rural area)
Carol	Female	20	African	Enkandla (rural area)
Ethel	Female	19	African	Newcastle (urban area)
Zethu	Female	21	African	Richards Bay (urban area)
Andiswa	Female	20	African	Pietermaritzburg (urban area)
Anele	Female	19	African	Mandeni (rural area)
Angela	Female	19	African	Ulundi (rural area)
Ayanda	Female	20	African	Ladysmith (rural area)
Fikile	Female	21	African	Umzumbe (rural area)
Gugu	Female	19	African	Mpangeni (rural area)
Khanyo	Female	20	African	Eshowe (rural area)
Londi	Female	19	African	Ulundi (rural area)
Niki	Female	19	African	Melmoth (rural area)
Noku	Female	20	African	Enquthu (rural area)
Phume	Female	20	African	Richards Bay (urban area)
Primrose	Female	19	African	Enyoni (rural area)
Sphe	Female	19	African	Richards Bay (urban area)
Thando	Female	18	African	Newcastle (urban area)
Thumi	Female	19	African	Mnambithi (rural area)

Table 1 shows that the majority of the participants were from rural areas. Fifteen participants were from rural KwaZulu-Natal areas and five were from urban KwaZulu-Natal areas. The participants who came from rural areas were mainly from poor backgrounds. The participants were aged between 18 and 21 years old. All the participants were African. My intention was to have a sample that consisted of female students of different races, so that I could hear their different perspectives regarding the topic under study. However, this was not possible, since some students were unwilling to take part, and many lived off-campus. My sample at the end included only black African females. South Africa has a diverse population that are classified as African; this includes former categories of white, Indian, and coloured. The term black African is used to refer to the participants in this study, and their first language is isiZulu. I did not include male students in the sample because the focus of this study was female students' understandings and experiences. It was important to foreground their voices. Since men featured prominently in their discussions, I recommend that future research should include male students.

4.7 RESEARCH METHODS

Nieuwenhuis (2016) defines research methods as instruments utilised by researchers to generate data. These instruments allow researchers to generate data regarding social reality from groups, individuals, texts, or artefacts in any medium. Examples of research methods that can be utilised are interviews, observations, or the gathering of visual or textual data. The main instruments that I employed to generate data in this study were focus group discussions, semi-structured individual interviews, and a research diary. The focus group discussions provided an opportunity for the participants to engage with one another. The individual interviews allowed for private engagements with the participants, and the research diary recorded my daily reflections on the research process.

4.7.1 Semi-structured individual interviews

Individual interviews are a qualitative data-generation method that enables a researcher to ask participants questions with the purpose of learning more about their opinions, beliefs, and views of the topic under study (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, & Bezuidenhout, 2014). According to Cohen et al. (2011), individual interviews are known for giving participants room to express their interpretations of the world they live in and to express their point of view regarding certain issues. They are regarded as a strong tool for researchers (Terre Blanche et al., 2009).

I conducted semi-structured individual interviews because they are flexible (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). They gave me an opportunity to repeat a question or to clarify a question in a way that was understood by the participant and to probe further when required.

Because of the good rapport that existed between me and my participants, the participants freely expressed their views regarding the topic under study. However, the logistics of putting together lengthy periods of interviews was complex (Check & Schutte, 2012). I addressed this constraint by creating a good relationship with the participants. I considered in advance how they would respond to the interview schedules, and I developed a method that did not disrupt their traditional social programmes. I realised that the participants were not interested in being interviewed in the evenings or over weekends as most of them were busy with their social lives. We agreed that interviews would be conducted during the week in their free time. I framed open-ended semi-structured questions for the participants, and each responded to the same core questions. This allowed easy analysis of the collected data and further enabled me to compare notes on the opinions and views of the participants in a more organised way (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). Key questions regarding participants' experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality were asked. Some participants were a bit nervous about being interviewed and requested that I showed them the questions before interviewing them. I provided the questions in advance so that they could be more relaxed and prepared. I created a calm and supportive environment and assured them that their responses would be respected without judgement.

Individual interviews were conducted with 20 participants from 20 March to 24 October 2018. The interview sessions went smoothly without any disruptions. However, it took longer than I expected to complete the interviews, because sometimes participants cancelled the interview session at the last minute and we had to reschedule. Most had valid reasons such as that they were busy with an assignment or studying for a test and we therefore had to reschedule. Some participants would simply not show up for the interview session, and when I contacted them to remind them about it, they would say they had forgotten, and we had to set another date for the interview. Individual interviews were held in the Research Commons. This venue was quiet, secluded, and ideal for carrying out the interviews. Each interview took approximately 45 minutes to one hour. The participants chose a time that was convenient to them for the interview, and they were carried out between 10:00 and 13:00. The participants preferred this time period rather than the afternoon, and I agreed to it. They felt that for a meaningful and fruitful interview to take place, it should be done before lunchtime, as they often felt lazy and less enthusiastic in the afternoons, especially when it was hot. Each individual interview

session was audio recorded after acquiring consent from the participant. I used my cell phone for audio recording. Merriam (2009) suggests that wary respondents are more likely to be calm or to forget that they are being recorded if a recording device that is not conspicuous is utilised. Keeping this in mind, instead of using the traditional audio recorder, I used a device (my cell phone) that the participants were familiar with and since they used their cell phones on a daily basis, they felt a bit more relaxed. To protect the participants' identities, I assigned pseudonyms to each during individual interviews, as shown in Table 1.

The language of communication that I utilised during the interviews with the participants was English. The participants were comfortable using English as the medium of communication during focus group discussions and individual interviews, despite the fact that many of them speak isiZulu as their mother tongue. They expressed their views fluently in English, although some of them used minor isiZulu words such as *hayibo* (an interjection that indicates surprise) and *isitabane* (a derogatory term for gays and lesbians) for emphasis.

The quality and depth of an interview may be affected by disparities such as power, status, background, and ideologies between the interviewer and the interviewee; the interviewer therefore has a duty to create a relationship that is equal and that promotes sharing (Mears, 2009). It is inevitable that my position as a married woman, a mother, and a PhD student impacted on my research. The first-year female students expressed their views regarding gender and sexuality, as well as issues of power. Even though I did not agree with some of their views, I attempted to not let my beliefs influence the discussions. As suggested by Mears (2009), a researcher must acknowledge that research participants possess information that a researcher needs; I therefore treated each participant as an expert on the research topic and tried as much as possible not to enforce my opinions, which could have led to bias as the participants would have changed their actual views to accommodate my beliefs.

4.7.2 Focus group discussions

Babbie (2014) defines a focus group discussion as a group with a small number of people gathered together in a secluded, relaxed setting to participate in a guided discussion of a particular topic. Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014, p. 184) define a focus group discussion as a “group interview whose purpose is determining behaviour, attitudes, preferences and aversions of participants who are simultaneously being interviewed by a facilitator”. In addition, “participants join together to express their thoughts and views about pre-set, open-ended

questions related to a particular phenomenon” (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014, p. 184). I utilised focus group discussions because they focus on a particular topic and encourage debate and conflict, and such group dynamics enable data gathering. Group dynamics encourage participants to engage in discussion among themselves, instead of directing their remarks at the facilitator. As a result, participants build on one another’s views and comments, which leads to the attainment of comprehensive data (Nieuwenhuis, 2016).

According to Kumar (2014, p. 155), when conducting a case study, it is “appropriate to establish good rapport with participants before generating data”. I followed Kumar’s (2014) suggestion by establishing good rapport with my participants before I conducted focus group discussions. My initial intention was to conduct the focus group discussions before the individual interviews, to assist in motivating and imparting confidence in the participants; however, it was difficult to bring the students together at the same time, as some of them were busy with assignments and studying for tests. I ended up conducting one focus group first, and the other two group discussions were done between the individual interviews.

The size of a focus group in research can differ. Cohen et al. (2011) suggest that a focus group can have six to 12 participants. Following their suggestion, I created three focus groups, each with seven participants; a total of 21 participants were therefore involved in the focus group discussions.

I utilised focus group discussions because, in addition to the rich data they produce, they are cost effective in nature and produce valuable data within a short period. They allowed me to obtain the views of a number of participants at the same time; thus generating data at a faster pace compared to other methods (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). Focus group discussions are quite flexible in question design and follow-up questions. The flexibility of focus group discussions granted me an opportunity to ask participants to elaborate on aspects that were of interest; rich and detailed data were therefore produced. They further gave me a chance to clarify contradictory statements made by the participants (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014).

Salkind (2014, p. 290) points out that “focus group discussions boost interaction within the group and this helps to bring together several perspectives in a way that one on one interviews do not”. There are some questions that may require more than one person’s response in order to answer them. Some participants’ comments were thought provoking, which motivated others to pursue lines of thinking that might not have been elicited in individual interviews. The participants also commented on the views of others, and this discussion further allowed me to

detect the attitudes and opinions of participants who were less articulate, by noting their facial expressions and body language while others were speaking. Focus group discussions were held in a comfortable environment (Babbie, 2014), which in this case was the Research Commons. The environment was quite encouraging and the good rapport between me and my participants created a setting that enabled honest and open communication (Salkind, 2014).

Salkind (2014, p. 290) points out that the “facilitator of the group discussion should not force his/her views on the participants and should also make sure other participants do not take over the discussion”. Although I tried as much as possible to not enforce my views during the interview process, I later discovered that the explanation about first-year female students’ exposure to GBV (see Appendix 7) might have influenced the participants’ beliefs and opinions, which led to bias.

During the focus group discussions, I ensured that participation in the process was not taken over by one or a few members of the group. Every member had a chance to air their views. Some participants were a bit reserved, and I encouraged them to share their views in the discussion.

The first focus group discussion was held on 24 April 2018 and lasted approximately one hour; the second was conducted on 17 July 2018 and lasted around 50 minutes; and the final group discussion was carried out on 13 September 2018 and lasted one hour and 15 minutes. The participants’ responses were audio recorded with their approval. Pseudonyms (see Table 1) were utilised to protect the participants’ identities.

4.7.3 Research diary

Nieuwenhuis (2016) points out that diaries are often utilised in qualitative studies, and researchers may compile a diary where they record their personal experiences during research sessions. Kumar (2014) notes that a research diary can be used by researchers as a data-generation method, where researchers write down their thoughts when they see something significant, when they talk to participants, or when they observe something that assists them to comprehend or add to what they are researching. It is a powerful source of data when used in conjunction with other methods (Nieuwenhuis, 2016) such as focus group discussions, interviews, or any secondary source (Kumar, 2014). A research diary was used as a reflective tool throughout this research project. Reflexivity, as an ongoing process, is quite important in qualitative research and involves reflecting on the research process and its outcome (Nadin &

Cassell, 2006). To adopt a reflexive approach, I recorded my experiences and observations in an orderly way as the research progressed.

Babbie (2014) points out that it is crucial to take full and accurate notes during interviews and observations, and Nieuwenhuis (2016) states that it is important to take notes and capture non-verbal cues. I clearly recorded in my diary all my observations during the interview proceedings. This included comments on the interview process, non-verbal aspects of the participants' behaviour, and the main themes. The participants' facial expressions reflected their emotions during the focus group and individual discussions. For instance, during an individual discussion with Anele, her facial expression showed that she was surprised that I asked her whether she was in a relationship with a male or a female. To her it was obvious that as a female she has to be in a relationship with a male. Using a diary for reflecting also enabled me to outline all concerns that were of interest, especially observations concerning me as a researcher that would otherwise have affected the outcome of the research; for example, my emotional state during the process (Nadin & Cassell, 2006).

My intention was to start by conducting all focus group discussions first, followed by individual interviews. I intended to use this strategy so that I could stimulate the participants' interest and build rapport with them. However, it was quite difficult to bring participants together for a group discussion. I managed to conduct one focus group discussion first and the other two focus group discussions were held between the individual interviews. Although all the participants took part freely, I realised that those who participated in the group discussion first were more stimulated and eager to talk during the individual interviews. I was able to make comparisons and to ask questions about issues that had previously been discussed during the focus group discussions and individual interviews. Where information needed to be corroborated, this was also achieved throughout the process.

4.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is a process that involves meticulously examining data in an organised way, so that conclusions about the issue being investigated can be drawn (Mitchell, 2012). In this study, I sought to learn first-year female university residence students' experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality in the context of GBV. Nieuwenhuis (2016) points out that the distinct characteristics of a qualitative study are its ability to rely on linguistic rather than numerical data, and that it uses meaning-based rather than statistical forms. Data were analysed using a

qualitative analytical technique called thematic analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis requires a researcher to identify, analyse, and report themes in the data. In addition, data are organised and described in detail. In qualitative studies, data analysis is a continuous process that begins from the commencement of data generation (Burns & Grove, 2005). Terre Blanche et al. (2006) concur by stating that data generation and analysis in qualitative research are not necessarily seen as two separate phases, but may occur concurrently. Hence, in this study, I began analysing data on the day that I organised and carried out the first focus group discussion. All interviews were transcribed, arranged, and sorted to identify common themes, patterns, differences, and similarities for the purpose of organisation and presentation of results. I used Braun and Clarke's (2006, p. 87) six-stage guide (see Table 2) to conduct thematic analysis.

Table 2: Six stages of thematic analysis

Stage	Description
Data familiarisation	Transcribe data, read and reread the data, and write down initial ideas.
Generation of initial codes	Code fascinating aspects of the data systematically across the whole dataset, and collate information relevant to each code.
Search for themes	Collect and arrange codes into potential themes; gather data that are relevant to each potential theme.
Review themes	Check if the themes work in relation to the coded excerpts (Stage 1) and the whole dataset (Stage 2); create a thematic map of the analysis.
Define and name themes	Continue analysis to improve the details of each theme and the overall story being told by the analysis, and create clear definitions and names for each theme.
Produce the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Select clear, compelling excerpts and examples, complete final analysis of excerpts chosen, relate the analysis to the literature and the research question, and produce an academic report of the analysis.

Since I worked with verbal data from individual interviews and focus group discussions, the data were transcribed into a written form to successfully conduct thematic analysis, as indicated by Braun and Clarke (2006). This process of transcribing data enabled me to familiarise myself with the data, although it was time consuming and sometimes tedious. Interesting ideas that emerged from the data were noted and initial codes from the data were produced. This process of coding was useful because it enabled me to arrange the data into meaningful groups (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I coded the data manually by writing some notes on the texts that I was analysing and highlighted possible patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Data excerpts were coded and then collected and combined together within each code.

After coding and collating the data, I then sorted the different codes into potential themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After this, I had to review and refine my themes, which meant reading all the collated extracts for each theme and checking whether a coherent pattern was being formed. After this process, I had to define and refine my themes; this means that I had to identify the core of what each theme was about, and determine the facets of the data captured by each theme. As part of the refinement, I identified that there were some subthemes contained within the main themes. Finally, I had to work on my final analysis and write up the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Responses were grouped into the following themes:

- Gender, power, and violence;
- Fitting into university culture;
- Partners and partnering; and
- Managing the freedom of university life.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the thematic analysis strategy works to reveal reality and go beneath the surface of reality. In addition, thematic analysis conducted within the constructionist theory strives to put forward the sociocultural situations and structural conditions that allow the individual accounts that are available. To uncover first-year female university residence students' reality, the data were analysed using social constructionist theories on gender and sexuality (discussed in Chapter 3), inspired by Butler (1990), Lorber (1994), and Burr (1995; 2015). Theory gives a clear picture of the first-year female university students' understanding of the world they live in, in terms of gender and sexuality. It assumes that the manner in which we figure out the world and the categories and ideas we utilise are usually culturally and historically specific (Burr, 1995); hence, the growth of the sexual self takes place within a specific context rather than in isolation. Because social constructionist perspectives are mainly concerned with illuminating the processes by which individuals explain, describe, and account for the world that they dwell in (Burr, 1995), this is important for understanding how first-year female university students explain, describe, and account for the world they dwell in, in terms of gender and sexuality.

4.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Babbie (2014) notes that ethics in research is usually associated with morality, as they both deal with issues of right and wrong. One of the reasons why it is important to observe ethics when conducting a research study is that being ethical encourages participants to trust the

researcher and to feel safe when they are with him/her (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). It is also important for researchers to remember that human beings serve as participants in research, and their dignity must therefore be upheld at all times (Salkind, 2014). Participants need to be protected from any possible harm, whether psychological or otherwise (Salkind, 2014). To uphold ethics in this study, a number of ethical issues were taken into consideration. Before the study was carried out, gatekeeper permission was sought from the UKZN Ethics Committee, which was granted (see Appendix 2). In addition, full ethical clearance was granted to carry out this research (see Appendix 1).

Babbie (2014) states that it should be known by participants that their participation in research is totally voluntary, and they should participate willingly. This therefore means that no one should be coerced into taking part in research in any way (Neuman, 2006; Salkind, 2014). The participants were not forced to participate in this study. Another important aspect to consider in ethics is to ensure that participants make an informed decision (Babbie, 2014). This means their voluntary role or decision to take part in the study should be based on a full understanding of what the study involves and the risks likely to be faced (Neuman, 2006; Babbie, 2014), and if they do not want to take part, the researcher must find an alternative way to satisfy the requirements of the research. At the commencement of this study, I explained to the participants what my study was about and I then gave them informed consent letters to sign. I also clearly informed them of their right to withdraw from the study at any time if they were not willing to participate any longer. I clarified to them that their decision to withdraw from the study would not be questioned.

Kumar (2014) points out that participants should be competent to give informed consent. In this case, competency refers to the legal and mental abilities of participation to give consent; for instance, children and very old people cannot give informed consent. There were no children or very old people among the participants in this study. All of those who participated in this study were between the ages of 18 and 21 years, and they gave their informed consent.

Babbie (2014) points out that research should not harm participants in any way. Kumar (2014, p. 286) mentions that “harm includes things such as anxiety, discomfort, harassment, invasion of privacy or demeaning”. The participants were notified that this study was not designed to create any stress or anxiety. However, if their participation gave rise to any anxiety or stress, then they could contact the psychologist based on campus. In following these guidelines, the participants’ right to privacy was protected.

Salkind (2014) states the importance of maintaining privacy through anonymity. This means that no one should be able to match the results of a study with the participants involved. Babbie (2014) points out that participants' interests and wellbeing can only be secured by protecting their identity. Furthermore, researchers can guarantee anonymity when a given response cannot be linked to a given participant. Anonymity is important because it increases the prospect of the truthfulness of responses (Babbie, 2014). To maintain anonymity, I assured my participants that confidentiality would be observed and that no one would be able to link their responses to their given names. In this regard, the participants' identities were protected by the use of pseudonyms. Babbie (2014) points out the importance of confidentiality, which can be guaranteed when a given person's responses can be identified by the researcher, but he/she promises not to reveal the source of them to anyone else. I promised the participants that I would not publicly avail the identity of the source that provided the data. To enhance confidentiality in focus group discussions, the participants were requested to sign confidentiality declarations (see Appendix 5), which explicitly encouraged them to respect confidentiality by not disclosing the information discussed in the group or what other participants said during the discussion. In addition to the confidentiality form, I provided a detailed explanation to the participants on why it is important not to disclose any information discussed in the focus group.

Oliver (2010) points out that it is important for a researcher to let participants know the need for recording interviews, as well as how these recordings will be utilised, stored, and deleted after the process of transcribing and the identification of participants' voices in the recordings. The participants were assured that their identities would be protected through the use of pseudonyms. I explained to them why it was crucial for me to record the interviews, i.e. to ensure that their responses are accurately represented. I also assured them that the recordings would be kept in a safe place with my supervisor and would be deleted as soon as the research was completed. I realised that the participants were more relaxed after explaining how they would be protected as far as the issue of audio recording was concerned and they participated freely.

Another important aspect in ethical considerations is to report research results fully and correctly, and to disclose mistakes, limitations, and other shortcomings in a study (Babbie, 2014). The participants' responses were transcribed and their exact words were used during the analysis of the data, and the limitations of the study were indicated. Another vital facet is to respect participants by giving them feedback on the research study. According to Schulz,

Riddle, Valdimirsdottir, Abramson, and Sklar (2003), the notion of respect for people in research involves incorporating a moral obligation to offer the results of the study to participants upon the completion of the research. Providing participants with the results of the study is important, in the sense that it acknowledges respect for the research participants and further discourages the idea of regarding participants as a means to an end. As a result, this might have explicit positive results for the participants and implicit benefits to research as a whole (Fernandez, Kodish, & Weijer, 2003). To observe the principle of respect for participants, all female students who participated in this study will be provided, via email, with a link to the university library's electronic database where a copy of this study will be made available.

4.10 THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

In qualitative studies, different terminology is used to determine validity and reliability, which is often referred to as trustworthiness (Kumar, 2014), and this is very important. The quality of research is mostly evaluated by its trustworthiness and genuineness (Kumar, 2014). Four criteria are mainly used to ascertain the trustworthiness of a qualitative research study, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Punch, 2009).

Credibility is one component that is used to determine the trustworthiness of research, and mainly involves the accurate interpretation of the data provided by participants (Punch, 2009). In addition, the findings of the research must be believable from the participants' point of view, and accurately reflect their views and thoughts. To enhance credibility, I used effective, multiple data-generation methods, i.e. those that have been successfully utilised before by other researchers, to enhance the credibility of my research (Shenton, 2004). In this study, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and a research diary were utilised. Furthermore, the participants were consulted to verify the data after the data had been transcribed. They all confirmed that what had been transcribed was a true reflection of their views. This process was important because it assisted in ensuring the accuracy of the data. I also emailed the findings of my study to the participants for them to confirm, validate, and approve (Punch, 2009).

Dependability is mostly concerned with obtaining the same results if the same procedures are followed; i.e. the findings must be consistent and repeatable. According to Punch (2009), dependability refers to the quality of integration that takes place between the data-generation technique, the analysis of the data, and the theory gathered from the data. To enhance

dependability, I will make available a detailed record of the process of my research for others to repeat, in order to establish the dependability level. In addition, the participants' verbatim accounts were used to express their meaning in the data-analysis process (Shenton, 2004).

Transferability refers to the extent to which findings can be applied to comparable situations and produce the same results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Kumar, 2014). Although it is somewhat complex for findings to be generalised in qualitative studies, this can be achieved by explaining in detail the process adopted by the researcher for others to follow and copy (Kumar, 2014). To achieve transferability, I explained in detail the process (methodology) adopted to conduct this research. Individual interviews and focus group discussions were utilised, which created a space whereby the participants were able to communicate their feelings and interpretations regarding the phenomenon under study. This was important in providing insight into the possibilities and limits of what individuals may do in comparable situations, although it is not possible to predict what they could do (Mears, 2012). I hope that highlighting the participants' experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality in the context of gender and sexuality will generate an opportunity to compare and contrast the reaction of people in diverse circumstances when they are presented with comparable circumstances.

Qualitative researchers utilise confirmability to deal with issues related to bias when conducting research. According to Bell (2010), bias in research is a result of a wide variety of problems, and researchers who hold strong views about the phenomenon under study pose many risks to the research. As a result, it is critical for a researcher to self-reflect as this produces an "open and honest account that resonates well with the reader" (Creswell, 2009, p. 192). Confirmability can be achieved if a researcher declares his/her influence and position (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To improve the trustworthiness of my research, I therefore present my own comprehensive narrative of researcher reflexivity.

4.10.1 Researcher reflexivity

To offer clarity and openness to the reader, I reflect upon my position as a researcher and show how my identity might have influenced the way the data were generated.

4.10.1.1 A married mother, a former high school teacher, and a PhD student

I am a married mother of two children, a boy and a girl. I used to teach at a high school in Zimbabwe and I taught at a mixed-sex school for eight years. During the data-generation

period, I made my position as a PhD student clear to the participants. I made it clear to them that, just like them, I was also a student who was working towards achieving a degree and that their participation in my study was greatly appreciated. I wanted to be someone whom they could identify with as a student and for them to understand that, as a student, I have a responsibility of taking control of my studies to achieve the desired end goal. I realised that declaring that I was a PhD student was quite inspirational to them as some of the participants were enthusiastic about participating in my study. They asked about what motivated me to continue my studies and whether it was challenging or not. They also wanted to know the minimum requirements to be accepted as a PhD candidate.

As a married mother, I realised that my position might have influenced some participants' responses. In some African societies, young women are often encouraged to get married and bear children for their husbands. If a young woman gets pregnant out of wedlock, she is usually condemned and shamed. Marriage, especially in my culture, is valued and young women are usually asked about their boyfriends and when they are going to get married. Some participants condemned the life of being a single mother, which showed that there was some kind of stigma associated with being a single parent. For instance, Carol was a single parent and she was in a relationship with a married man and she was willing to be in a polygamous marriage. Her responses showed that she was trying to get me to understand the importance of marriage and the challenges single parents encounter. As a married woman who is not in a polygamous marriage, I was actually surprised by the fact that she was dating a married man and that she was willing to marry him. However, reflecting on that experience, I realised that I should not have allowed my feelings, which were quite judgemental, to surface. Some of the participants were single parents and they narrated the challenges, especially economic challenges, they encountered as single parents. There was a moment when I empathised with one participant's (Thando) ordeals of being a single mother. She mentioned that her boyfriend abandoned her when she was pregnant and she had to take care of their baby herself. Her boyfriend did not even acknowledge that the child was his and she was left feeling depressed. I tried to imagine what she went through as a single mother and ended up comforting her. I felt that the gender power disparities that exist between men and women often leave young women vulnerable and overburdened with responsibilities of taking care and providing for their children. Some of participants' responses regarding marriage showed that they valued it and it was something sacred to them. For example, one participant, Andiswa, mentioned that she was not ready to engage in sex before marriage and that sex was meant for married people.

Although I did not want to enforce my views on the participants, I realised that before conducting the focus group discussion that I had explained to the participants that exposure of first-year female students to traditional and gender sexuality stereotypes such as male sexual aggression, sexual objectification of women, and compulsory heterosexuality was likely high (see Appendix 7). Such strong statements might have influenced their responses to the questions that were asked during the focus group discussions, thus affecting the trustworthiness of this study.

Another issue that needs to be reflected upon is the way I sequenced the focus group discussions and individual interviews. I started with a focus group discussion first, and the other two focus group discussions were conducted between the individual interviews. Starting with a group discussion might have influenced the participants' views during the individual interviews, since the participants were the same and many of the questions from the focus group discussions and individual interview questions were the same. In hindsight, I realised that I should have started with individual interviews first to generate information not influenced by group thinking. The data provided during the individual interviews would have been supported or disputed during the group discussions.

This study was conducted with female students as the only participants, and male students were not included. I did not include male students because I wanted to understand how female students constructed gender and sexuality. First-year female students are viewed as the most vulnerable to GBV at university (Clowes et al., 2009). Because this study was conducted with only first-year female residence students who expressed their views about men, this means that the data analysed led to conclusions based on these young women's views about men without having a balancing or alternative view from young men. It would have been ideal to include male students to respond to or to verify some of the allegations made by female students regarding male behaviour.

4.10.1.2 Being an African foreign female student researching gender and sexuality

One issue that I was nervous about before I started generating data was how I was going to conduct interviews with participants whose first language was isiZulu. Although I had interacted with some of the participants before and established that their spoken English was good, I was worried that they might not be able to express some of their ideas clearly in English since it was not their mother tongue. When I conducted my first focus group discussion, I was

a bit nervous and worried that participants were not going to answer the questions clearly. As a foreign student who does not speak isiZulu, I had preconceived ideas that the participants might treat me differently because I was from Zimbabwe and could not speak isiZulu. These fears were exacerbated by xenophobic violence that had been ongoing in South Africa. As a result, I felt that the participants might be passive or might decide to speak in isiZulu as a way of rebelling or just to encourage me to learn isiZulu. I was not really comfortable during the first few minutes of the focus group discussions; however, the participants were keen to participate and conversed clearly in English. This created some confidence in myself and I managed to facilitate the discussion well. The anxiety during the first minutes might have interfered with my ability to probe for more information. To illustrate, at the beginning of the focus group discussion that was held on 22 November 2018, the participants were talking about the challenges they faced as first-year students and how these challenges forced some female students to look for boyfriends to take care of them. I failed to probe more on the background of the first-year female students who resorted to finding boyfriends to support them.

Another issue that needs reflecting on is the age gap that existed between the participants and myself as the researcher. Although there was a big age difference between me and the participants (a difference of about 20 years), I tried as much as possible to be open minded and not allow my preconceived ideas to interfere with the process of data generation. However, there were some instances when I presented my feelings towards certain topics. The age difference between me and my participants meant that the way we view the world might be different. As an older woman who grew up in Zimbabwe and with a different background, I realised that the way I was raised was totally different from the way these young women take charge of their lives. Some of these young women could talk freely about their engagement in sexual activities, which was viewed as a taboo topic when I was growing up. Their knowledge of sexual activities was very different from the knowledge that I had growing up, which really surprised me. As I reflect on this, I believe that I should not have presented such feelings of surprise to the participants as this might have influenced the data that were presented.

4.11 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

One major limitation of this study was the reluctance of first-year female university students who reside in the residence to take part in the research. Any subject related to GBV is usually sensitive to many female students. I sought permission to conduct this study from relevant authorities at the university. This enhanced the willingness of some of the participants to take

part. I assured them that confidentiality would be observed and that no one would be able to recognise their responses or link them to their given names. In this regard, their identities were protected by the use of pseudonyms. During the focus group discussions, the participants were reminded to keep the contents of the discussions to themselves, and they were asked to sign non-disclosure forms. This was to guarantee anonymity and confidentiality among the participants.

As expected in qualitative research within an interpretive paradigm, maintaining objectivity when conducting research is not a goal. Mears (2009) points out that there is a high probability that bias is introduced by personal feelings and views, which lead to uncertainty, especially when utilising interviews in the research process. I was constantly aware of my own biases, especially as a mother and wife researching gender and sexuality. As a result, I attempted to follow Mears' (2009) advice that it is vital for researchers to state and reflect on their subjectivity, instead of attempting to state the likelihood of attaining objectivity in research. I therefore made an effort to declare and reflect on my subjectivity in this study.

4.12 CONCLUSION

The process that was utilised to conduct this study was explained in this chapter. An appropriate research design and research methods were selected to assist in answering the specified research questions. The study is located in a qualitative approach and utilised the interpretive paradigm. A case study approach was utilised and the sampling methods used were purposive and snowball sampling. Individual interviews, focus group discussions, and a research diary were the main methods utilised to generate data for this study. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the collected data. The chapter also discussed the strategies used to achieve the trustworthiness of the research. Ethical considerations and the limitations of the study were also discussed.

The next chapter presents and analyses the data that were generated using the discussed methods of data generation.

CHAPTER 5:

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: UNDERSTANDING GBV AND FITTING IN

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the methodology that was deployed to generate data on first-year female university residence students' experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality in the context of GBV. The data generated from 20 individual interviews and three focus group discussions are presented and analysed in two chapters. This chapter discusses the first two major themes, while the remaining themes are presented in Chapter 6. These major themes are not presented in any particular order, and they respond to the following critical research questions in overlapping ways:

- What are first-year female university residence students' understandings of GBV?
- How do students experience being female, first year, and resident at university?
- How do first-year female university residence students construct their gender and sexuality in the context of GBV?

5.2 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study on first-year female university residence students' experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality in the context of GBV are discussed under the following main themes in this chapter:

- 1) Gender, power, and violence
- 2) Fitting into university culture

The main themes are discussed with their various supporting subthemes, and each theme is presented and discussed separately, even though there is a considerable overlap between them. Each theme in this study expresses some significant ideas regarding first-year female university residence students' experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality in the context of GBV.

As discussed in Chapter 3, social constructionist theories of gender and sexuality were used to analyse the data, as well as concepts such as heterosexuality, sexual scripts, and gender and

power and GBV. Furthermore, each theme is analysed against the literature review presented in Chapter 2. The use of verbatim comments is fundamental when providing evidence to support the themes in data analysis, as suggested by Cohen et al. (2011). The participants' exact spoken words, which were taken from the transcribed individual interviews and focus group discussions, are utilised as evidence to support the themes and supporting subthemes presented and analysed in this chapter.

5.3 THEME 1: GENDER, POWER, AND VIOLENCE

This section presents and interprets the findings from this study under the theme Gender, power, and violence. This theme explores the participants' understandings of GBV, and further highlights the participants' views regarding safety at this university.

5.3.1 Defining GBV

The majority of the participants seemed to have a broad understanding of GBV and what it constitutes. A typical example is reflected in the two excerpts from individual interviews below:

Sphe: GBV, I would say it's an act of violence that is directed towards a person, maybe a female or a male. It's just directed towards a certain sex, yah, for example, rape. It can happen to both males and females but in most cases it is directed towards females. Men feel that they are free to do whatever they want with us, even if you tell a person that no I'm not comfortable with having sex, they still go on and do it.

Anele: Umm, I think its violence that is directed to someone because of their gender; for example, beating up lesbians because they are lesbians or raping them just to show them that they can enjoy sex or something, yes. Like women being beaten up by their partners and that's gender-based violence.

From the above excerpts it is clear that Anele and Sphe were aware of the general meaning attached to GBV. Their statements show that GBV is a gendered phenomenon, where a person is violated because of their gender. This brings to mind Leach's (2002) argument that GBV is any form of violence that is directed against a male or female because of their gender. This kind of violence can be physical; for example, forced sex or rape and assault, or verbal, emotional, or psychological abuse. Sphe clarified her definition by emphasising the

misconception men have about women; for instance, if a woman rejects a sexual request, men continue to do it. Such behaviour by men might have been shaped by certain gender stereotypical norms; for example, some societies believe that women like to be taken by force or that they reject men's sexual advances to create the impression that they are respectable, when they actually want to do it (Renzetti et al., 2012). Such actions may be shaped by gender norms that construct women as passive and submissive and as a result are unable to refuse men's sexual advances. Heise et al. (2002) argue that femininities are largely linked to being passive or submissive, and women who resist sexual advances from men may face the risk of being violently punished, as they are believed to be contravening gender norms. Women who refuse to comply with men's sexual needs are often raped. Some face the dilemma of being coerced into engaging in sex, since failure to comply may result in severe physical or social consequences (Heise et al., 2002).

Anele also elaborated on her understanding of GBV by giving the example of lesbians being beaten or raped to prove to them that they can enjoy sex with a man. She also mentioned women being beaten by their partners. Noku expressed that GBV is harming people because of their gender, which includes men attacking women or inflicting pain on someone because of their sexual orientation. As discussed in Theme 3, gays and lesbians may experience GBV because they might be viewed as not complying with the emphasised version of masculinity and femininity. Jewkes and Morrell (2010) note that women who do not conform to emphasised femininities are often marginalised and stigmatised, and may face violation such as the gang rape of lesbian women and other forms of homophobic violence.

During the focus group discussions, the participants expressed similar understandings of GBV, as shown below:

Boni: *It is any form of abuse or unfair treatment against somebody, maybe in a form of rape, maybe in a form of vulgar language or speaking in a way that is not appropriate to somebody or shouting at them or anything that is like unfair treatment.*

Busi: *And it can occur between a male and a female or female to female and male to male. It depends.*

Ethel: *Yah, its unfair treatment from another person, it can be physical, emotional, or verbal.*

The above discussion shows that the participants agreed that GBV is violence perpetrated against both males and females, and that perpetrators can be either males or females.

However, surprisingly, during the individual interviews, two participants did not seem to understand what GBV was, as indicated below:

***Niki:** Eish, I don't know, maybe you can give me a clue.*

***Me:** Have you ever heard of the term gender-based violence?*

***Niki:** No, maybe I have heard about it, but I just don't know that it's called gender-based violence. I think it's whereby a male is violating a female. I am not sure.*

Busi also did not understand what GBV was, as shown below:

***Busi:** I don't understand it.*

***Me:** Have you ever heard about gender-based violence?*

***Busi:** No, I have never heard of it.*

The above comments from Niki and Busi indicate that they were not aware of what GBV was. When asked about their understanding of GBV, they had a blank facial expression, which reflected their lack of understanding of the term, which may be either a result of failure to label certain behaviours as violence, regarding them as normal, or they might be able to recognise violence perpetrated against someone because of their gender, but they were not aware that it is called GBV, as in Niki's case.

5.3.2 Victims and perpetrators on campus

During the individual interviews, the majority of the participants indicated that the main victims of GBV on campus were female students, as well as gays and lesbians. A typical response is illustrated in the following extract:

***Ayanda:** It's mostly women, gays, and lesbians. As women, we are taught to be fragile and to be soft. They don't speak out. We are socialised that, as a woman, you have to respect a man; even at weddings, like a woman is told to respect a man. And some lesbians and gays experience violence because the perpetrators find it difficult to*

understand their sexual orientation; they think that what they are doing is against the norm, like a man should date a woman, yah.

From the above statement it is clear that the participants related femininity with vulnerability to violence, and masculinity with danger. Ayanda identified women, gays, and lesbians as the main victims of GBV. Her argument regarding women being taught to be “fragile and soft” and to respect a man by being silent indicated her conformity to the traditional notions of “emphasized femininity” (Connell, 1987, 184-185). This concurs with Bell et al.’s (2014) explanation that certain societies construct women as fragile and powerless, which makes women vulnerable to violence. She also argued that gays and lesbians were often abused because people lacked a clear understanding of gays and lesbians’ sexual orientation, and they viewed such behaviour as inappropriate. Her statement reveals how perpetrators attempt to validate gender conformity that privilege heterosexuality (Tomsen & Mason, 2001) by labelling their behaviour as a defiance of gender norms (Nel & Judge, 2008); hence, these students are particularly targeted for GBV:

Khanyo: *We as first years are fragile, we are new, we don’t know anything, so they take advantage of us. And you see with a guy, when you hit a girl, it’s the it thing, that’s when you are in control. So we are fragile as first years and guys get a chance to take advantage of you and you don’t know anything about the environment, you are still new here.*

Khanyo’s statement shows her compliance with patriarchal norms that position men as dominant and women as subordinates. She constructed first-year female students as “fragile” and easily exploited. Such views support the “emphasized femininity” notion that subordinates women (Connell, 1987, 184-185). These patriarchal gender norms promote inequality between men and women. Khanyo’s utterances also reflect how students hold dangerous, gendered stereotypes that view violent behaviour from men as a sign of being in charge. This concurs with Arnett and Hughes’ (2012) argument that in some societies young adults often hold dangerous gender stereotypes that place certain features and characteristics upon men and women, which consequently puts them at risk of being violated.

Other participants also mentioned that female students were the victims of GBV because of natural feminine characteristics. This is reflected in the following excerpts from individual interviews:

Sphe: *It's females, we are the victims because we cannot fight back, so I think we are the victims of this violence. Women are not strong enough to defend themselves and men take advantage of that. They know that nothing will happen to them if they violate them.*

Thando: *It's women, because they are vulnerable. They have got less power. Sometimes we think okay, if he is gonna beat me I don't have power to fight back 'cause he is a man. Women cannot protect themselves if they get violated and that is why men take advantage of us. Females are always treated differently because they have a soft spot. They are easy to get, unlike males, yah.*

From the above assertions it is evident that Sphe and Thando conformed to common understandings of women as vulnerable human beings who have less power and are therefore unable to protect themselves. They drew on essentialist views of gender and constructed women as naturally vulnerable and defenceless compared to men. They also believed that men were aware of women's vulnerability, which was why they violated them. This brings to mind Mazars et al.'s (2014) argument that patriarchal gender norms play a significant role in the perpetration of violence against women, because they recognise men and boys as having higher social value, power, and status than women and girls. Furthermore, sexually violent men usually target women and girls because they are viewed as having lower status or power.

Gugu believed that women are to be blamed for being violated because they do not speak out:

Gugu: *Women are also to blame because they don't speak, you know, when they experience violence; they are silent about it. Maybe it's because in most families women are taught that you need to respect men and if you are beaten, you don't fight back, you just remain silent about it. They are taught to be submissive, yah. Women allow men to beat them up and they think it's love, yah.*

Gugu demonstrated an understanding of how gender socialisation and patriarchal norms put women at risk. Gugu's view that women are "taught to be submissive" indicates a patriarchal system that teach women not to challenge men. This system allows men to perpetrate violence as an exercise to exert their power over women (Morrell, 2002). Shorey et al. (2008) also argue

that patriarchal norms contribute to violence against women as they promote male domination and female subordination. This leads to power disparities between them, and these power differences encourage men to perpetrate violence against women.

The majority of the participants pinpointed men as the perpetrators of GBV. An example of this is shown in the following excerpt:

***Anele:** I think it's the male students, they even abuse the gays and the lesbians. They say some nasty things to them, like I'm gonna sleep with you to prove that you are not really lesbian, you are a woman.*

Anele stated that male students were the main perpetrators of GBV and that female students and non-conforming male students were at risk of violation. Globally, GBV is generally perpetrated by men against women (Gevers et al., 2013). Boonzaier (2008) states that men are the most frequent perpetrators of GBV. Men's perpetration of violence has been attributed to patriarchy, which aims to sustain and perpetuate itself through the subordination of women (Connell, 2003).

During the individual interviews, the participants were asked why men engaged in such behaviour, and they gave various reasons. Ayanda mentioned that some men do not have appropriate role model fathers, as indicated in the extract below:

***Ayanda:** I think it's not having the right father role to teach you on how to be a man, and also this norm, which says men cannot cry, and the way that they express their feelings is by hitting women and this thing of... You see how violence has become like a fashion now, and if you are not hitting your woman, then you are not superior, and you need to show your power. My own perspective is that a man who hits a woman is weak. It means you can't communicate with this person, the only communication you make is by hand.*

Ayanda seemed to have some understanding of how masculinities and femininities are socially constructed; however, she simultaneously conformed to conservative ideas of gender constructions through role modelling. She believed that men who grew up without a father as a suitable role model to teach them how to be a man might end up perpetrating violence. Her extract also illustrates that some men use violence to exercise control over women and to demonstrate masculinity. Ayanda's statement illustrates that masculinity norms, such as that men cannot cry, exacerbate violence perpetration, as men resort to the use of physical violence

to articulate their feelings and assert their dominance. South African masculinities value aggressive traits such as physical strength, bravery, and toughness, and hierarchical authority is accepted, but above all, they stress that men are capable of exercising control over women and other men (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). In addition, when it comes to relationships with women, the prospect of establishing control creates a space for the use of violence against women, and all this is done in order to attain and demonstrate masculinity (Jewkes, 2010). These findings concur with Msibi's (2009) argument that male students at universities attempt to assert their masculinities through gender violence and homophobia. Such violence hinders equal participation in higher educational opportunities. Ayanda believed that men who hit women were weak and were unable to communicate. Her statement shows that by positioning violent men as "weak", she rejected masculinity norms that encourage men to use violence to show their power.

Carol shared the same sentiments during an individual interview about men being taught not to cry, as illustrated in the extract below:

***Carol:** It's this thing of saying a man does not cry in our culture, so if we teach boys and men not to cry, then the only way they are going to express themselves is by hitting because they have been keeping such anger for a long time.*

Carol's statement shows how dominant notions of masculinity that encourage boys not to shed tears force young men to express their feelings through the use of physical violence. Bell et al. (2014) argue that gender has important cultural messages and meanings associated with it, and that it is a very important part of men and women's identity and how they shape their day-to-day lives. Since it is a social construct, men and women are taught behaviours and characteristics by society that are deemed suitable for their sex (Bell et al., 2014). These gendered social transactions put men and women under pressure to validate gendered societal prescriptions, such as that men are supposed to be tough, self-reliant, and independent, while women must be soft and passive. Crying is usually associated with femininity; therefore, to separate themselves from feminine traits, men may resort to the use of violence to express their anger. This is in keeping with Burr's (2015) assertion that human beings construct their different versions of knowledge through day-to-day interactions, and the most important aspect of these daily interactions is language. As human beings converse with one another, the world gets constructed. Cultural and subjective meanings that frequently change and differ, depending on time and place, are key to the construction of gender. The way people understand

gender depends on where and when they live; these understandings are therefore culturally and historically influenced. Carol's view revealed that as boys and men converse with one another in their culture, they learn that crying is not for men; they therefore express their feelings through hitting women.

During the individual interviews, the majority of the participants believed that men learned such behaviour at home, as shown below:

Sphe: *I think it starts from home and maybe in most cases a person is exposed to violence at home, so some people don't adopt such behaviour, but in most cases, if it's a boy, they adopt such behaviour that they see their fathers doing. So, in most cases, it's a behaviour that they pick up from home and with others, it's a behaviour they pick up from friends when they get to university. 'Cause if your friend is beating up his girlfriend, you then gonna think it's okay if she is misbehaving, 'cause they think its misbehaviour, so I guess some people adopt it when they get to university and feel that it's okay since my friends are doing it, so I can also do it.*

Boni: *I think if you are a man and you grew up in a home where violence was a norm or where your father abused your mother and your mother did nothing, you might think it is right to beat up a woman.*

Gugu: *They think that they are superior and that they are male so they can do whatever. They learned from their background that they have power because they are men. They learned that from their homes and they wanna apply it to us. Some men want their girls to be submissive. For example, I have a friend whose boyfriend is a student here on campus, and whenever he gets hungry, he goes to her and demands food, and also wants her to wash for him, and she is just a girlfriend and not a wife.*

From the utterances above it is clear that Sphe, Gugu, and Boni believed that men learn such gendered behaviour at home growing up and they internalise it. Those who grew up in families where violence was perpetrated and accepted as a norm, learned and accepted that behaviour. They learned the dominant notion of masculinity that position men as having power over women and they justified the utilisation of violence to affirm power (Msibi, 2012; Bhana, 2005). Wood (2009) points out that in some societies some children may grow up thinking that violence against women is acceptable, especially those who are raised in families where violence exists. From Sphe's statement it is clear that some young men learn and internalise

violent masculinities from their friends when they enter university. For example, they may learn that it is appropriate to use physical violence against their partner if she is not behaving in a way they deem appropriate. Gugu's statement showed some power differences that strengthen the subordination of women. Men assert their authority by demanding that their girlfriends provide food and wash their clothes for them.

Some participants demonstrated that they did not accept the notion that men were naturally powerful. They mentioned that men believed that they had power and they wanted to be in control, as indicated in the extracts from the individual interviews below:

***Anele:** I think it's because they think they can do anything they want because they are men. They can get away with anything, they have power, yah. Men think that if a woman disrespects them, she has to be disciplined and they discipline by beating them, yes. They think that to show your superiority you have to hit, yah.*

***Andiswa:** Because they want to feel in control. Because as guys, based on what other guys have told me, let's say you meet and discuss your relationships, they told me that if she doesn't do what I tell her to do, I will hit her. And one guy was telling me that he hit his girlfriend because she was not listening to what he was saying, and not doing what he wanted her to do.*

From the above statements it is clear that Anele and Andiswa believed that men perpetrate violence because of their need to take full control in a relationship and their expectation that women will act in accordance with what they want. Their arguments indicated that men utilise violence as a strategy for the construction and reproduction of dominant gender relations, in particular certain versions of prevailing masculinities (Connell, 2003).

Anele further expressed that men believed that women who disrespect them should be disciplined by hitting them, and that it was their way of showing that they are superior. This finding resonates with Boonzaier's (2008) finding in the study, "If the man says you must sit, then you must sit' – The relational construction of women abuse: Gender, subjectivity and violence." The study reported that some male participants utilised violence towards their partners and they justified their actions, especially when they felt that they have been provoked and disrespected.

Jewkes and Morrell (2010) point out that men's power is established through the use of force in sexual matters, which is exacerbated by patriarchal norms that encourage the use of violence

within acceptable limits and in certain contexts. Andiswa felt that men want to feel like they are in charge by using violence to get their partners to obey them. She heard this from the “horse’s mouth” – men themselves. This finding resonates with Petersen et al.’s (2005) research, which reported that young men hold on to patriarchal ideologies that view violence as a plan used by men to discipline women if they become assertive or too independent.

Similar ideas were expressed during a focus group discussion, as shown below:

Phume: *A man wanting to be in control, like if you do something that he does not want, he might hit you to show that he is in control, and he knows that us women are not strong.*

Primrose: *I also want to add that GBV is more of a belief that men are superior and we as women should obey the rules of the men, so that’s where they get to act in an abusive way, because they know that they are the powerful ones.*

Niki: *Even anger, let’s say you grew up in an environment where daddy used to hit mommy, so you end up developing the same thing, like because you experienced it from an early age. That’s how you learn that. Oh, this is how you treat a woman, this is how I should also do things.*

Sphe: *I think that’s how males gain power or fame, maybe they cause violence toward their girlfriends, they become famous; other guys will see them as if they are powerful, they are strong. They show their girlfriends that they are not to be messed with, you know, they are accepted by their friends. Hitting their girlfriends gives them some sort of power.*

Fikile: *Yes, he wants to be in control.*

The discussion above shows that the participants believed that males perpetrate violence against women because of their need to exert their power over women. Their words further illustrate the unequal gender power relations that exist between young men and women that put women at risk of being violated. Phume’s statement that men want to be in control, and that they use physical violence to punish women who do things they do not approve of supports the dominant masculinity construction of men as beings who possess power over women (Connell, 1995). Primrose’s excerpt indicates that men believe that they are superior and women should therefore obey their rules. Sphe’s view that men utilise violence to gain

popularity among their peers demonstrates the desire by young men to conform to dominant notions of masculinity and assert their power over their partner. It further indicates how men are under pressure to validate gendered societal prescriptions that encourage men to be strong (Butler, 1990) and in control of a relationship.

Courtney (2000) argues that women and men often think in the ways they do because of the masculine and feminine traits that they learn from their respective cultures. People in society often use gender stereotypes as their meanings in the construction of gender, and these gender stereotypes are traits that are believed to be typical of either men or women. This results in the majority of people conforming to and embracing the prevailing norms of masculinity and femininity (Courtney, 2000). Society generally agrees on typical feminine and masculine traits, and people are urged to conform to these characteristics. The participants' views showed that men perpetrate violence against women because of the stereotypical meanings attached to what it means to be a man. They learn and adopt these meanings from their culture. According to the participants, to be a man means having power, beating women, and acquiring fame among their peers.

Although some participants felt that men perpetrate violence because they want to show their power and that they are in charge, one participant admitted that she was attracted to men who present such masculine traits, such as power, as illustrated in the extract from an individual interview below:

***Phume:** When it comes to males, it's a good thing to have someone who is dominant, someone who has powers in a relationship, someone who will challenge you, you know, and someone who you can trust whenever you have problems, you know. Someone who you know can lead rather than follow, yah. Yes, we should also be powerful, but there is still that attraction with a male who has power, who is dominant, who makes the rules and stick to them.*

Phume's statement indicates that she agreed with hegemonic gendered constructions that require men to be dominant and in charge and women to be vulnerable, although she said that women should also be powerful. She admitted her attraction to men who are dominant and who make rules that a woman must follow. Her utterances indicate that she subscribed to an unbalanced structuring of relations, did not object to them, and agreed with gender power disparity (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Gender inequality is another factor that can cause the perpetration of GBV. Findings from the *World report on violence and health* revealed that

there are higher chances of sexual violence occurring in societies with inflexible and conservative gender norms (NSVRC, 2004). These are societies that hold ideologies that view male supremacy as strong, through emphasising physical strength and male honour; cases of rape are usually high in such societies (NSVRC, 2004).

While the majority of the participants expressed that the main perpetrators of GBV were male students, some mentioned that women also perpetrated violence against other women, as shown in the excerpt from an individual interview below:

Me: *Who are perpetrators of gender-based violence?*

Carol: *I think it's females because they love to talk about other people's business behind their backs, so that can build violence. Ladies are the ones that are just gossiping about each other. You can't be a lady and then discourage another lady, but it happens. They gossip, they look at how a person dresses.*

From Carol's statement, it is evident that female students are not always innocent victims of violence. They also perpetrate violence against other female students. The violence referred to here is verbal. Ayanda also mentioned female students as being violent. The incident that she cited was about physical violence against other female students.

Ayanda: *There was also an incident in the carpark, where two girls were fighting over a man, so it's also women and women violence. People also make nasty comments to women. Some girls also say some nasty things to others on the campus Facebook page; for example, they would expose someone by saying this girl is dating so many people or this person has a long nose, or say something bad about her body. Yah, those nasty comments.*

Her statement was similar to the others' and showed that fights between female students were mainly over boyfriends. It also shows that female students faced harassment, such as body shaming and slander (for example, claiming that a female student has multiple partners), on the campus Facebook page from other female students.

Khanyo mentioned during an individual interview that women often perpetrate violence against other women, as shown below:

Khanyo: *As women alone, we end up badmouthing each other without actually hearing the full story. For example, a first-year lady was dancing and taking off her panty on*

Friday at the bash; the same video was taken by a female student and it has gone viral. Again, it shows how alcohol actually influences all these things, 'cause this could not have happened if she had not been drinking, so I feel like men... a guy will never do that to another guy. Men have a way of defending each other's titles; as for women, we are failing to defend each other. Let's say you see me doing that on Friday, why don't you grab me, take me aside, make sure that I'm fine and stop taking the video? Look for my friends and find them, and then just make sure I'm protected? Men would never do that. A video was taken by a female student and its trending right now.

Khanyo's statement indicates that some female students perpetrated violence against other female students. She expressed her concern about women not standing by each other, like men do. She gave an example of a video that was taken by a woman that was trending on their campus. She felt that instead of taking the video, they should have taken the girl aside and spoken to her. Khanyo further emphasised the dangers associated with alcohol consumption among women, by saying that the student in question would not have behaved in such a manner if she had not consumed some alcohol.

5.3.3 Experiencing GBV: "It happens on campus"

The majority of the participants admitted that GBV was prevalent at university, and they shared their various experiences of it. One personal experience of GBV on campus is indicated in the excerpt from an individual interview below:

Me: *Do you think it happens on campus?*

Phume: *Definitely, I have experienced it, because I was attacked by three drunk guys trying to go upstairs within the residence. They attacked me. I didn't know the people who attacked me, and they were drunk. Two of the SRC members were in the TV room and when they came out, they told me that they were postgrad students who were here for the graduation and got drunk at the weekend. They attacked me because I wanted to go up the stairs, and they didn't want me to go up the stairs. They said I was full of myself, why do I want to pass while they were still talking to me. When I opened a case, they didn't do anything until they left. They never questioned them, they didn't do anything, and they never tried to find them. So even the school doesn't do anything.*

From Phume's words it is clear that she faced GBV from three drunk men who felt that she contravened gender norms that associate femininity with being submissive and obedient (Heise et al., 2002). The drunk men enforced patriarchal masculinity ideals by deciding to punish her through the use of violence simply because she did not obey their request not to climb up the steps. Phume suggested that there was no support from the institution. She reported the case and there was no support for the victim and no consequences for the perpetrators.

Fikile also shared her experience during an individual interview:

***Fikile:** I remember having an argument with this guy, a student. He was saying something bad about my body and I didn't like it. And I was so pissed off, I wanted to go home, and I called my mom and I told her I wanted to come back home ... yah, it's so difficult.*

Fikile experienced body shaming and was very affected, to the extent that she wanted to go back home. She emphasised the difficulties she experienced based on gendered expectations of body and beauty. Her statement also indicated that men view women's bodies as sexual objects, which need to be taken care of for their satisfaction.

Some participants expressed the challenges that first-year female students faced from male students on the SRC, as illustrated in the extract from an individual interview below:

***Anele:** A lot has happened to me. Because the SRC men are involved somehow in assisting with accommodation, so they just use their power to ask for sex from us first years, because they know that we are in an environment that is not familiar to us and we don't really know how things work here. When I came here, it was not easy to get accommodation, and one guy even promised to give me accommodation only if I slept with him. I refused to give in to his demands, and he said he was not going to help me. I thank God that I managed to get accommodation in the end without having to sleep with anyone, but I know some girls who had to sleep with SRC guys to get accommodation.*

The SRC is supposed to be student leaders who help create safe and supportive environments. The first-year female students were easy targets for exploitation because of their newness at university and their need for assistance with accommodation. The male student leaders often abused their power.

Another participant shared her experiences with senior male students:

Angela: Some male students, especially those in fourth year, are always asking for first years to date them. If you don't want to, they harass you and say some nasty things about you, like she is that kind of girl who sleeps around.

Anele and Angela's statements reflect how perceived male power played out on campus. Some male SRC students and senior male students used sexual harassment to exert their power and dominance over first-year female students. They utilised their power to ask for sex in exchange for accommodation. Anele's experience is a clear indication of how SRC members utilise their power to harass first-year female students. She was asked for sex in exchange for accommodation; she refused and was able to find accommodation in the end without giving in to sex. However, she expressed that she was aware of some female students who capitulated to the male SRC members' demands in exchange for accommodation. Conroy (2013) explains that some young men at universities may use violence such as sexual harassment to declare power and dominance over female students. Angela's statement reveals that some senior male students sexually harassed first-year female students by asking for dates; if their request is rejected, they often spread nasty rumours about the young woman; for instance, saying that she is someone who sleeps around. Her statement showed that senior male students use violence as a tool for the construction of and reproduction of dominant gender relations, in particular certain versions of dominant masculinities. The utilisation of sexual harassment by male students to dominate women clearly indicates that gender is an instrument that reinforces categorised relations, often referred to as gender order, among men and women. In this gender order, women are usually regarded as docile and obedient, as opposed to the ideal masculine role, which is viewed in the context of freedom, sexual desire, and sexual activity (Gilchrist & Sullivan, 2006). This concurs with Bakari and Leach's (2008) study conducted at a Nigerian college that found that male students and staff frequently sought to reaffirm male dominance by sexually exploiting female students. With regard to men in a position of power, Bakari and Leach (2008) note that they might not need to use physical violence to maintain control over women – instead, their tool of controlling women is through sexually exploiting them.

The participants shared similar views during a focus group discussion about sexual harassment by some SRC members:

Anele: And you find that sometimes we need help from SRC and they say come to my room.

All: Yes.

Anele: For what, and you don't understand. I need your help, can you not help me here out in public where everyone can see you? Why do you want me to go to your room? I can go to your office, not your room. They want your number. Okay, it's fine if you want my number, I can give you and we can communicate over the phone, but it tends to be more than just...

Angela: They want favours, like sexual favours to help you.

Zandile: They say if I'm going to help you, then allow me to go somewhere with you. You need to come to my room so we can talk about it, and I will help you after you come to my room.

Me: What happens when they go there?

Carol: You know what they do... I experienced this when I went to SRC looking for help and they told me to come to their room. Because I'm still new, I'm gonna follow the rules, right. When I get there, they asked me to cook and they asked me to do their washing for them, they asked me to clean their room in return for getting the help that I asked for. Well first, before they asked to cook, clean and everything, they asked for sex first. That's what they do.

Me: In exchange for what?

Ayanda: Registration problems, funding.

Andiswa: Residence.

There was widespread agreement in the focus group discussion that first-year female students faced sexual harassment from SRC students, with consensus between Anele's views and those from the focus group discussion. From the above discussion it is evident that some male members of the SRC asserted their dominance and power over first-year female students. They placed them in subordinate positions by coercing them to do normative female tasks. This finding supports Humphrey and White's (2000) argument that the risk of being sexually victimised is higher during the first year at university.

Although there is freedom to explore sexuality, as discussed in Theme 4, some participants mentioned that homophobia was rife at the university. They expressed the kind of violence that

gay and lesbian students faced on campus, as illustrated in the extracts from the individual interviews below:

Zethu: *Oh, I think the gays and lesbians are affected as well because they are looked at in a different way. They are criticised more than someone who is normal. They say things such as isitabane, they make them feel that they are not normal and not equal to other people.*

Fikile: *You find like someone like staring at gays in an unusual manner and calling them names, insulting them. Like one incident in the bus park, there was this gay passing by and he was wearing women's clothes, and these guys started laughing at him and calling him names, and they do the same to lesbians.*

Zethu and Fikile's statements indicate that gay and lesbian students often encountered sexual harassment from other students. This concurs with Morrell's (2002) argument that gender violence is an obstacle for both men and women. Violent acts are often perpetrated against men by other men, which makes men victims as well and the participation of men in violence is regarded as an issue of masculinity, as they perpetrate it to assert their masculinity (Morrell, 2002). Zethu mentioned that gay and lesbian students were marginalised and criticised "more than someone who is normal"; by saying this, Zethu might have a belief that homosexuality is not normal. She therefore demonstrated her compliance with heterosexual norms that stigmatise and segregate those who are identified as acting out of the norm (Francis & Msibi, 2011). Zethu and Fikile's statements indicate that students who oppose, challenge, and transform gender by acting contrarily to what is required of them according to gender norms (Jaramillo-Sierra et al., 2015) often face harassment from their peers when they are around certain spaces on campus such as a bus stop. This finding resonates with Jagessar and Msibi's (2015) finding in their study on homophobia in the residences of a university in KwaZulu-Natal. They found that gay and lesbian students were often verbally harassed by male students. When they pass through certain spaces, they would be stopped and asked questions about their sexuality that made them feel uncomfortable. Insulting comments were also made about some gay and lesbian students.

5.3.4 Intimate partner violence (IPV)

Some participants narrated the challenges they experienced in their relationships, as reflected in the excerpt from an individual interview below:

Me: Are there any challenges in your relationship?

Angela: Like when he wants to see me, then I say I'm busy, and he will get angry at me. Maybe I'm busy and he says this weekend you should come and see me, and I say no, and then he gets angry. Sometimes he hits me for nothing, like if I refuse to do what he wants.

Me: Why don't you leave him?

Angela: I love him, he is a good person, except when he is angry.

Angela's statement showed the gender power differences that exist in their relationship. Angela's partner exerted his power and control by utilising violence when she failed to obey his requests. This brings to mind Reddy and Dunne's (2007) argument that gender norms create power differentiations that enforce the subordination of males and females who are considered as not complying to norms that are regarded as appropriate. The power differences are significant to the exposure of females to GBV, and may further hinder their efforts to protect themselves from violence (Reddy & Dunne, 2007). Angela's argument that she cannot leave him because she loved him indicated her compliance with sexuality ideals that associate women with love in sexual relationships. This ideology of being in love forced her to tolerate violence perpetrated by her partner and to stay in an abusive relationship. By tolerating such violence, she further complied with the emphasised version of femininity that promotes the subordination of women and accommodates men's interests (Connell, 1995).

Londi also expressed unequal gender expectations as leading to violence in intimate relationships:

Londi: Because I also drink alcohol, I usually don't mind when he is drunk, but usually when he is drunk he shouts at me, yah. But I know it's alcohol that makes him do that, so I just keep calm.

Londi's statement indicated that she in some ways challenged conventional norms of femininity by drinking alcohol, but she also complied with femininity norms that encourage

women to be passive and further contribute in maintaining hegemonic masculinities. Men in South Africa who conform to hegemonic masculinity ideals often engage in heavy drinking and perpetrate violence against their partners (Gass, Stein, Williams, & Seedat, 2011). She tolerated violence from her drunk partner and justified his actions by blaming alcohol. This concurs with Wood's (2001) argument that women, especially those in abusive relationships, try to make sense of violence perpetrated against them by making excuses for their partners' violence. By trying to excuse her partner's behaviour, Londi clearly accepted male dominance and normalised violence perpetrated against her. This finding further demonstrates how heterosexual relationships at university are shaped around male dominance and the vulnerability of women (Bhana & Anderson, 2013).

In the extract from an individual interview below, Sphe narrated her main relationship challenge as something external to her partner:

Sphe: The challenge is the drinking. If he is drunk, he doesn't control his temper. I think he's got temper issues. He wants to shout at people and fight with his friends. Sometimes he shouts at me, but he does not hit me, yah.

From the above excerpt above it is clear that Sphe experienced verbal violence because of the gender power differences that exist in their relationship. However, she did not consider it as violence since it was not physical. Shorey et al. (2008) argue that violence between men and women is a manifestation of prevailing power structures of male dominance and female subservience, and such power disparities often result in violent behaviours in sexual relationships. Her argument that her boyfriend verbally harassed her from time to time, but did not physically abuse her, indicated that she accepted such violence from her partner; she therefore agreed with hegemonic masculinities that subordinates femininities (Connell, 1995). It is also clear that her partner participated in toxic forms of hegemonic masculinity that oppress women and subordinate other types of masculinity (Connell, 1995). Jewkes and Morrell (2010) argue that heavy alcohol drinking is a risky practice that is prominent among young men and boys for them to be regarded as real men. When Sphe's partner was intoxicated, he engaged in aggressive behaviour by fighting with his friends or yelling at her. This concurs with Wood's (2009) argument that young men usually engage in types of masculinity that are toxic, such as heavy drinking and insulting women.

Anele also talked about her experiences of violence by a drunk partner:

***Anele:** He is difficult to deal with when he is drunk, especially the issue of sex. He wants it and he wants it so badly that we do it two to three times per night, and he sometimes hurts me. It's difficult to walk properly if you are hurt after doing it the whole night... That's my biggest challenge, but I love him, you know. It's true what people say, that men like sex [Smiling].*

The extract above reflects explicit gender violence (Dunne et al., 2006) that Anele was exposed to. She experienced sexual coercion in her relationship and she accepted it as a normal manifestation of a drunk partner. Campbell (2003) argues that women who encounter violence, such as forced sex, find it challenging to negotiate sexual practices that are safe because of the violence that is likely to be perpetrated against them. By complying to engage in sex even when she was not comfortable, she subscribed to femininity norms that encourage women to be passive and submissive in sexual matters; this consequently puts her at risk of being violated. By accepting such violence, she reinforced dominant masculinities that subordinate women. Jewkes and Morrell (2010) argue that dominant masculinity is a cultural belief that is linked to the use of violence and other behaviours that are controlling of women (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). The power differences in Anele's relationship are clear as she allowed her partner to take full control of sexual matters in the relationship. This further shows how female students' rights to give or refuse consent to sexual activities are violated (Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002) at university. They do not have control over sexual decisions. Their sexual autonomy is quite limited because of power differences in their sexual relations (Ackermann & De Klerk, 2002). Anele is forced to have sex with her drunk boyfriend and she failed to label her experiences as rape. She justified her partner's behaviour by drawing on an essentialist notion of gender as she identified men as individuals who relish sex. This echoes Renzetti et al.'s (2012) argument that some women are raped by men because of certain mythologies about perpetrators and victims. For instance, women who experience violence such as rape by their partners fail to label such acts as rape. Instead, they tend to justify or excuse the perpetrator's behaviour by stating that men have a natural sexual aggression and they are therefore not accountable for the rape (Renzetti et al., 2012). This finding resonates with Shefer et al.'s (2012) study that investigated students' narratives on transactional sex at a South African university. Shefer et al. (2012) found that heterosexual relationships were characterised by acts of violence such as coercion and male control, and that such behaviour was considered normal.

During the individual interviews, some participants detailed the kind of violence they witnessed on campus:

***Fikile:** Yah. Last week I saw a guy hitting his girlfriend at night when I was coming from the library, and the guy was drunk. There was a musician here last week, and this guy was dragging his girlfriend and hitting her.*

Fikile witnessed physical violence perpetrated against a female student who was being dragged and hit by her boyfriend.

Another participant expressed what she had witnessed:

***Thando:** It happens my roommate has a boyfriend and they are both in their first year, and her boyfriend drinks a lot... a lot of alcohol, like every day he is drunk, and he's always going out with lots of girlfriends, and you don't know which one he's dating and which one is his friend. So, like my friend is always angry and she decided to confront him about these girls, and he beat her and the guy was drunk that day. So it's been hard on her. He doesn't care about her, and females are more sensitive than males. She is not taking everything well.*

Thando's extract indicated the vulnerability of her roommate to IPV and the power imbalances in the relationship. Her roommate's partner used violence to exercise control over her and to attain and demonstrate dominant masculinity. The dominant masculinity encourages gender inequity, which limits young women's agency (Stern, Buikema, & Cooper, 2016). His masculinity was threatened by the girlfriend who confronted him by questioning his behaviour and he used violence to ascertain his power and to protect his masculinity. Thando's statement that her roommate's partner consumed a lot of alcohol and that he went out with many young women shows a relationship between toxic alcohol use (Gil-Gonzalez, Vives-Cases, Alvarez-Dardet, & Latour-Pérez, 2006) and having multiple partners. His behaviour of going out with many girls might be a way of demonstrating dominant masculinity. This finding resonates with Dunkle et al.'s (2006) findings in their study, titled "Perpetration of partner violence and HIV risk behaviour among young men in the rural Eastern Cape, South Africa". They found that the probability of young men who overindulge in alcohol to exhibit violent behaviours towards their partners and to have many partners was likely high. In the two excerpts above it seemed as if the female student who observed violence against other female students accepted it as normal and did not act against it.

Sphe's statement from an individual interview (below) showed that she was deeply concerned about her friend being verbally and physically abused by her boyfriend:

***Sphe:** Yes, it happens. You see people around in very toxic relationships, that their boyfriend is so bossy. There is a friend of mine that I met here, and her boyfriend is doing his studies here, and I think they have been dating for a long time, 'cause she knows him from back home. So I met him for the first time a week after orientation, and he said, 'Hi how are you, she told me that you that you are her friend,' and as we were rushing to class I said, 'Okay, let's go,' and he was like, 'No, we are still talking,' and she said, 'No baby, I'm gonna be late for class,' and he was like, 'I said we are still talking,' and I was like, 'Okay, should I wait or should I walk away?' and he said, 'No, you can go.' The tone he used shocked me, and when she came, I asked her, 'Are you okay?' and she was like, 'Oh no, no he is like that,' justifying his behaviour. Then I met up with them again, and we attended a party at his residence. We went there with our friends, so she did tell him that she was gonna come with me and two of our friends, and he came and caused such a scene. He was so angry, saying, 'You are here with other people, how dare you? It's disrespect that you are showing here with other people.' Then he said, 'Your little brain should have told you that you are not supposed to be here with anyone. You were supposed to come straight to my room,' and then she was quivering and she was scared. And then I was like, 'Are you okay?' then she said, 'It's fine, don't worry about him,' and then his other guy friends were saying, 'No, no need to use that tone,' you know, and he said, 'Can you mind your own business please, I'm talking to my girlfriend,' and he literally grabbed her and walked away with her. So we do see a lot of toxic relationships here.*

Sphe acknowledged that there were female students who were in toxic relationships. Her friend faced verbal and physical abuse from her partner and she tolerated her partner's aggressive behaviour by stating that "he is like that". Her friend's response to violence perpetrated against her indicated that she accepted male dominance and control in her relationship and, by conforming, she was complicit in strengthening differential power relations. Acceptance of such domination is a clear indication of unequal distribution of power in a relationship. This unequal distribution of power in sexual relationships has been found to be the greatest cause of IPV, especially in South African communities that are strongly patriarchal (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). To express masculinity and power, her partner made verbal insults toward her and she accepted it by telling Sphe "not to worry about him". Accepting such abuse from her boyfriend

is an indication of how her behaviour was shaped by traditional notions of what it means to be a woman. She conformed to femininity norms that construct women as individuals who are supposed to be compliant and docile (Heise et al., 2002).

Another participant mentioned during an individual interview the emotional abuse that some female students face:

Zethu: *What's happening here is emotional abuse, like a boyfriend ill-treating the girlfriend. For example, if a guy wants a relationship to end, they don't tell you, but they just start to ill-treat you and they don't give you the love and attention that they used to give you, and that leads to your emotions being hurt.*

Zethu's assertion that some female students faced emotional abuse from partners who mistreated them by not giving them "love and attention" is an indication of how she subscribed to female sexuality norms that associate women with love and stable relationships (Perez-Jimenez et al., 2007). By framing female sexuality around narratives of love, Zethu constructed female students as vulnerable and easily wounded when they do not get attention from their partners. Her argument that being neglected leads to women's feelings being "hurt" showed that she complied with femininity norms that construct women as fragile (Arnfred, 2004).

Another participant shared similar views regarding emotional abuse:

Khanyo: *Men are having sex with many girls, a lot of sex, knowing that they are not dating. It's emotional violence. I think that's violence, because they are breaking their hearts. Why would they want to have sex if they are not dating? Why are you giving a woman false hope, knowing that you are gonna hurt her feelings... emotional feelings? Of course, some men do it for love, but most of them just want to have sex, looking at the pregnancy rate on campus. A lot of students are pregnant, not married and not together with their boyfriends, which proves that there is a lot of unprotected sex taking place here on campus, and it's very risky.*

Khanyo spoke angrily about emotional violence that some first-year female students faced. Her argument that men are engaging in sex with many young women without being serious was a clear indication of how she rejected the dominant version of masculinity that require men to have multiple partners (Bhana et al., 2009). Khanyo also drew on the essentialist notion of gender by constructing men as individuals who "like sex". Her views might have been shaped by gender norms that view men's sexual desire as uncontrollable (Reddy & Dunne, 2008).

Khanyo questioned the behaviour of men who engage in sex with female students when they are not serious as such behaviour gave young women false hope and wounded their feelings. This is a clear indication of how she framed heterosexual relationships around faithfulness and stability. She also constructed young women's emotions as fragile.

The participants also expressed their concerns about IPV during the focus group discussions, as shown below:

Zethu: *There are some guys even here, when they are drunk, they shout at their girlfriends and some even hit their girlfriends. So when you drink alcohol and it makes you harm other people, I think it's bad. I have a friend whose boyfriend drinks a lot of alcohol, and when he is drunk, he doesn't want his girlfriend to say no to sex. He forces her to have sex, and it's not good. And the bad part is, my friend understands such actions, she would just say, 'Oh, he was drunk', so alcohol is bad when it makes you do such things.*

Carol: *Yes, some girls here have boyfriends who beat them up only when they are drunk, but when they are sober, you can see that this is a nice guy. When they are drunk, they are different people, you know, so there are some dangers.*

In the discussion above, Zethu and Carol suggested that alcohol caused violence in intimate relationships. Female students experienced violence from male students, who constructed their masculinity around aggressive behaviour and control of decisions regarding sex (Dunkle et al., 2006). However, female students tended to normalise and accept such behaviour. This resulted in them strengthening the power disparities between men and women in heterosexual relations. The power disparities that exist between men and women play a significant role in promoting violence in sexual relationships (Shorey et al., 2008). Zethu and Carol's extracts showed that some female students experienced violence from their drunk partner who asserted their masculine power by coercing their partners into having sex, or beating or insulting them. However, young women excused their partner's behaviour by blaming alcohol. Understanding their partner's behaviour and blaming alcohol is an indication of how these young women comply with gender norms that subordinate women. Because they accept norms that strengthen power disparities, the likelihood of them challenging their partners or leaving them is quite low (Campbell & Mannell, 2016). This finding is consistent with Stern et al.'s (2016) investigation, titled "South African women's conceptualisations of and responses to sexual coercion in relation to hegemonic masculinities". They reported that young women were forced into having

sex with their partners and they were often upset and devastated by their partner's behaviour. One participant confirmed that there was a time when her boyfriend forced her to have sex even after she told him that she was in pain. She was angry with her partner but she was afraid to confront him about his behaviour. Participants in Stern et al.'s (2016) study also confirmed that it was common for boyfriends to force their partners to have sex, especially when they were drunk.

5.3.5 The stigma of reporting violence

The majority of the participants expressed that some female students who encountered violence did not report it, because they feared damaging their reputation. Typical examples are shown in the extracts below:

Me: *Do you think they report such violence?*

Thando: *No, they don't report. It's not easy, the image of the girl will be damaged if they report that they have been raped, yah.*

Anele: *I think some are embarrassed to report. It's difficult to report that you have been raped, especially if you are a woman. What will people say? They will automatically look at you in a different way, like you are dirty.*

Khanyo: *The thing is, at university you can't just report such things. The shame that is associated with it is too much. For a girl, you don't want people to know that you are being beaten. It's embarrassing. Girls usually like to portray a certain image about their relationship, like social media girls post pictures with their men, like they are happy, and when things go wrong, they get embarrassed to speak out and be judged by other female students.*

From the above it is clear that pressure to comply with feminine norms that value a spotless sexual reputation among women hinders them from reporting violence perpetrated against them. Thando, Anele, and Khanyo's words reflect that there is a strong stigma attached to young women who speak out about or report violence. Anele believed that some women are ashamed to report cases like rape, as people might see them as unclean. This is a clear indication of how patriarchy controls female students' sexuality and maintains gender inequality through shaming victims of abuse. Femininity norms that require young women to be pure and to maintain their moral values and self-control (Varga, 2003) may contribute to women feeling

ashamed of reporting violence as it would reflect poorly on their reputation. Fear to report violence may also have been shaped by femininity norms that shame abused women or the lack of support for those who ask for assistance (Campbell & Mannell, 2016) at university. Khanyo's statement indicated the importance of young women's relationship image, which they try by all means to protect and they do it by pretending to be in a happy relationship, which hinders them from speaking out if they are abused. Such views might have been shaped by sexuality norms that value monogamous heterosexual relationship for women and placing the responsibility of maintaining that relationship on women (Milnes, 2004). When they face abuse from their partners, they continue with the charade that they are happy and yet they are not.

The participants expressed similar sentiments during one focus group discussion, as shown below:

Zandile: *As a woman you are supposed to keep something that is a disgrace within you, so if you are abused, you won't be able to voice out what is happening. You won't be able to tell someone else because it will appear as if you can't control your problems, you can't control the challenges in your relationship, so sometimes it appears as something that is an embarrassment or a disgrace, so that's why we don't report.*

Ayanda: *Here on campus you see girls being beaten by their boyfriends, but they don't report because they are ashamed; they think they can sort out their relationship problems, so yah. They don't want to break up with their boyfriends.*

Zethu: *They also want people to think they are dating, they have a boyfriend who calls them, who takes care of them. It's like being single is a shame here, such that other girls prefer to continue in an abusive relationship.*

The comments above show that the participants constructed successful femininity as having a relationship and being able to cope with whatever challenges they encountered in a relationship. Zethu spoke with a serious facial expression, which indicated how deeply concerned she was about the shame associated with reporting abuse. She believed that being abused was a "disgrace" to women, and telling others that you are being abused is a sign that you cannot control the challenges in your relationship. These findings reiterate Jewkes and Morrell's (2010) argument that some women tolerate violence perpetrated against them by excusing men's aggressive behaviour, and they put up with such behaviour just to keep their man. By tolerating such behaviour, they thus conform to dominant femininity norms that oblige

women to be strong during difficult times and further compel them to handle any anxieties that they encounter in their lives (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). This further limits their agency and desire to report the perpetrator.

5.3.6 Women befriending men for protection

Many participants acknowledged that they had male friends during the individual interviews, as shown below:

Me: *Do you have friends?*

Khanyo: *I have friends. I have a high school friend that I came along with, so she is always in my room. I have male friends, I have a gay friend 'cause I'm not judgmental when it comes to sexuality, so I have a gay friend who is in my room right now, I have three to four male friends on campus. Who said a girl cannot be friends with a boy?*

Noku also expressed similar views, as shown below:

Noku: *For me it doesn't matter. I have both, but I don't have males sleep over but female friends they can sleep over. I have male friends. To survive here, you need to make male friends so that they can walk you wherever you want to go. Make friends with other male friends who are in power so that people won't pick on you, like having friends who are in the SRC.*

Khanyo and Noku's words suggested that friendships between male and female students were important and useful. Khanyo had male friends and rejected the notion that a girl could not have male friends. She positioned herself as an open-minded person because she had a gay friend. This indicated the effort she made to prove that she did not select friends based on their sexual orientation. Noku had both male and female friends, but some conditions were in place for male friends, such as that they did not sleep over in her room. She believed that a woman should have male friends in order to survive on campus. Male friends were viewed as chaperones when on campus and men with power, such as SRC members, provided protection from any kind of provocation. Her statement showed that she constructed women as helpless individuals who need male protection.

Some participants expressed similar sentiments during a focus group discussion, as reflected in the extract below:

Phume: *It's good to make male friends. Some of the girls in another residence told me that they adopted a strategy where if you are going out of your room, you have guys that you go to class with, you walk with them to the residence or other places. When you are walking with a guy, people will just assume that it's your boyfriend, and I think you are safer 'cause nobody will try to harass you sexually and nobody will try to attack you in any way 'cause you have company and it is a male.*

Thumi: *Men are given power and even respected, so it's not easy to just come and attack you when you are walking around with a male student. So in order to survive, make male friends, walk around with them, yah.*

Sphe: *That's true.*

The above statements reflect how the participants reinforced gender norms that construct men as having the power to protect women and women as being vulnerable. Phume believed that having a male friend would protect a woman from being harassed or attacked. Thumi concurred, as she expressed that the chances of being attacked when walking around with a male student were slim. She believed that for a woman to avoid being a victim of violence, she had to make male friends. These findings are consistent with Boonzaier's (2008) findings, which showed that the majority of women were consistent with traditional feminine norms, as they fully situated themselves within the realm of vulnerability, by constructing themselves as passive and helpless objects who need male protection.

Some participants expressed strong beliefs that it was inappropriate for a female student to have male friends, as reflected in the extracts from the individual interviews below:

Me: *Do you have male or female friends?*

Angela: *I have female friends only; I only talk to some male students. I can't say they are my friends. I don't believe that a girl and a boy can be friends. You will definitely end up dating, feelings will develop. So it's better to stay away from this girl/boy friendship.*

Ethel: *I have female friends. I don't think it's appropriate to have male friends. What will you be talking about? What if you end up doing something? Because they would*

want to visit you in your room. I don't think my boyfriend would like that, he will, like, get angry. It's better to avoid that.

From the above statements it is clear that some participants did not approve of female students befriending male students. Their assertions show that they conformed to gender stereotypical norms that separate boys from playing with girls. MacNaughton (2006) argues that people learn what is appropriate for their gender in early childhood; when they are subjected to views and experiences that are different, they will revert to stereotyped options. Angela had female friends only and felt that if a male and female became friends, they would ultimately date; it is therefore better to steer clear of such friendships. Ethel also believed that it was not appropriate and that her boyfriend would not approve of such friendships.

The data and analysis in this broad theme, “Gender, power, and violence”, show that many first-year female student participants seemed to be aware of what constituted GBV on campus. They were able to identify behaviour that constituted GBV. The participants gave various reasons why women are targeted for GBV. They mentioned that women are fragile, soft, and powerless. Their responses revealed that they constructed women as vulnerable and unable to fight back when faced with a violent situation. They also gave reasons why men perpetrate violence. They expressed that some men learn behaviour at home, such as beating a woman, and others learn such aggressive behaviour at university.

Although many participants felt that men were the main perpetrators of violence, some felt that women also perpetrated violence against other women. They shared their experiences of women perpetrating violence against other women on campus.

The participants also detailed the kind of violence they witnessed on campus. They acknowledged that many female students did not report GBV because they felt embarrassed about such encounters, and they believed that reporting such an experience might damage their reputation. Others felt that women did not report GBV because they wanted to portray the image that they were in happy relationships. Some participants had male friends and they felt that there were some advantages associated with this; for instance, they could protect them from being harassed by other male students. They believed that men have the power to protect them.

The next major theme presents and analyses that data that relate to fitting into university culture.

5.4 THEME 2: FITTING INTO UNIVERSITY CULTURE

Many participants expressed feeling extreme forms of pressure to fit into the university culture. This pressure included conforming to particular ways of appearance and behaviour.

5.4.1 Pressure to fit in with particular appearances

One participant described the university environment as “brutal” because of the immense pressure that female students face, as shown in the excerpt from an individual interview below:

Sphe: ... varsity is brutal. It really is brutal and it depends on the kind of person you are. One problem that we are facing is the dressing up. You wanna be a cool student, you wanna fit in, you wanna own a weave, you wanna do your nails, like change your nails every two weeks, you want to have the latest shoes yah, everything. We don't come from the same home, so there are students who can afford to get the latest trends, so you also feel the pressure. Like okay, I also need to get that jacket, I also need to get those shoes, I also need to get that hairstyle done, it's a lot. So if you like wear the same T-shirt for like three months or so, it becomes a problem, and honestly you do see people the way they react and some people are so nasty, they say things indirectly. Maybe they are talking to a friend a couple of metres away, you can hear that they are talking about you and they just tarnish your self-esteem, so I was not expecting varsity to be this brutal.

Sphe's words showed that she considered the university space as pressuring. She bemoaned that first-year female students faced pressure to conform to the prevailing gender stereotypical norms that require women to dress in particular ways. They are forced to follow the university culture, which redefines femininity ideals regarding fashion and beauty. The need for female students to look “cool” supports the traditional femininity constructions of women as focused on fashion and beauty (Bartky, 1990), which is often a dilemma for some students. Pressure to conform to the ideal feminine look at university financially constrains those who cannot afford it. There seems to be a stigma attached to wearing the same clothes over a period of time, with those who wear the same type of clothing for months often being gossiped about, which affects many female students' self-esteem. This brings to mind Milkie's (2002) argument that standards regarding the way a woman should look like play a significant role in controlling women and they negatively impact women.

The majority of the participants agreed that the pressure to wear trendy clothes and to look attractive forced some female students to engage in relationships with older men. Typical examples are shown below in the extracts from the individual interviews:

***Londi:** Some students are dating blessers, like you see that I know someone's background and I know where she comes from, but when she is here, she is another person, you see, like her family cannot afford the things that she has and you know that she's got a blesser.*

***Thando:** There is a lot of pressure here. The pressure is too much ... like the way girls dress. If you don't have money, it's not easy here ... You want to wear nice clothes and if you are not careful, you end up dating older men to get money, like what other girls are doing. They want to be cool, like other girls who wear nice clothes and make-up on campus. yah.*

From the above statements it is clear that gendered social transactions put pressure on some young women to validate gendered prescriptions regarding the way female students dress. The pressure to fit into the ideal femininity of being fashionable forces some female students, those who lack financial means to purchase clothes in particular, to engage in transactional sex with “sugar daddies”. This supports the conclusions made by Shefer et al. (2012) that those who do not have enough financial resources to fulfil their desires may engage in trading sex in exchange for necessities. The *World health report on sexual violence* (Department of Gender and Women's Health: WHO, 2004) indicates that people with a low socioeconomic status are often vulnerable to violence. Engaging in transactional sex may put female students at risk of being violated. This finding concurs with other studies that were conducted in South Africa, which revealed that widespread lack of money has motivated some women to engage in sexual relations in pursuit of a better life and to satisfy their day-to-day needs (Wamoyi et al., 2010; Leclerc-Madlala, 2003). This shows how sexuality has been reconceptualised as a resource that can be used for economic reasons; this need to sustain such standards of living exposes women to GBV (Mulwo et al., 2009).

Zembe et al. (2013) argue that in many African societies, the ability of young women to negotiate safe sexual practices is compromised by transactional relationships, and these relationships further amplify the risk of violence perpetrated by men. Transactional relationships are often marked by concurrent multiple sexual partnering, which further puts women at risk of HIV infection and STIs. Kaufman and Stavrou (2004) also point out that

many sexual relationships among young people in South Africa are characterised by coercion. Because youth is a phase usually characterised by scarce economic resources, great demand for material possessions, and peer pressure in South Africa, many young women are pressured to engage in relationships with older men or wealthy young men for their economic survival and security. These kinds of sexual relationships are often characterised by the exchange of gifts and/or favours for sex. Such relationships often create power imbalances, which might have ramifications such as sexual violence (due to coercion or force), unwanted pregnancy, and HIV infection. The men often have sexual leverage, which allows them physical and sexual privileges to the woman's body (Kaufman & Stavrou, 2004). Thando further said that the pressure is extensive and female students who do not have money to buy themselves stylish clothes may, if not careful, resort to transactional sex.

Anele and Ethel shared similar sentiments regarding pressure to fit in, as shown in the excerpts from the individual interviews below:

***Anele:** I changed the way I dress here at university because of the pressure. I even dated a man to get new clothes. It was the pressure that I felt from my peers. Pressure to wear trendy clothes like jeans and crop tops, to wear make-up, and Brazilian weaves, yah. When I first dated my first boyfriend, it was merely for survival purposes. I wanted to buy myself new clothes and make-up. I wanted to change from the girl that I was at home to a woman at university, a woman who wanted to keep up with the trends at university. It was not easy for me when I first came here. I was feeling out of place with the kind of clothes ...*

***Ethel:** Yah, pressure is too much in terms of dressing ... Like the nice weaves, make-up, earrings, jeans, you know. Yah, I think they do things because if you are not doing these things, you are not girl enough, like in terms of dress code and stuff. You know, the make-up, earrings, whatever.*

Anele and Ethel's words corroborated the views of Sphe, Londi, and Thando, as they agreed that pressure to dress in a certain manner was rampant on campus. Their statements reflected the concept of doing gender (West & Zimmermen, 1987) where, through interaction with their peers, they learn how a woman should dress. The pressure forced Anele to change the way she dressed at university and lack of financial means to cater for the new lifestyle forced her to engage a transactional relationship. Additionally, it can be noted that Anele engaged in a transactional relationship due to the "brutal" pressure at university. This concurs with Shefer

et al.'s (2012) argument that first-year female university students from poor socioeconomic backgrounds are regarded as likely to engage in transactional sex. This may lead to some women accepting male control and violence in order to obtain financial rewards (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010).

Anele and Ethel's statements indicated that to be considered a woman, or "girl enough", one must conform to the acceptable ways of dressing on campus, i.e. nice weaves, earrings, jeans, make-up, etc. This reveals how a femininity identity at university is sought through the clothes a female student wears. Anele and Ethel's views showed how gender shapes female students' identity and their daily lives at university. Burr (2015) notes that human beings construct their different versions of knowledge through day-to-day interactions, and the most important aspect of these daily interactions is language. As human beings converse with one another, the world gets constructed. Through their day-to-day interactions at university, they learn behaviours and characteristics deemed necessary for their gender (Bell et al., 2014). In doing so, they are forced to adopt a new feminine role that requires them to dress in a particular manner for them to be considered "girl enough". This shows that gender is a result of an illusion maintained by continuous repetition of norms that "materialise that which they govern" (Butler, 1988 cited in Hey, 2006 p.441). These behavioural norms, which include "how girls should talk, walk and, dress to look like a typical woman, function to organise the fictive solidity of gender, and this fiction is created by uncontrollable repetition" (Hey, 2006, p. 440).

In the focus group discussions, the participants concurred with ideas about pressure that first-year female students experience with regard to dress and appearances:

Me: *How does it feel to be a first-year female student?*

Ayanda: *It's too much pressure ... A lot of pressure going on ... First things first, it's the way you dress. There is too much pressure on how you dress.*

Zandile: *Aaah, for example, you would find that most of us at home we are not allowed to wear jeans, and here at varsity you see a lot of girls wearing jeans, and then they see you wearing long skirts, then they start talking funny to you and now you have to change the way you are, even if you are not comfortable with wearing those jeans.*

Angela: *You are just forced to change the way you are because maybe you are a person who comes from home where you don't have a lot of money. Even if you get funding, maybe it's NSFAS [National Student Financial Aid Scheme], the money that you are*

getting is not a lot. But then you come here and your friends have long weaves and they are wearing branded clothes so... and now you are also forced to buy, but then you can't afford it, so the pressure is really overwhelming. That's when people start getting depressed and stressed. The pressure is too much.

Anele: *I believe that a lot of things are tempting. The way girls do things, it's very tempting. You find young girls driving cars and having almost everything, like beautiful clothes, and it's very tempting for you to use the very last cent that you have to be on the exact same level, so that people like boys can recognise you or people you might be jealous of. You also want to be in the spotlight and you also get noticed, maybe like how your friend is noticed by good guys, and you do not even take into consideration the fact that you guys are from different homes, from different backgrounds, and it's never the same, so yah.*

They experienced internal pressure to conform to stereotypes that required them to wear Western and stylish clothes. There is therefore consensus between the views of the individual interview participants (Anele and Ethel) and the participants in the focus group discussions. The pressure forced some female students to wear clothes such as jeans, which goes against their home culture. The participants also felt that some female students capitulated to this pressure because of the need to attract boys' attention. Such views indicate how female sexuality is shaped around beauty, fashion, and acquiring the attention of men. By focusing on their appearance or dressing in certain ways to attract men, they position themselves as sexual objects. Anele's argument that female students needed to be seen by men and get attention is a clear indication that they conformed to femininity norms of dressing, which encouraged them to continuously check on the way they looked and how they appeared to men (Milkie, 2002). Their views of wanting to attract men's attention may be shaped by norms that view men as having strong sexual desires (Barker & Ricardo, 2005), which can be aroused by the way a woman dresses.

Although many participants acknowledged that they gave in to the pressure that they faced at university, some proudly stated during the individual interviews that they did not submit to it, as shown in the extracts below:

Noku: *Umm, some view my dressing as being lazy. I don't put effort into what I wear, like I wear my natural hair, I have an Afro, or I have braids, I don't wear weaves. I like nails but it has to be gel, so my style is kinda like lazy. People don't put much attention*

into how I look or what I wear. Like, I don't know whether you have noticed the fashion trends that are at tertiary level. Girls wear make-up every day, they wear concealer on their face and I wear lotion, their nails are always done, hair is always done, you know, people buy hair and there are different lengths and stuff. There are trends, there are crop tops, there are shoulder tops, you know, really nice things. I like those things, but I'm not that interested and I don't let the pressure get to me.

Fikile: *A lot of them do that even like with the way that we dress and stuff, because some come here looking like different, dark in complexion, and then start using skin lightening and stuff. There are students who look dark but then they become friends with those who are light-skinned and then they start bleaching their skin. They do all this to be seen by boys, imagine. But I am not like that, I am who I am and I don't want to change, even though the pressure is there.*

Ethel: *Although some students criticise my dressing, I am happy that my friends are okay with my dressing. I haven't heard any problems with them analysing my dressing, because like at home I was told that I shouldn't wear trousers, so like I wear skirts and dresses. So like my friends do wear trousers, but they do not criticise me because I do not wear trousers, like they understand because I explained to them, like back home I'm not allowed to wear trousers and I'm not gonna wear trousers because I'm not used to them.*

The statements above clearly indicate that Noku and Fikile asserted their agency by not giving in to the pressure to fit in. They rejected the feminine norms that require female students to focus on their looks and the way they dress. Noku said that there are lots of fashionable clothes and students who wear make-up, but she was not interested in all that. Fikile's argument that there were some female students who befriended light-skinned female students and then started bleaching their skin to look light and get more attention from men showed that female students face pressure to look sexually attractive and demonstrate their sexual worth through an aesthetic expression of sexuality (Maas et al., 2015). However, Fikile was not fazed by the pressure to look attractive through the use of skin bleaching, and she was determined not to change. This is a clear indication of how she rejected the femininity norms that associate women with the need to look beautiful and to dress fashionably. Although Ethel faced criticism from some students because she did not conform to femininity prescriptions of an ideal woman

by wearing pants, she found comfort in knowing that her friends understood and she was determined not to change the way she dressed.

It was apparent that female students face pressure from other female students who tease some female students about their style of dressing, as reflected in the excerpts below from the individual interviews:

Andiswa: *At home I was used to wearing skirts and long dresses and when you get here, obviously they start calling me a granny or whatever. 'Why do you dress as if you are a granny?' They will ask you that, 'Like why you wear long dresses, why do you wear long skirts?'*

Primrose: *Some people talk to you and they use rude language or make nasty remarks about you, for example, about the dress you are wearing and all that stuff, maybe like tighten it, and I don't want somebody to comment on my body. If you are telling me, rather tell me privately, not in public, I don't like that. I was wearing this dress and they were like, it would have been nice if it was tighter. They said it was sagging and it made me look like a gogo [granny].*

Khanyo: *Life at university is not easy, especially when you don't have money to keep up with the trends, like clothing, make-up, etc. When I came here, I was wearing clothes that I normally wear at home, and I could tell that some girls were laughing at me, so I had to change the way I dress, and that's why I started wearing pants and make-up as well. It was not easy for me here, yah. Some boys even looked at me like I was an alien because of the way that I used to dress. I think my clothes were a bit old-fashioned, I don't know, so I had to change my kind of dressing and the challenge was that I didn't have enough money to buy new clothes. It was not easy, yah.*

The excerpts above reveal that the participants felt the need to change the way they dressed, as their way of dressing was condemned by their peers. They were often harassed because they did not conform to feminine norms regarding dress code. Andiswa felt offended by being called a “granny” because of the long dresses that she wore. The remarks allegedly made to Primrose, especially in public, also made her feel uncomfortable. Khanyo felt that some female students laughed at the way she dressed, and she had to change. Khanyo critiqued the way she used to dress by arguing that she had to change because she felt that her clothes were a bit outdated. She was also concerned about the way men looked at her as if she was “an alien” because of

her way of dressing. This shows how femininity is constructed around how men perceive the way women dress.

Khanyo and Andiswa faced harassment because they did not conform to feminine norms that encourage women to value the way they look and be sexually desirable for men (Conroy, 2013). Their views also show that they were judged by normative standards on how a woman should dress at university, which in this case was wearing pants, tight dresses, short skirts, and make-up. The findings support Kimmel's (2000) conclusions that our gendered identities are both voluntary and coerced, which means that people are often compelled, coerced, sanctioned, and beaten for them to submit to certain rules. For some people becoming a male or a female in society is easy and effortless, and for others it is an incessant agony – a nightmare in which they bottle up some aspects of themselves to please others or to stay alive. To comply with expected norms of femininity at university, some participants felt coerced to dress in particular ways, even if they were uncomfortable with it or could not afford it.

During a focus group discussion, the participants felt that the kind of pressure they faced primarily affected female students. They believed that male students did not necessarily experience pressure to dress fashionably. The only pressure that men experience is about having many girlfriends and drinking better alcohol:

***Ayanda:** Male students do not face pressure of having to change the way they dress like us women here. They wear what they want and no one talks about it behind their backs.*

***Anele:** Male students are not in a lot of pressure like us. I can see from what I am observing, but it's about girlfriends... Like I have many girlfriends, my girlfriends are beautiful. Those kinds of things, and they brag a lot. They brag about alcohol, like my alcohol is better than yours.*

***Zandile:** I think so too, because if you are a girl, you worry about what you are wearing. Is it okay, what will others think of your dressing? Because the truth is people look at you when you are walking around on campus and they judge you because of the way you are dressing, but they don't do that to guys. Some will label you as a rural girl who doesn't know fashion if you wear like long dresses, long skirts, a doek [headscarf], and all that.*

***Gugu:** Yes, and senior girls also laugh at first years, especially with the issue of dressing. They say she doesn't know how to dress, she needs some lessons on how to*

dress nicely. They even gossip about you, saying she is old school, this is university. I hear some stories of how these senior girls treat some of us, but they don't do that to guys, yah.

From the above discussion it is evident that gender is highly influential in determining men and women's behaviour (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010) at university. The university culture defines the expected behaviour for male and female students. The participants' views indicated that the pressure they faced was gendered. They were expected to dress fashionably, and those who did not act according to this norm, were often labelled "rural girl", which is a derogatory term meant to show that one's fashion is outdated, while male students engaged in risky behaviour such as competing to have many girlfriends and drinking better alcohol. Through social interaction, male and female students learn behaviours that are suitable for their gender, and these include male students distancing themselves from feminine behaviour and sustaining their social supremacy of masculinity through competing for beautiful girls and having many girlfriends, as well as consuming good-quality alcohol (Muhanguzi et al., 2011).

Many participants expressed during the individual interviews how they made a strong effort to please their partners through the way they dressed. One typical example is reflected in Ayanda and Zethu's statements below:

Ayanda: ... *There was this time when I bought a tight dress and I didn't buy it because I loved it, but I bought it because I was, like, my boyfriend is gonna like it. So sometimes we do stuff for pleasing our partners, not really because we are comfortable with that thing. Like, for example, I like loose stuff and I was wearing this loose dress, and my boyfriend said it would have been nice if it was tighter, and after a few weeks I bought a tight dress. I didn't like it but I knew that it would look appealing to my boyfriend, yah.*

Zethu: *Sometimes when I come dressed in a certain way, then he would be like he doesn't like this. Maybe ripped jeans or things that expose your body, things like that. Then automatically when he says he doesn't like this, then you know that okay, I wasn't supposed to wear this. He doesn't want me to dress like this and I stopped wearing it.*

Ayanda and Zethu's utterances revealed the power differences that encompass their relationships and how these compromised their agency. They conformed to a version of femininity that subordinates women and accepts the desires of men. To please her partner,

Ayanda went to the extent of buying a tight dress, which she was not comfortable wearing. When Zethu's boyfriend made it clear to her that he did not like to see her wearing clothes that showed certain body parts or ripped jeans, she automatically obeyed by stopping to wear such clothes. By allowing her boyfriend to control the way she dressed, Zethu therefore subscribed to patriarchal norms that allow female subordination and male domination in a relationship.

Some female participants seemed to conform to conventional notions that it is inappropriate to wear clothes that show certain parts of the female body, as reflected in excerpts from the individual interviews below:

***Andiswa:** Okay, for me, I dress appropriately and it's not something that is stylish. I like casual dressing. I don't wear clothes that reveal my body like what other ladies do here. I feel like it's wrong because guys will be like staring at you. I think people define you also if you wear clothes that show your body or cleavage; guys are gonna call you names like a prostitute, so I just wear appropriately.*

***Ethel:** And I think some women cause gender violence because they want to wear clothes that show their breasts, their legs ... like miniskirts and some men when they see that, they will violate the woman. Like here on campus some girls wear very short skirts and I don't think it's right, yah.*

***Sphe:** You see girls walking around campus halfnaked and with shorts, like very short, and crop tops that look like bras and it's not a problem. I think that kind of dressing is inappropriate because you are exposing everything. If men are able to just see everything you have, they are not gonna value you, they are honestly not gonna value you. There is no need whatsoever to wear a bum short and a crop top. I do not approve of such dressing at all. There are dangers associated with that 'cause I feel that like some men would assume that perhaps you are seeking for attention and they would give you such attention. They would definitely give you that attention and it places you in a very dangerous position in terms of being raped. Even though it's wrong 'cause you are not asking for it, but I believe it puts you in more danger if you expose yourself like that [Hand gestures].*

The extracts above illustrate how some participants adopted victim-blaming discourses. This brings to mind Bourdieu's (2002) notion of symbolic violence, where social groups and individuals that are dominated accept ways of thinking that strengthen the arbitrariness of social

order, which further justifies the normalisation of social structures. The participants' extracts show how they focused on the behaviour of young women to reduce the chances of them being abused rather than on the perpetrator. Andiswa talked about what the appropriate dress code was. She believed that it was inappropriate for women to wear revealing clothes, as boys would stare at them. This perception strengthens the notion that the victim's duty is to protect herself from being raped, rather than it being the perpetrator's duty not to engage in raping women (Bourdieu, 2002). Andiswa also argued that women are defined by the way they dress; hence if one wears clothes that show their body or cleavage, they might be labelled a prostitute.

Ethel seemed to blame women for being violated by men. She believed that some women wore clothes that showed off their breasts and legs, and men were provoked by seeing those parts of the female body, which led to them violating women. This concurs with Renzetti et al.'s (2012) argument that gender norms that condone violence are seen in cases where women are violated because of the way they dress, especially those who wear clothes often considered by society as inappropriate and provocative. Sphe's statement indicated her compliance with stereotypical gender norms that require women to dress in ways that do not provoke men's sexual desire. She expressed that some female students walked around campus not fully clothed or "half naked". She kept on moving her hands as she was speaking, to emphasise her argument. She believed that men would not value a woman if they saw her whole body because of the way she was dressed. Kramer (2015) points out that most cases of sexual violence are still framed around typical myths and stereotypes that view men as aggressors and women as victims who bring about their abuse by virtue of their dress code. Although Sphe acknowledged that it was wrong for a woman to be raped because of the way she dressed, she, however, complied with the victim-blaming notion by stating that wearing such clothes put women at risk of being raped. This brings to mind Petersen et al.'s (2005) study on sexual violence in South Africa, which found that young men and boys continue to maintain views that they are not able to control their sexual desires and that it is the responsibility of women to control those desires by wearing clothes that do not show off their bodies, and if they wear such clothes or walk around at night, they would be asking to be raped.

Some participants, however, challenged the gender stereotypical narrative that blames women for being raped because of the way they dress, as shown in the extract below from an individual interview:

Khanyo: ... *We should wear what we want. People think that just because I'm wearing shorts, it's okay to be raped or I deserve to be raped. Me dressing like that doesn't mean that I'm asking for rape or I wanna be raped, and men should learn to control their sexual feelings, [and] not just behave like they are the victims.*

Khanyo argued that women should be free to wear what they want, and that wearing shorts does not mean that one deserves to be raped or is asking to be raped. She also asserted that men should take charge of their sexuality by learning to control their sexual feelings. Khanyo's utterances reflect what Butler (1988) describes as a new tactic of doing gender. Her theory of performativity gives room for agency to the subject; in the sense that the manner in which performativity is repeated might shift the same gender norms that allow the repetition itself. This means that it is only in carrying out repetitive acts that a subversion of identity is likely. Subjects can therefore strengthen a new tactic to doing gender by repeating actions, behaviours, or needs that defy dominant gender expectations (Jenkins & Finneman, 2018).

During a focus group discussion, some participants expressed their anger over male students who criticise women who wear revealing clothes, as shown below:

Fikile: ... *Some guys judge you if you wear like miniskirts, shorts, and clothes that show cleavage. They think you are that girl who is easy to get, you know. You are inviting guys' attention, you know. It's not fair.*

Niki: *Yah, some guys whistle or start saying some nasty things to you if you are wearing a miniskirt. They think we deserve to be harassed or even raped for wearing short skirts, or short pants.*

Primrose: *Guys need to stop judging women like that. It's so annoying. They need to know that a woman is free to wear what she wants.*

The statements above show the participants' frustrations over male students who harass and criticise female students who wear clothes that show certain body parts. From their statements it is clear that male students asserted their male dominance by defining what was appropriate and inappropriate for women. They did this through criticising and harassing women they

believed were inadequately dressed and they thought that wearing such clothes meant inviting male attention. Petersen et al. (2005) reported that young men believe that women who wear revealing clothes were responsible for inviting men to rape them. This view is exacerbated by the view that men have strong sexual desires that cannot be controlled (Barker & Ricardo, 2005) and that their sexual desire is therefore usually aroused once they see a woman wearing provocative or revealing clothes.

5.4.2 Pressure to fit into particular behaviour

Many participants indicated that they sometimes engaged in activities due to the pressure they felt to fit in. A common understanding among the participants was that some female students engaged in partying, clubbing, smoking, and drinking alcohol to fit in, as shown in the excerpts from the individual interviews below:

Ayanda: Honestly speaking, I will speak for myself, like I didn't drink before I came to university, but the reason why I was engaging in alcohol was one, I wanted to fit in with other students, I wanted other students in my residence to like me. I don't know how to put it, so I will say pressure and to fit in with friends.

Londi: There was a party at a certain club so I went there with my friends and I knew that I was not gonna be comfortable, because I'm a church goer. So obviously things that happen at the club, I wouldn't like them at all, but I just went there because my friends were going, but I didn't feel comfortable at all.

Zethu: And also things like going out to bashes that are hosted here on campus, and maybe you would come here on campus and maybe you are someone who doesn't go out, but because your friends are people who like drinking or going out and then you also develop that interest of wanting to go out.

The above statements illustrate that peer pressure forced some participants to engage in alcohol consumption and going out and clubbing. Kalichan, Simbayi, Kaufman, Cain, and Jooste (2007) point out that alcohol is regarded as a driving force of specific forms of gender expression within a particular context, and might be utilised to prevent stigmatisation and to conform to specific gender norms. To avoid stigma and conform to gender norms, participants like Ayanda gave in to the immense pressure to consume alcohol at university, which she previously was not accustomed to. She conformed to the dominant form of femininity, which

encourages female students to consume alcohol. These findings resonate with Kyei and Ramagoma's (2013) findings, which revealed a relationship between peer pressure and alcohol consumption. Kyei and Ramagoma (2013) reported that students whose friends were drinking were most likely to engage in that behaviour as well. Students usually start their first year innocently without thinking of drinking alcohol and as they start to interact with their friends, they start to drink alcohol. Kyei and Ramagoma (2013) further found that there was a strong relationship between alcohol consumption and living on campus, as many students (73.3%) who lived in campus residences consumed alcohol. Londi confessed that she reluctantly went to a certain club at night for a party and that she was not comfortable there. The pressure forced her to go against her religious views as she was a church goer. Her statement shows that she had limited choice regarding who she was and what she believed in. Zethu stated that some students develop an interest in going to bashes hosted on campus or drinking because their friends are into that kind of behaviour. These statements from the participants clearly show that gender identities are not fixed but rather fragmented, and are discursively constructed within society; thus increasing multiple discourses that allow us to comprehend different types of masculinities and femininities that are unstable and vary in and outside culture (Foucault, 1986). Their views indicated that alcohol consumption was not a gendered phenomenon where only males were pressured to consume the beverage in a bid to identify with a dominant masculinity, while women were forbidden to drink it. Instead, the participants showed that some female students also consumed alcohol.

Similar views about pressure to change their behaviour were shared during a focus group discussion. Some participants demonstrated their resistance to this as follows:

Primrose: *I think you need to be true to yourself, like know your values and morals. I think you need to remain true to yourself, know what your goals are, 'cause I won't lie – there are a lot of temptations, but you just have to abstain from certain things.*

Me: *What kind of temptations?*

Thando: *Temptations like ... drinking too much alcohol.*

Londi: *And also partying or clubbing at night. There are a lot of temptations. Girls are tempted to go to parties and they go even if they don't want to. They drink too much there and it's risky.*

Ethel: *And if you are out drinking at night with guys, who knows what might happen with those guys. They might rape you when you are drunk, because most women are raped by people they know, people they trust. Some girls don't know how to control themselves when they are drunk; you might be raped not because you were drunk, but because of the way you were acting, and a guy might think you want to sleep with him and yet no.*

Thando: *Even though people think that we are old and we are now able to distance ourselves from peer pressure, there comes a time when friends will say, 'Do you think that you are too good to drink with us? Why are you not drinking with us, you think you are better?', so sometimes the pressure is too much.*

From the above statements it is clear that first-year female students face pressure to engage in risky behaviour to fit in. The participants stated that some female students were lured to go partying and clubbing at night, even when they were not comfortable with it. Ethel mentioned that female students who went out drinking at night were at risk of being raped. She further expressed that their actions, which might be misconstrued by men as an invitation to have sex, might also lead to them being raped. As a result of being intoxicated, women might find it difficult to refuse sex, which might result in them being victims of rape. This supports Weinzimmer and Twill's (2016) conclusion that first-year female students are exposed to behaviour such as partying and drinking and their need to socialise puts them at risk of experiencing GBV such as rape, especially during their first weeks of university. Paul et al. (2000) also argue that alcohol consumption could lower effective assessment and upfront communication, which may lead to difficulties in refusing sex.

The *Stop sexual violence against women* report compiled by Mazars et al. (2014) revealed similar results. It states that there is a relationship between drinking alcohol and men perpetrating sexual assault and IPV, and that women who consume alcohol are more vulnerable, with lower chances of them reporting cases. In addition, being intoxicated is a risk because it precipitates loss of inhibition, weak problem-solving abilities, increased sexual risk-taking behaviour, and less thought given to the end result. Although the participants acknowledged the vast pressure they encountered, Primrose suggested that there was a need to remain truthful to one's values and morals. She acknowledged the temptations that are faced at university, but urged female students to be truthful to themselves, know their goals, and

abstain from certain things. Her statement shows how she asserted herself and chose not give in to peer pressure, even if it meant risking being alone.

It was also found in this study that alcohol consumption was a choice among some female students at the university, as reflected in the extracts below from the individual interviews:

Me: *Do you drink alcohol?*

Andiswa: *I drink it but occasionally, let's say when I'm attending a wedding, I will drink a glass of wine. Sometimes I do drink alcohol like wine, I also look at the benefits like red wine. I drink red wine; apparently it helps you in terms of losing weight, so I drink it. I also drink alcohol that's less, like 4.5%; not all the time, just occasionally.*

Noku: *Yes, I drink alcohol and everybody drinks alcohol. Like there are a few girls that I know that actually don't drink at all. I take one to destress, like gin and tonic, and it's better with company, it's better with friends all the time, yah, so yah, I think that most ladies drink on campus and there is nothing wrong with a woman drinking alcohol. We are living in the 21st century, yah.*

The participants' responses above show that some first-year female students made their own choices about their activities on campus. Some deconstructed gender norms that disassociate women from drinking alcohol. Andiswa acknowledged that she occasionally consumed alcohol. Noku also mentioned that she drank alcohol, and she further acknowledged that only a small number of female students did not consume alcohol. Noku's views rejected the gendered notion of associating alcohol consumption with dominant masculinity, which encourages men to consume alcohol.

The participants also shared similar views during a focus group discussion, as reflected in the excerpts below:

Me: *Okay, what's your take on alcohol drinking?*

Londi: *There is nothing wrong with drinking alcohol, but as a woman, you need to drink moderately to avoid putting yourself in danger.*

Busi: *Alcohol is not a problem at all. The way you drink and handle yourself shouldn't be a problem as well.*

Thando: *You need to know your limits and don't forget your responsibilities. Just don't drink too much.*

Londi: *And the environment that you are in is important when you are drinking as a woman. You can't drink in an unsafe environment, not knowing how you are gonna get home and then depending on us as your friends or people that you know to take you back wherever you live. It's risky. And drink responsibly.*

Gugu: *A lot of students drink here and I don't think it is wrong to drink, but people need to behave when they are drunk, and if they can't behave, then they need to stop drinking, yah.*

Others: Yes [Nodding their heads].

From the above discussion, it is evident that the participants believed that there was nothing wrong with women drinking alcohol. However, they specified conditions under which female students should do this. Londi emphasised the need to drink moderately and not to overindulge and forget responsibilities. Gugu stressed the importance of the environment in which a woman drinks and believed that an unsafe environment was dangerous for women. Other participants nodded their heads to show that they agreed with what was being said. Such statements show that they had mixed feelings towards alcohol consumption among men. Although they approved the behaviour, they also worried about the dangers that it posed for women. Alcohol use among college peers has been found to be related to GBV, and female students are mainly the victims. Young women at universities are at high risk of being sexually victimised because of the extensive use of alcohol on campuses (Renzetti et al., 2012).

Although some participants' responses reflected that alcohol consumption among female students was something that was no longer associated only with men, a few still held the view that women should not consume alcohol, as shown below in the extracts from the individual interviews:

Me: *Do you drink alcohol?*

Zethu: *No, I would say it's unprofessional and it's kind of inappropriate because women play different roles ... Our society expects a woman to be a respectful person and expects the guys or men to be drinking, not women.*

Angela: *No, I don't drink alcohol because I don't want to regret one day. Because sometimes when you are drunk, you just sleep with a male without being prepared, so I like doing things when I'm on my senses. It's not a right thing to do, especially for women. Women should not drink alcohol, because they may be abused by men if they are drunk. I think those who drink should think otherwise.*

Gugu: *No, I don't drink alcohol. Umm, I don't know what person I will become if I'm drunk, so I'm just scared. I see a lot of girls here who get drunk, they act like they are out of their minds. They don't behave well and some guys take advantage of that by touching their bum or breasts, it's bad. I actually don't think it's right for girls to drink because some of them don't behave when they are drunk, so yah, that's why I don't want to drink.*

The above statements reflect the participants' compliance with gendered norms and societal expectations regarding alcohol consumption. Zethu's statement shows how she complied with societal gender norms that criticise alcohol consumption among women, as they are expected to be respectful, while men are encouraged to drink it. She constructed alcohol consumption among women as unfeminine and as only a masculine activity (Andersen, 2003), which may lead to excusing unruly behaviour among men. This also brings to mind Rolfe, Orford, and Dalton's (2009) argument that, historically, alcohol consumption was regarded as a masculine domain and male dominance was determined by alcohol use in the public and leisure realm; women who consume alcohol were therefore viewed as encroaching the male space, not feminine enough, and readily available for sex. Peralta (2007) also describes university campuses as environments where men and women do gender and where alcohol use is utilised for gender construction. For instance, male students may be socialised to identify with a dominant masculinity version, which encourages alcohol consumption. Angela's statement shows that she was of the view that women might engage in unplanned sexual encounters if they drank alcohol and she further expressed that alcohol consumption might lead to them being violated. As she was talking, she kept frowning, which showed that she deeply disapproved of alcohol consumption among women. Gugu's extract indicates that she was scared of the behaviour that she might exhibit if she consumed alcohol. She had witnessed some girls behaving in a manner that she deemed inappropriate, and had also seen how male students touched female students inappropriately. These experiences made her steer clear of alcohol. Their arguments show how society is responsible for the context and the instructional guide that men and women are supposed to follow to create their identities (Kimmel, 2000).

Similar views were also expressed by the participants during a focus group discussion:

Angela: *It's not okay for girls to drink. There was this girl on campus who was so drunk and she was literally sleeping outside her door. Sometimes a person is able to get to where they are going, but once they get there, like she couldn't open the door, so she just snapped out and slept outside, so when the guys were passing they were like, hayibo. Luckily we were passing as girls and we saw these guys so close and we were like, hayibo, what are you guys doing? She was already in danger and these guys left and they were laughing. We tried looking for her key and we couldn't find it, and we tried waking her up, and she couldn't even move. It was bad, so it's really is a danger.*

Zethu: *There was also this function and there was a girl who was very drunk, and she went up onto the stage and held the guy who was on stage, she was dancing and twerking on stage and everyone was there and she kept on doing that, even when the guy was trying to get away from her.*

Carol: *I think it is okay for men to drink, but for women, umm, I think they shouldn't do it. It's not safe, especially if you go out and drink with guys, it's not safe. You might be raped, who knows?*

Zandile: *I do agree with you, 'cause if you see what happens when girls go to bashes, it's bad. You can see that this man is touching this girl, but the girl is doing nothing because she's too drunk.*

From the above extracts it is clear that some participants believed that alcohol consumption by women was inappropriate because of the risks that they were exposed to. They described their experiences with female students who were drunk. The participants' statements above reflect their compliance with the dominant version of masculinity norms that encourage alcohol consumption among men only. Angela, Zandile, and Carol's statements indicate that female students who get drunk may be endangering their lives, while the participants' assertions bring to mind Mazars et al.'s (2014) report, which states that women who consume alcohol are more vulnerable to GBV, with lower chances of them reporting cases. Paul et al. (2000) state that alcohol consumption could lower effective assessment and upfront communication, which may lead to difficulties in refusing sex. By arguing that female students may behave inappropriately when they are drunk, which may make men feel uncomfortable, Zethu suggested that men could also be victims of violence from drunk women.

One participant expressed during an individual interview that she drank alcohol, but that she had to hide this from her boyfriend, as reflected below:

Thando: *I drink alcohol but my boyfriend doesn't drink. I didn't tell him because it's not something that I do all the time. It's something I do there, and as a woman I don't think it's right for me to be drinking. I will tell him one day, but I'm still not comfortable telling him. I don't want to upset him or lose him.*

Thando's statement indicates her agreement with stereotypical gender norms that do not associate alcohol consumption with women. She believed she was acting outside the expected gender norms that forbid women to consume alcohol. By stating that she was not comfortable telling her partner because she did not want to disappoint him or risk destroying her relationship, she revealed her conflict with conforming to and challenging gender norms.

Carol mentioned during an individual interview that she did not drink alcohol because her boyfriend did not approve, as shown below:

Carol: *I don't drink alcohol. It's like the person I'm with in a relationship, he does not want me to drink alcohol and mix up with wrong friends and so on.*

Me: *Does he tell you that?*

Carol: *Yes, he tells me every day that I must not change at all the way I was before I came to university. I must behave the way I behaved at home, so I am not going to drink alcohol.*

Informed by patriarchal norms that position men as dominant and women as subordinate (Bhana & Anderson, 2013), Carol did not consume alcohol and did not contemplate doing so because her partner did not approve. She spoke about how her partner did not approve of alcohol consumption because it might cause her to hang out with the wrong friends and change her behaviour. Her statement shows that she accepted being controlled by her partner and that she also lacked agency by positioning herself as a submissive partner who did not want to offend her boyfriend by drinking alcohol. What she felt about alcohol consumption did not matter; only her partner's views mattered, which she intended to obey.

5.4.3 Fitting into two different cultures

The pressure to fit into the university culture encouraged some female students to present different identities at home and at university, as shown below in the extracts from the individual interviews:

***Ayanda:** My parents don't even know that I wear pants or miniskirts here. I am sure they will disown me the day that they discover that I wear pants here. I usually leave my stuff with my friends. I wear my normal clothes at home, like long dresses and skirts.*

***Ethel:** There are some girls I know who used to wear long skirts and then at varsity they see other students wearing short skirts, trousers, and then they think that in order to fit in, you have to wear this way. Yah, they do that to fit in the university environment, and when they go home, they wear decent clothes, like long dresses and skirts.*

***Zethu:** Some students you can see that they don't drink alcohol at their homes, but because of the pressure from their friends, they just drink it. Some, when they come to university, they start wearing trousers, which they don't wear when they are at home, yah. They wear bum shorts and you can see that it's peer pressure.*

Ayanda's statement indicates that she lived a double life as far as dressing was concerned. Her facial expression showed that she felt conflict about the kind of life that she felt pressured to live. She wore pants and miniskirts at university, while at home she wore long dresses and skirts. Ethel pointed out that there were female students who wore different clothes at home and at university. Zethu's statement shows that some students adopted behaviours such as drinking alcohol at university, while that was not done at home.

The statements below from the individual interviews show that Anele and Thumi's parents were not aware of their drinking habit:

***Anele:** I started drinking alcohol here. Umm, my friends were drinking and I had to. I like drinking beer, but at home I don't even attempt to drink. They don't know that I drink and I don't even want to imagine what they will do if they find out that I drink.*

***Thumi:** I like drinking alcohol. Like, I'm one of those students who started drinking here at varsity. It just happened, like we went to a party and then there was alcohol and then I just wanted to try it out, yah. My parents don't know yet that I drink alcohol and I don't think I want them to know.*

From these extracts it is clear that Anele and Thumi started consuming alcohol when they entered university, and that their parents were not aware of their new behaviour.

During the focus group discussions, many participants corroborated Anele and Thumi's statements, as shown in the excerpts below:

Sphe: *We wanna wear something that's trending.*

All: *Yes, yah.*

Sphe: *No one wants to be left behind.*

Khanyo: *And there are students who come from families where they are not allowed to wear trousers, but when they are here on campus, they wear jeans and crop tops and when they are going home, they wear long skirts and long dresses.*

Me: *Why do you think they do that?*

Primrose: *To fit in, yah.*

Fikile: *We are also pressured to go clubbing and drinking and some girls drink alcohol here, but at home they don't drink.*

Sphe: *Yes, some first-year students are forced to do these things even if they are not comfortable. It's not something they are used to. When at home, most of us don't drink alcohol or go clubbing, but we are pressured to do that.*

Phume: *The pressure is just too much. Some students change the way they dress, for example, there are some students whose religion does not allow them to wear pants or clothes that are too revealing, but because of the pressure, they change and start to wear such clothes so that they don't feel like out of place, you know. Some they don't drink alcohol when they are at home, but when they are here, they get drunk and start behaving inappropriately. Like, there is a girl that I know who got drunk at a bash and different guys who she claims were her friends were just touching her body and she was letting them do that to her, you know.*

From the above verbatim narratives it is evident that the pressure to fit in led some students to engage in behaviour that was different to how they acted at home. At university, they succumbed to the pressure and changed the way they dressed, as well as consumed alcohol,

while they wore different clothes and hid the fact that they consumed alcohol at their respective homes. Living this double life may be shaped by conflicting feminine norms between university and home. At home they were forced to comply with social prescriptions of femininity that encourage women to hold themselves with dignity and propriety (Spronk, 2005) through wearing clothes such as long dresses and skirts. In contrast, the university environment provided a new shift to womanhood as they were forced to comply with a different version of femininity, which encourages women to wear pants, short skirts, and other types of clothing that contradict their home values and norms. These findings support Gilchrist and Sullivan's (2006) conclusion that the societies in which young men and women live are crucial in the construction of who they are and offer the cultural context for their growth. Moreover, the prevailing cultural constructions of appropriate masculine and feminine behaviour exert a robust influence on people.

5.4.4 Pressure to be in a relationship and to engage in sexual activities

The majority of the participants mentioned that they faced pressure to have a boyfriend and to engage in sexual activities, as shown below in the extracts from the individual interviews:

***Ethel:** I had my first sexual experience here on campus with my boyfriend. My friends were just putting pressure on me, saying if I don't do it with him, he will leave me, so I did it because they were also doing it with their boyfriends. I just wanted to know how it feels. The pressure here is too much; you get to do things because everyone else is doing it. You want to fit in. Girls have sex with their boyfriends because everyone else is doing it and they want to be seen as women, not girls.*

***Khanyo:** There is pressure to have sex with a boyfriend. Some female students when they came here, they were virgins, but the pressure from their friends forces them to have sex because their friends are doing it. I know a girl who did that and afterwards she was not happy about it and she is not dating the guy anymore.*

***Noku:** I spoke to a girl last week and she was telling me that she was brought up in a Christian home and you know how we shouldn't engage in sexual relationship before marriage. She said when she came to university, she reckoned because everyone does it as well, like they are in sexual relationship even though they are not married. She doesn't think that God will punish her alone so she decided to do it, like it doesn't matter if she engages in a sexual relationship because everybody does it, so yah.*

The above data indicate that female sexuality at university is acceptable within the narrative of having a boyfriend and engaging in sexual activities. As a result, some female students are under pressure to find a boyfriend and to engage in sex. This led to their views about sex before marriage being challenged and further to interrogate their previously held views regarding the idea of sex before marriage (Arnett & Hughes, 2012). To prove her femininity, Ethel had to engage in sex, and it was her first sexual experience at university. This behaviour was stirred by the enormous pressure that she was facing. Noku spoke to a female student who challenged her previously held religious beliefs regarding sex before marriage by engaging in sex with her boyfriend. As people interact, they learn suitable and unsuitable ways to behave sexually, and different context might provide different rules (Butler, 1990). The extracts above show that through interactions, the participants learned the expected sexual behaviour and to acquire a sense of belonging, and not to feel humiliated by their behaviour, they are forced to accept the version of femininity that requires them to have a boyfriend and engage in sex. Perez-Jimenez et al. (2007) point out that peer pressure is influential in university students' construction of gender and sexuality; for example, some students enter university as virgins, but when they get there, they discover that everyone is having sex. As a result, they end up having the urge to experience what everyone else is doing.

The above statements from the participants are in conflict with the prevailing discourse of femininity in many African countries that encourages women to abstain from sexual activities and to carry themselves with dignity and propriety (Spronk, 2005). As a result of interaction with their peers, sexual identities are negotiated and produced and they learn heterosexual codes that are required for them to achieve womanhood (Muhanguzi et al., 2011). These findings resonate with Spronk's (2005) findings on female sexuality in Nairobi. Spronk's (2005) study found that most women talked about sex as a symbol of their status as women, and having a boyfriend was the most important thing to them because it reflected positively on their femininity.

Many participants shared similar views during a focus group discussion, as shown below:

***Zandile:** Yes, we also face pressure to like have a boyfriend. If you don't have a boyfriend, you feel like you are left out. So some first-year girls will end up dating a guy even if they know that he is dating other girls, so I think it's the pressure. And most girls who are in these relationships don't use protection, because they want to please the guy. They will be like no, that's what he wants. He doesn't enjoy it without a*

condom, I want to make him happy, and that guy will be cheating on her in return, you know.

Ayanda: Yes, I think many first-year female students are in a relationship with other male students, especially the seniors. The problem is the senior guys who go after first-year female students because they are 'fresh', they want to date them but they don't want to form serious relationships with them. They want to show other guys that they got a 'fresher', but then the girl will be serious.

Angela: The saddest thing is, you are not the only girl that he is sleeping with. The guys here sleep with many girls and we know that this guy is sleeping with this girl and two or three more other girls, you know. And some girls, they even know that their boyfriend is sleeping with another girl and they don't care.

The above discussion indicates the substantial amount of pressure that was faced by some participants regarding relationships and sex. They were forced to accept a version of femininity that complied with the subordination of women, and further to accept the interests and desires of men (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). The version of femininity that they were forced to comply with encouraged female students to be in a relationship and to have sex. As a result, some first-year female students adopted gendered constructions of sexuality, which allow men to have multiple partners and women to have one partner, by engaging in a relationship with a male student who is known to have multiple partners – and further engage in unprotected sex to please their partners. In doing so, they further accepted and complied with the sexual double-standards phenomenon that allows men to freely explore their sexuality by having multiple partners, while women are to remain faithful to one partner (Arnett & Hughes, 2012). These findings resonate with Reddy and Dunne's (2007) findings that for young women, the ideal femininity is to make a man happy, as well as satisfying a man's sexual desires rather than their own needs and desires. Adopting this kind of femininity may lead to women compromising their agency in a relationship (Reddy & Dunne, 2007). The participants' views show that the agency of female students is compromised by the desire to be in a relationship and to please a man so that they can keep the relationship going.

Although the majority of the participants spoke about the pressure that female students felt to engage in sex, some participants tried as much as possible not to surrender to such pressure, as shown below in the extracts from the individual interviews:

***Ayanda:** Honestly, I don't know. I'm really not sure 'cause I'm like puzzled in my mind... I can't really disappoint my parents you see, at the same time I... I won't lie, there are some times whereby I really feel like doing it... Like the things my boyfriend says, for example, he would say you are not doing it for me, you are not doing it for yourself, but you are doing it for our relationship. Its gonna take our relationship to the next level and all that stuff, so those words are... I feel like those persuasive words he uses are really getting to me now, but at the same time ... like coincidentally, when these things happen my mother would just like ask me, 'Are you alright?' You see and I would be like shaking, what if she is having a sixth sense that I'm doing something wrong.*

***Me:** So the reason why you are not doing it is because you don't want to disappoint your mother?*

***Ayanda:** Yes, 'cause my body... if like he touches me or something, I feel something, so the only thing that's keeping now is that I can't disappoint my parent, and the pressure from friends is so much, especially my friend who is dating. If we talk, usually at 7 [pm], we are usually in the kitchen cooking, so they will be talking about those sex conversations and you feel left out you see, so yah. One time you would want to be part of that conversation, but then you might end up lying maybe... You want to lie about doing it, but then when you want to lie, you don't know whether you will say the right thing or the wrong thing, so you are scared to lie. You want to lie because you want to be part of the conversation.*

***Boni:** I will be honest, I think it really depends on how you were raised ... Like how was sexual intercourse communicated to you; for example, some may say that their parents don't have any problem if their children have sexual intercourse, but from our IsiZulu culture we have this thing called umhlanga, like it is held in September, so it becomes a problem whereby if you don't wanna go, they will be like, 'Why don't you wanna go there?', which means you are no longer a virgin. So it really lies on how you were raised or your culture, because some people they are really from urban areas so culture is not really taken seriously, and I think everybody has a choice and everybody*

is entitled to follow what they want. So I won't really judge their actions but as for me, I will do it after marriage and that's it.

***Sphe:** My boyfriend and I are not having sex even though my friends are putting pressure on me to do it. Almost all my friends are doing it, but I feel that I'm not ready and also, like I said, he is a guy from church so in terms of the rules of church, we cannot engage in sexual activities until we are married. Although we are not having sex, he always brings it up and I'm like, 'Dude, can I at least get through my first year at university,' cause when I was still in high school it was out of the question. I did not even want to talk about it and now he is saying, 'But you are already in university, you are old now, come on,' and I'm like okay, I understand all that but I'm not comfortable as yet in engaging in that. So I hope he can continue to respect that until I am ready.*

The comments above show how the participants were agentic by resisting pressure to engage in sex. The female students indicated that there were several reasons for this resistance. Ayanda's reason was that she did not want to disappoint her mother. She said that she felt excluded when other female students discussed sex topics, and that sometimes she contemplated contributing to the conversation by lying about having sex, but at the same time she felt that if she lied, she might be caught out by her friends that she was not experienced in sexual issues.

Women and men often think in the ways that they do because of the masculinity and femininity traits that they adopt from their respective cultures (Courtney, 2000). This can be seen in Boni's statement. She respected her culture, which regulates women's sexuality by promoting abstinence. Although her culture regulates women sexuality by promoting abstinence, Boni was also showing her agency by using that culture to negotiate sex. As a young woman, she must conform to feminine norms by abstaining from sex. She mentioned a Zulu cultural event called *umhlanga*, which is usually held in September, which virgins are encouraged to attend; if one does not attend, people may automatically assume that one is no longer a virgin. This ceremony is very important to her. Boni's views might have been influenced by her cultural and historical context. During the precolonial period, enormous value was placed on premarital virginity among young women, and virginity testing was therefore practised. As a result, the purity of girls was often supervised by older women, who regularly tested their virginity (Hunter, 2005). This culture is still practised by some contemporary societies. Bhana (2016) notes that several South African societies promote abstinence through virginity testing;

however, this is often blamed for regulating female sexuality in order to sustain patriarchy. Girls and young women in different townships in KwaZulu-Natal are frequently tested for virginity (Bhana, 2016). Furthermore, the most popular ceremony is the Reed Dance, which is conducted annually, where girls and young women between the ages of eight and 25 years are required to wear their traditional dress called *imvuluno*, and to carry a reed, which represents their virginity, and give it to the king. This notion of virginity, which embodies pride, respect, and dignity, is still valued despite it facing some criticism (Bhana, 2016).

Sphe showed aspects of her agency by using religion to negotiate sex. Fiaveh (2017) argues that the use of religion can also be regarded as an agentic approach, and not a forced social structure on female sexuality that is damaging. Sphe was not yet comfortable having sex, as it was against her religious beliefs to engage in sex before marriage, even though her boyfriend and friends were putting pressure on her. Her views might have been influenced by a Christian background that promotes abstinence. When Christianity was introduced in South Africa, it brought regulatory and moralistic views about sexuality (Mathe, 2013). The kind of Christianity that was taught by missionaries promoted love between married couples and stigmatised traditional practices that promoted the agency of young women and men. Sex outside marriage was considered a disgrace (Delius & Glaser, 2002). Women who fall pregnant outside marriage were punished, either by being given a seat in the back of the church, or being excluded from the church community. Their moral reputation was tainted and they were considered outcasts by the Christian community (Delius & Glaser, 2002).

To deal with this kind of pressure, some female students isolated themselves from others, as reflected below in the extract from an individual interview:

Carol: *I don't have any friends here and my roommate doesn't drink alcohol.*

Me: *You don't want to make friends?*

Carol: *No, I don't want to.*

Me: *Why?*

Carol: *Because they will put pressure on me to change the way I am at university, like going out and sleeping around, so I decided to be on my own. I don't want to change my behaviour, yes.*

To steer clear from campus pressure, Carol opted to isolate herself from social activities and to abstain from socialising with her peers at university. Her views might be influenced by conservative gender norms that encourage women to be faithful, to abstain from sex, and to control their sexual feelings (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001).

From the discussion in this main theme, it is evident that the participants faced pressure to fit into the university environment. Due to such pressure, one participant described the university environment as “brutal”. The participants mentioned the different kinds of pressure to fit in that they faced. This included pressure to dress in a particular way, and pressure to go clubbing and drinking. Regarding dressing, the participants felt that female students faced pressure to wear trendy clothes, make-up, and weaves.

Some participants’ responses suggest that they complied with femininity norms that encourage women to be submissive. They obeyed such norms by listening to their partners’ demands to change the way they dress, because their boyfriends were not happy with the kind of clothing they were wearing. Some even went to the extent of wearing clothes that they were not comfortable with, simply because they thought their partner would really like it. However, some participants believed that women should not wear revealing clothes because they might attract men’s attention sexually, or they might put themselves in danger of being violated. Other participants rejected the notion of blaming women for being raped because of the manner in which they dressed. They further asserted that men should learn to control their sexual feelings.

Many participants also mentioned that female students are pressured to consume alcohol and go clubbing. Because female students are pressured to drink alcohol, alcohol consumption among young women is commonplace and not just associated with men. Some participants confessed that they started drinking alcohol at university, and some admitted that their parents were not aware that they consumed alcohol. This shows that the pressure encouraged some participants to live a double life, where at home they presented a persona that was different from the one they exhibited at university. The majority of the participants consumed alcohol and they made it clear that there was nothing wrong with women consuming alcohol. They rejected the previously held stereotypical gender norms that associated alcohol consumption with men only and forbade women from consuming it. Nevertheless, a few participants strongly believed that society did not allow women to drink alcohol. They also felt that alcohol consumption among women could put them at risk of being violated or cause women to behave inappropriately, as other female students were seen to do when they were drunk.

One participant admitted to consuming alcohol but she felt that it was unacceptable for women and did not disclose her behaviour to her boyfriend, whom she thought might be upset or leave her.

The majority of the participants also expressed that female students faced pressure to be in a relationship and to engage in sex. Some confessed that they had their first sexual encounter when they came to university. This femininity version encourages female students to be in a relationship and engage in sex with their partners. This contradicts femininity norms that encourage women to remain virgins until they are married. The pressure to be in a relationship forces some female students to comply with a dominant version of femininity, which encourages the subordination of women and accepting the desires and interests of men. By engaging in a relationship with a man who is well known to have multiple partners, they comply with gender norms that encourage men to have multiple partners and women to be obedient and faithful. However, some participants expressed that they did not give in to the pressure to have sex. They continued to follow their religious or cultural beliefs, which allow women to have sex after they are married. The majority of the participants also mentioned that the kind of pressure they faced was gendered.

5.5 CONCLUSION

The data on first-year female university residence students' experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality within the context of GBV were analysed and two of the themes, which are "Gender, power, and violence" and "Fitting into university culture", were discussed in this chapter. The first theme discussed participants' understandings of GBV, victims and perpetrators, participants' experiences of GBV, IPV, stigma around reporting violence, and women befriending men. The second theme focused on the pressure faced by first-year female students to fit into particular appearances and behaviours and pressure to engage in relationships and sex. It was also revealed that the immense pressure experienced by students often led to some of them attempting to fit into two different cultures. The next chapter discusses the two remaining themes, which are "Partners and partnering" and "Managing the freedom of university life".

CHAPTER 6:

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: NEGOTIATING PARTNERS AND FREEDOM

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter discussed the first two main themes that emerged from the data. This chapter discusses the remaining two themes in relation to the following research questions:

1. What are first-year female university residence students' understandings of GBV?
2. How do students experience being female, first year, and resident at university?
3. How do first-year female university residence students construct their gender and sexuality in the context of GBV?

The themes addressed in this chapter are partners and partnering, and managing the freedom of university life. Social constructionist theories of gender and sexuality are employed to understand first-year female university residence students' experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality in the context of GBV.

6.2 THEME 3: PARTNERS AND PARTNERING

Many participants talked about relationships. Even though I did not focus exclusively on heterosexuality, it is evident that heterosexuality is the dominant sexuality at university. Many participants acknowledged that they used certain strategies to sustain their relationships. Men were usually seen as the partners who made most of the decisions in these relationships.

6.2.1 Young women and heterosexuality

The majority of the first-year female students mentioned that they had partners and were in heterosexual relationships. During the individual interviews, the participants were asked whether they were in a relationship with a male or a female; typical responses were as reflected below:

Ayanda: With a male.

Anele: A male, of course. I am not attracted to girls.

The above responses clearly show that Ayanda and Anele were involved in heterosexual relations. They each said that they were in a relationship with a male partner, and Anele further elaborated on her response by saying, “A male of course,” showing the dominant heteronormative culture at university. Before she responded to the question, she raised and arched her eyebrows and her eyes were wide open. That facial expression showed that she was actually surprised that I asked whether she was in a relationship with a male or female. To her it was obvious; as a female she was supposed to be in a relationship with a male. This echoes Bell et al.’s (2014) argument that traditional views of what being a woman means continue to influence their identity and behaviour. Being a woman, in Anele’s case, means being in a relationship with a male; sexuality is therefore constructed within a discourse of heterosexuality.

Some participants who did not have partners aspired to be in a heterosexual relationship, as shown below in the excerpts from the individual interviews:

Me: *Are you in a relationship?*

Busi: *No, but I would love to have a boyfriend, it’s just that I can’t find one at the moment.*

Me: *Are there any guys asking you out?*

Busi: *No.*

Me: *How does that make you feel?*

Busi: *I am not happy about it. I hope to find love soon, yah.*

The excerpt above demonstrates how gender was significant in shaping Busi’s identity. As a female student who resided in the residence, she was not in a relationship but aspired to be in a relationship with a male partner. Her facial expression showed that she was unhappy about the situation that she was in, and she sincerely hoped to find love as soon as possible. Her sexual feelings and needs might have been shaped by societal heterosexual norms and expectations that associate female sexuality with relationships and love (Shefer & Foster, 2001).

Busi’s utterances bring to mind the concept of doing gender of Lorber (1994), who argues that all people unknowingly do gender and the construction of gender starts with the assignment of

sex categories based on what one's genitals look like when he/she is born. As a woman, Busi strongly felt the need to find love with a male because her sexual feelings might have been influenced by norms and expectations regarding relationships that were gendered. Her assertion demonstrated that she constructed her sexuality around notions of love and relationships (Shefer & Foster, 2001).

However, during an individual interview, Boni stated that she could not concentrate on studies and a relationship at the same time:

Me: *Are you in a relationship with anyone?*

Boni: *No.*

Me: *Have you ever been in a relationship with anyone?*

Boni: *No.*

Me: *Do you want to be in a relationship?*

Boni: *No, I will consider that when I'm ready. I need to focus on my studies. Men can distract you, all they want is sex, nothing serious, and it's too early for me to have a relationship.*

Informed by gender norms that construct men as human beings who badly need sex (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001), Boni was not ready to be in a relationship as she felt that men were only interested in sex rather than in forming serious relationships. She drew her assertions from essentialist ideals of masculinity by constructing men as individuals who like to engage in sex. This is a clear indication of how she aligned with the male sex drive discourse that positions sex as an activity that is mainly centred on men and inherently masculine (Shefer & Foster, 2001).

This study established that in these heterosexual relations, some participants dated male students while others dated outsiders. The same sentiments were expressed in the individual interviews and also expressed during the focus group discussions, with the participants mentioning that female students engaged in relationships with either students or outsiders, as reflected below:

Thumi: *Yes, I think many first-year female students are in a relationship with other male students, especially the seniors. The problem is the senior guys who go after first-*

year female students because they are 'fresh', they want to date them but they don't want to form serious relationships with them. They want to show other guys that they got a 'fresher', but then the girl will be serious.

Others: *Yes.*

Niki: *Some they form relationships that are successful with either a student or a non-student. You can see that this guy is dating this girl and they are happy, they love each other and they are faithful to each other. You even admire their relationship, you wish you had a guy as faithful as that guy. So I think some relationships are good. You see that the couple is happy and they are always together and are not ashamed to be seen with each other in public, you know, because they have got nothing to hide.*

The participants in the focus group indicated that first-year female students formed relationships with either male students or non-students. Thumi highlighted the challenges with first-year residence female students dating senior students. Senior male students often pursued first-year students with no serious intentions but wanted to compete with their friends in terms of getting pure new female students, whom they referred to as “freshers”. The other participants nodded their heads in agreement. This shows how multiple sexual conquests among male students are praised; as a result, many senior male students prescribe to that version of masculinity. Ouzgane and Morrell (2005) highlight that men's identity, confidence, and social value are often related to their sexuality. Due to this, some men engage in behaviours that are totally different from those of women, such as having multiple sexual partners and competing for women, to improve their self-confidence, to dominate and control women, and to be regarded as real men (Ouzgane & Morrell, 2005). Thumi's utterances show that male partners engaged in such behaviour to show their dominance and to control first-year female students. However, the first-year female partner would be serious about the relationship. Shefer et al. (2012) note that first-year female students are usually more gullible and immature. As a result, older male students, who are aware of college dynamics, are believed to exploit young first-year female students. Although some female students are exploited by senior male students, there are some relationships that thrive. Niki emotionally expressed that some relationships – either with male students or outsiders – were quite successful, to the extent that she admired these courtships. The relationship is usually characterised by faithfulness and happiness, and the couple is not ashamed to be seen by others in public spaces.

6.2.2 Young women challenging heterosexuality

Although most participants aspired to be in a relationship with a male, there was evidence of non-conforming female students; for example, the excerpt below from an individual interview:

Me: Are you in a relationship with anyone?

Niki: No.

Me: Have you ever been in a relationship with anyone?

Niki: No [Laughing].

Me: Do you want to be in a relationship?

Niki: Maybe one day, not now. I feel like other first years are always stressed in their relationships. They have too many problems, so that I don't want to put myself in that position because I won't be able to handle it.

Me: What kind of problems are they facing that makes you think that you are not ready?

Niki: I think it's all about their boyfriends cheating and not satisfying one another in bed.

Me: Do you want to have a relationship with a male or a female?

Niki: I don't know, a male or a female. I think a male. I have no idea. I will watch others and then I will choose.

Niki's words clearly suggest that she was not keen to be in a relationship because of what she witnessed happening to her peers and the challenges that they faced in their relationships. When asked if she had ever been in a relationship before, her answer was no and she laughed about it. Such a response could have meant that she was either embarrassed about not being in a relationship, or she viewed being in a relationship as a mockery because of the challenges that her peers encountered. She further stated that she was not keen to be in a relationship because of the challenges, such as cheating partners and lack of sexual satisfaction that her peers often battled with. She further confirmed that she had no idea of the gender of the partner she aspired to be in a relationship with. Her response indicates that she was not a passive victim of societal prescriptions of femininity; rather, she was an active agent in constructing and deconstructing prevailing norms of femininity (Courtney, 2000) that construct women as individuals who

search for perfect love and romance with a male partner, and continue in relationships even when they are toxic (Boonzaier, 2008). However, by giving herself time to explore her sexuality, she was opposing and challenging gender stereotypical norms that construct sexual desire through the binary oppositions of gender (Cranny-Francis et al., 2003).

Although the university environment is dominated by heterosexual relations, another participant expressed during the individual interviews that some students welcomed other kinds of relationships that existed on campus:

***Me:** What do people say about your gay friend?*

***Khanyo:** They don't really judge them. I think, aah, right now they are slowly adapting. Many students are coming to terms with homosexuality. I think they are finally accepting people for who they are.*

From the statement above it is clear that Khanyo's friend did not face criticism from students because of his sexuality. Khanyo highlighted that she believed students were gradually changing their negative attitude towards gay students.

Although Khanyo mentioned that many students were accepting homosexuality, some female participants confirmed that some gay and lesbian students were often harassed because of their sexual orientation, as reflected during an individual interview by Angela's statement below:

***Angela:** Some of the homosexuals are harassed verbally and some hide behind the closet because they are scared of what people are gonna say. They are gonna judge them; for example, if you come here as a first year and you are a man and then suddenly you decide to come out of the closet and say that you are actually gay, so some students are gonna judge you.*

Angela's statement shows that society and culture are responsible for defining the behaviour expected of men and women, and they also influence the way in which sexual relations are negotiated (Mantell et al., 2009). Her utterances reveal that some students believed that heterosexuality was the only acceptable form of relationship, hence they harassed gay and lesbian students because of their sexual orientation. As a result, some gay and lesbian students were forced to hide their sexual orientation as they feared victimisation. An online survey by Singh et al. (2015) on female students' fear of sexual assault on a South African university campus revealed that some gays and lesbians are scared of revealing their sexual orientation

because of the intimidating campus atmosphere. Angela mentioned that if, for example, a student entered university as a man and then decided to expose their sexuality, they may be judged by other people. This is a clear indication of how some students still hold the view that sexual interactions between men and women are the only appropriate normal articulation of a person's sexuality, and those who live outside this heteronormativity in sexual actions are often regarded as deviant, wicked, and immoral (Muhanguzi et al., 2011). This finding supports McCabe et al.'s (2010) findings that gender influences the meanings and understandings given to sexuality. Participants in McCabe et al.'s (2010) study defined a social order in which men and women were required to enact sexuality in a different way. Angela's statement further confirms that sexuality is socially constructed and society is responsible for shaping the intricate and multiple emotions, desires, and relationships of people (Nel & Judge, 2008). In this case, the erotic is used to create a well-defined division between those who are embraced on campus and those who are ostracised. As a result, some gay students cannot fully explore their sexuality because they fear being criticised by their peers.

Boni expressed that society has not fully accepted gays and lesbians:

***Boni:** Society hasn't welcomed them like fully, so if they see lesbians holding hands in public they would try and hit them because it appears to them as something that it disgusting and guys would be like... let's say to the lesbian who is considered the man in the relationship, some guys here would say, 'Why are you stealing our girlfriends, we are running short of girlfriends, and you are busy competing with us guys,' so society hasn't welcomed them fully. Here on campus they don't hit them, but sometimes you would find that, let's say in class when they see a gay coming, other guys will be disgusted by the fact that this person is gay, and some guys call them isitabane just to upset them. They look down upon them.*

She further mentioned that some male students viewed lesbians as their competitors as far as sexual relationships were concerned. They encounter homophobic violence as their peers insult them by using terms such as *isitabane* (a derogatory term meant to insult them). Mazars et al. (2014) reveal that lesbians may be targeted because they are regarded as challenging traditional male power, since they live outside the sphere of male control. Because gender is regarded as a social construction of masculinity and femininity (Lorber, 2000), men and women in South African societies are often expected to act according to prescribed versions of masculinity and femininity. Those who fail to conform to prescribed dominant gender norms are usually

violated in some South African communities. Members of the LGBT community are often attacked and discriminated against because of their sexual orientation, which is viewed as unorthodox. Heterosexual men in South Africa regularly attack homosexual women, to teach them to act like an African woman and to communicate to them that they are not welcome or accepted within their community (Anguita, 2012).

6.2.3 Relationship pressure and expectations

The participants had different expectations in a relationship. Typical expectations are highlighted in the extracts below from the individual interviews:

Me: What are your expectations in a relationship?

Gugu: Umm, loyalty. I expect him to be loyal to me and to love me. I also want someone who acts like my friend as well. Someone I can share all my secrets and stuff with... everything.

Zethu: I expect to get respect, to be loved, the guy to be romantic with you, to be spoiled.

Carol: I want to be loved. With my boyfriend, it's not easy to explain because he is married.

Me: He is a married man?

Carol: Yes, he is a married man and he wants me to be his second wife and I'm afraid of polygamy and I don't want to hurt his wife, it was not my intention to do that. Umm, I expect him to marry me as he wishes because he has been there for me in good and bad times. I want him to see that I love him the way he loves me and I'm not after his money.

The above statements show that the participants constructed their sexuality around respect, love, loyalty, and being spoiled in a relationship. This finding is consistent with findings from an investigation conducted by Bell (2012) in rural Uganda, where young women expressed that love and affection were the primary reasons why they started new relationships. Love was strongly related to the need to engage in sexual activities and feeling warm and satisfied, as well as appreciating life with someone and discussing their problems. The agency of young women was also seen in cases where they used their sexual relationships to acquire financial and material support from their boyfriends.

Zethu conformed to conventional femininity by saying that she wanted a partner who would spoil her. Her expectations were shaped around gender norms that view men as the provider in a relationship. Such relationships often create power differences as the female partner relies on the (male) partner for financial support (Wingood & DiClemente, 2000).

Carol said that she was afraid of polygamy; however, she was in a relationship with a married man. Although she showed a guilty facial expression when she admitted that she was in a relationship with a married man and did not want to hurt his wife, she nevertheless expected to be married to and loved by him. Her utterances demonstrated her compliance with gender norms that associate female sexuality with marriage. She confirmed that her partner wished to marry her, and she hoped that her partner would realise that she really loved him and was not after his wealth. Such expectations and strong feelings for her partner may result in her lacking agency in the relationship. Kaestle (2009) notes that strong feelings of love for a sexual partner might make an individual reluctant to risk destroying the relationship, which might result in female partners lacking agency through the acceptance of male control in a relationship (Kaestle, 2009). Carol's statement illustrated how she subscribed to gendered norms that promote male promiscuity and female monogamy (Milnes, 2004). Carol's expectations might have been influenced by her culture and historical context.

Burr (1995) argues that the manner in which we figure out the world and the categories and ideas we utilise are usually culturally and historically specific; hence the growth of the sexual self takes place within a specific context, rather than in isolation. According to Hunter (2005), in the 1930s, manhood in Zulu society was associated with bravery and good fighting skills. Men with such skills amassed wealth in the form of cattle, and the number of cattle they had also determined the number of wives they married. Creating a thriving homestead was quite important during this period, and the more wives a man had, the wealthier and more respected a household head (*umnumzana*) he became. Courtship was associated with marriage; thus, if a man started courting a girl, it meant that he was supposed to marry her. A man was supposed to get married and build his homestead instead of having many girlfriends.

Some participants mentioned that they were keen on having a stable, long-term relationship with one partner. A typical example is Ethel's statement from an individual interview:

Ethel: When I get into a relationship, I just want a guy who is himself, you know. I don't want someone who pretends to be somebody else just to impress me. Another thing, I just expect kind of like a long-term thing. Like I don't want to move from one

relationship to another, a kinda of stable thing you know, not like maybe a few weeks thing like a fling. I just want... I cannot say permanent because we are still young, but like a long-term thing. It's not good for a girl to move from one relationship to another; that will ruin your reputation here on campus. Some students will see you as one of those girls who are promiscuous.

Me: *Long-term meaning what exactly? Marriage or what?*

Ethel: *I am that girl who does not see herself married one day. I think just because of the way things are happening, like these days people get married and they divorce the next day, you know, so like I just don't wanna get married.*

Ethel's statement illustrates that she conformed to normative femininity by aspiring to a long-term relationship rather than a short-term one, which she thought might tarnish a woman's reputation. Ethel's assertion revealed that gender is significant in determining behaviour, and that its meaning in people's relations attracts certain behaviours and generates social subjects (Rasera et al., 2004). She felt that it was not appropriate for a girl to move from one relationship to another. Her views might have been informed by culture and history. Historically (that is, in the period between the 1930s and 1950s), the customary Zulu law (*umthetho*) did not allow women to have many partners. In fact, they were only allowed one partner and only unmarried men (*isoka*) were allowed to have many partners. Gender and sexuality norms that require women to act in accordance with their expectations and remain faithful (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010) to one partner might also have played a part in shaping Ethel's beliefs. This finding is consistent with Summit et al.'s (2016) findings that female sexuality among girls was acceptable within the narrative of committed relationships and heteronormative context. Girls who get involved with a number of boys or who just hang out with many boys were often regarded as sluts. Those who were regarded as sluts were often humiliated, segregated, and taken advantage of by boys. Sex was only acceptable when it occurred in the context of a committed relationship with only one partner.

Although Ethel was committed to her relationship plans, she was, however, not keen on getting married. While it seemed that she rejected the notion that female sexuality is associated with marriage, she seemed to want to avoid marriage because of the high rate of divorce.

Some participants' responses showed that they were afraid of committing to relationships because of fear of being hurt, as reflected in the excerpt below from an individual interview:

Thumi: *I am in a relationship but it's not like our relationship is that serious or we are planning to get married. It's just sex with us, nothing serious. I am scared that if I get too serious, I'm gonna be hurt. I don't know what's gonna happen next month or next year, maybe he is gonna break up with me and I will be left crying. He is the kind of guy who cheats, so he might find someone else, yah.*

The extract above indicates that Thumi chose to engage in a sexual relationship beyond the context of a faithful relationship. Thumi was not in a serious relationship and there were no future plans for marriage. She protected herself from being hurt by creating a casual relationship. Thumi's utterances showed that she did not comply with the romantic narrative that often associates women with strong feelings of love for a partner and serious long-term relationships, which, according to Milnes (2004), may constrain women's ability to negotiate their sexual relationships and safeguard their own sexual wellbeing. However, her statement showed that she was agentic in positioning herself as a desiring being rather than an object of desire. This concurs with Spronk's (2005) argument that there are women who directly and indirectly challenge gender roles by openly pursuing sexual pleasure as recognition of their womanhood (Spronk, 2005).

These findings support Perez-Jimenez et al.'s (2007) argument that there are mainly two distinct sexualities that prevail among students at university. One is characterised by love and commitment and the other is associated with just having sex for pleasure and does not take into consideration the other person's feelings. By pursuing sexual pleasure instead of a serious relationship, Thumi further laid bare how she reworked femininity norms that encourage women to search for romance and love. Although she showed some kind of agency by focusing on fulfilling her sexual needs, she did, however, comply with masculinity norms that accept that men engage in relationships with multiple partners. Thumi was aware that her partner was not capable of being faithful, but she still continued with the relationship, which put her at risk of diseases.

The participants with partners seemed to accept that cheating was a masculine trait, as shown in the extracts below from the individual interviews:

Londi: *We fight, like, 'Why did you do that? Why didn't you tell me where you are going? Why are you cheating? Where were you?'*

Me: *Does he cheat?*

Londi: *Every man cheats. So yah, he does cheat.*

Me: *Okay, so how do you deal with that challenge?*

Londi: *You have to be calm, accept that it happened. Most of the time I seek for proof that they separated with the girl he's been cheating with. Like he has to delete her number and they don't talk to each other anymore.*

Londi's narrative demonstrated that she saw cheating as being normal for men. She subscribed to gender norms that subordinate women and reinforce male dominance. Her statement further revealed how the power disparities limited her agency as she chose to remain "calm". Her utterances bring to mind Bell et al.'s (2014) argument that traditional notions of what it means to be a man or a woman continue to shape the majority of men and women's identity, behaviour, and emotional responses. By deciding to be "calm", Londi subscribed to prescribed versions of femininity that require women to hold themselves with propriety (Spronk, 2015).

Phume's statement below displayed some of the challenges that she encountered in her previous relationship:

Phume: *We fought a lot because I was sometimes jealous of his other girl, because it was always about her. In the social media it was about her, people know her, although she is far away, but people here know her. It's just that kind of thing. That was one of the challenges that we faced. We fought about it and he always asked me why we fight about it, because I already knew about her, I committed myself knowing fully that it was the case, but then why are we always fighting about it.*

Me: *So how did you deal with that challenge?*

Phume: *We talked about it, but we ended up just fighting about it ... I would tell him that I don't want to have sex with you today because you already got it from someone else, so I was the one who always brought up the topic. He used to barge into my room...*

and I was forced to see him because he was drunk. Another challenge would be that he swore a lot when he was drunk, especially at me. He called me all sorts of names that I honestly wasn't, and he would embarrass me in front of people, maybe forcefully pull me just because he wanted my attention. He would pull me because he wants to talk to me and he would force me to talk to him, and he would just mumble and mumble and swear, you know, do all sorts of things, and ask me to sleep in his room for us to have sex and all that stuff. We fought a lot and it really disturbed me emotionally, even mentally, because a lot of people always stared at me and always asked me why I was with him, so yah.

Me: *So what were you saying to people when they asked you?*

Phume: *I loved him. I really loved him, so I would tell them that I love him and he used to behave like that when he was drunk. At the end, he chose this other girl and left me, yah.*

Phume's statement illustrates how power differences shaped her heterosexual relationship. She knowingly engaged in a relationship with a man who was already in a sexual relationship with someone else and this resulted in her experiencing many challenges in the relationship. Although she sometimes refused sex with him, she continued to tolerate the abuse, such as swearing, verbal insults, and forced sex, perpetrated against her because she loved her partner. She excused her partner's behaviour by blaming alcohol. Her experiences indicate how her relationship was framed around male dominance and differential power relations. Phume's behaviour may have been informed by cultural ideals of femininity that encourage women to stand by their partners, despite the amount of violence or challenges they face in their relationships (Wood, 2009). Similarly, Jewkes and Morrell (2010) argue that some women tolerate violence perpetrated against them by excusing men's aggressive behaviour, and they put up with such behaviour just to keep their man (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010).

During one focus group discussion, the participants admitted that relationships have their challenges, but that there are also some positives, as shown below:

Busi: *Like one of the disadvantages is if your boyfriend is cheating on you then it means you might get diseases like STDs or HIV because he will be sleeping around. Your emotions are hurt also because as girls we want to be loved and you want to know that this guy is for you and you only, so it hurts, yah.*

Noku: *STDS, HIV, pregnancy also. I have friends who have had like STDs and stuff. It comes as a shock, but then it happens when you are dating a university guy. The guy is older, he is in third year and he was not here straight out of high school, and the girl is in first year. The guy had work experience and then he came to university, so he is in third year now and she is in first year, and she had a sexual relationship with this guy and the guy had girlfriends from home, and when he came to university, he had sexual relationships with other girls. STD is one thing that I'm scared of just from hearing what my friend went through. There are some serious disadvantages, she couldn't walk and it was for a whole month that she had that thing.*

Londi: *And HIV as well, 'cause when you find out that you are HIV positive, people react differently. You end up not doing your work as you had planned and then you end up falling into alcohol because you are stressed and you are depressed, then you end up sleeping with everybody else so that you spread the disease that you have...*

Ethel: *The biggest factor for me is dignity. You lose all your dignity, yah, that's the biggest factor for me. You lose your dignity if you have a sexual relationship that doesn't work out.*

The above discussion clearly reveals the challenges that female students face as a result of their male partners' sexual behaviour. Busi, Noku, and Londi agreed that a cheating boyfriend could put a female student at risk of contracting STDs or HIV. By stating that a girl's feelings are hurt by a cheating boyfriend, since as girls they want to feel loved and to know that they are the only girl in the relationship, Busi strengthened the notion of framing female sexuality within the realm of relationship, faithfulness, and love (Holland et al., 1990). Informed by femininity norms that value self-respect among women, Ethel mentioned the importance of "dignity" to her, and that a woman might lose her self-respect if her relationship failed. Her utterances show that being in a failed relationship reflects negatively on their femininity, which requires women to be dignified. Other participants nodded in unison to show that they agreed with her. To acquire dignity as a woman, in this case, means being in a successful relationship. In a bid to protect their dignity, women position themselves as subordinates and powerless and continue in a relationship with a partner who is unfaithful, thus putting themselves at risk of HIV and STDs, as well as violence.

In another focus group discussion, the participants shared the same sentiments as they discussed the positives and negatives in these sexual relationships, as reflected below:

Khanyo: *So sexually, I think they do take advantage and they always feel like when they have slept with one person in a group, they need to sleep with everybody just to prove a point, you know, that they have been sleeping with a lot of first years.*

Sphe: *Sometimes they make bets. There was a group of first-year female students, so these guys were interested in them and they were like we are gonna break up that friendship. I don't understand why, and this one guy said, 'Okay, I'm gonna make sure that I sleep with all of them.' Why? I fail to understand why they will do such, and it's really sad that you gonna set a goal to do that.*

Fikile: *It depends on the person you get into a relationship with, 'cause if you get into a relationship with maybe someone who is in the SRC, you know you are gonna get residence on campus, you are gonna get money, you are gonna get a cell phone, a nice one, you gonna get to go out, you are gonna be an RA [Residence Assistant], you are gonna get certain positions. So it depends on the person that you are in a relationship with.*

Phume: *From my experience, the advantage that I might have had from dating a student – when you are having a sexual relationship with someone, feelings are involved, and there is always chemistry, so you get to be closer than you were before – and being closer you end up sharing things like secrets, and it helps you to heal from things that you weren't properly healed from. They give you their time so a sexual relationship can be a proper relationship. Maybe where you are faithful to each other. You genuinely love the person, even if there is an age difference. You genuinely love the person and they love you back, and they take care of you the same way you take care of them.*

The above excerpts show that motivations and reasons for participating in sexual activities differ by gender. The participants' responses illustrate how male students reaffirmed their male dominance by sexually exploiting female students. Khanyo said that some students engaged in sexual activities with a group of first-year female students who were friends, to prove a point to their peers that they had slept with many first years. Sphe mentioned that some male students bet with their friends that they could have sex with a group of first-year female friends.

Her facial expression showed that she was surprised by such behaviour and she questioned why male students behaved like that. Sphe's statement indicates that male students attempt to achieve their manhood through engaging in sexual relationships with many women. They compete among themselves on the number of women each man has, and sex is taken for granted, which is risky (Hunter, 2005). Kaestle (2009) states that men may continue to participate in sexual activities even though they do not desire it, in an attempt to defend their masculinity.

In contrast, Fikile pointed out the benefits that can come from dating a male student who is perhaps on the SRC. She said that one would have easy access to accommodation, a cell phone, and any position that may be available, such as the Residence Assistant. Fikile's statement shows how female students assert their agency by using their sexuality to obtain goods that are necessary for their lives as students. Similarly, Leclerc-Madlala's (2003) investigation, titled "Transactional sex and the pursuit of modernity", in Durban, South Africa, found that sexuality among women in urban areas is symbolised by transactional trade and sex is usually traded for material things, such as jewellery, cell phones, expensive clothes, and other things in a bid to achieve a modern and thriving lifestyle. Bell's (2012) study suggests that young women present their agency through the use of their sexual relationships to acquire financial and material support from their boyfriends. They felt that this kind of support would help fill the gap left by their parents in providing for their basic needs. Phume said that being in a sexual relationship with a student could help you deal with any issues, as you shared secrets. You have someone to talk to about your problems if you are in a "proper" relationship, which is about being faithful and genuinely loving and taking care of each other.

6.2.4 Sex sustains relationships

Some participants' responses show that in these heterosexual relationships, sex is a tool used by some female students to strengthen their relationships or to keep their relationship alive. Some typical examples from individual interviews are shown below:

Me: Okay, how do you keep your relationship alive?

Angela: Umm, I love him you know, like when we are together, we make sure that we do what lovers do, like kiss, have sex, all that. Umm... I try to make him happy by doing that, yah.

Ethel: Aah [long pause], okay... I can say by... I try... just spend as much time as we can together. You know, men like to have sex, if you sleep with him, he gets happy, so I try to make that exciting as well.

The above extracts demonstrate that both Angela and Ethel used sex to gain their partner's affection. Angela confirmed that she engaged in sex and kissing to make her boyfriend happy. Ethel utilised sex to keep her relationship alive. By constructing men as individuals who like to have sex and are happy after engaging in it, she reinforced the discourse that frames male sexuality as inherently erotic and focused mainly on sex (Shefer & Foster, 2001). These gendered scripts cause young women to utilise sex as a strategy to keep their male partner to themselves and they provide sex to them at the expense of their own sexual satisfaction. Kaestle (2009) notes that gender roles and expectations influence people's perceived level of control over different types of activities. As a result, young men and women may develop sexual scripts or highly structured sets of ideas with regard to sexuality and their sexual roles, which serve as a guideline for sexual behaviours that are deemed suitable for certain people and partners (Kaestle, 2009). Sexual scripts are defined as indirect rules developed by individuals in the context of social and cultural norms, in relation to appropriate sexual behaviour (Maas et al., 2015). These sexual scripts encourage women to dwell more on improving the quality of their relationships, while men focus on individual pleasure. These gendered sexual scripts of inactive female sexuality may make it difficult for women to share their sexual preferences or concerns with their partners (Kaestle, 2009). In addition, these scripts may cause women to think that men desire many sexual activities, and also that in order to keep their men to themselves, they have to provide more sex to them. As a result, women may continue to engage in unwanted sexual activities with their partners in a bid to salvage their relationships.

Although they conformed to such gendered norms, Ethel and Angela showed their agency through the use of sex as a resource to keep their relationship alive. They were aware that as long as they continued to provide sex to their partners, their relationships would continue to be intact. This echoes Holland et al.'s (1990) study, which revealed that some young women engaged in sexual activities with their partners not because it gave them pleasure, but because it made their partners happy.

During the focus group discussions, the participants mentioned that males and females have different reasons for engaging in sex, as shown below:

Londi: *I think it's to make the relationship strong. You get attached together emotionally if you take your relationship to that level of having sex. I think as a girl I feel that way. It might be different with boys, because boys they just enjoy sex without being emotionally involved, but for us girls I think it's different.*

Noku: *I agree with you, having sex makes the relationship sort of formal and stable, because if you don't do it, your boyfriend might leave you and find another girl to do it with.*

Me: *Are you saying girls do it to keep their boyfriends?*

Boni: *Definitely, most girls do it to make their boyfriends happy. They don't want them to leave them. Even if the guy says he doesn't want to use a condom because it's not nice, they agree and use birth control pills to prevent pregnancy, you see.*

Ethel: *Most guys say they don't want to use a plastic when having sex, it makes them uncomfortable and they don't enjoy it, and girls listen to that, yes.*

Thando: *Male students can have sex without being emotionally involved. They can have sex with many girls and to them it's just sex, but for women, when you start having sex, it means the relationship is serious, even if the guy is not serious. For us to sleep with a guy, it means you are in love, but a guy can sleep with you knowing very well that he doesn't care.*

From the above discussion it is clear that female students use sex as a strategy to strengthen their relationship, while men simply enjoy it without involving romantic emotions. Noku suggested that sex stabilised and formalised a relationship, and if a woman did not provide it to her partner, then her partner might get it from someone else. Her statement shows her compliance with sexuality norms that construct sex as an entirely male activity and men as active heterosexual subjects (Shefer & Foster, 2001). On the other hand, women are constructed as having a duty to fulfil the male desire, of which failure to do so will result in the male partner moving on to another relationship to satisfy his sexual needs.

Noku and Boni's assertions illustrate how some female students subscribe to the emphasised version of femininity, which complies with the subordination of women and accepts the

interests and desires of men (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). They do this by putting their partners' sexual needs first, at the expense of their own desires, and this limits their sexual independence, and increases their partner's sexual autonomy (Chong & Kvasny, 2007). This finding resonates with Holland et al.'s (1990) study, which found that young women generally perceive sex as a useful tool to use if you want to prove your love and trust for your partner; love is therefore used to validate sex. In this case, women usually define sex in the context of men's needs and desires, consequently regarding themselves as passive vessels of men's sexual desires. This study brought to light that heterosexual relationship dynamics are framed around male partners' preferences, and this inequality in sexual decision making puts women at risk of being victimised. Similarly, Van der Riet et al. (2019) found that students engaged in sex to prove love for their partner or to show that they were serious about the relationship and that condoms were not used consistently.

The participants' statements also showed that female students took control of their sexual safety and exercised their agency by using birth control pills to prevent pregnancy. The use of birth control measures shows that they can manage to take control of their sexuality, which was previously associated with reproduction and women's gendered role of being mothers and wives (Weeks, 2003). This resonates with Bell's (2012) study on young people's sexual agency in rural Uganda, which reported that young women presented their agency through using different types of contraceptive strategies to prevent unwanted pregnancy.

Although they presented some kind of agency through the use of birth control measures (such as contraceptive pills) to prevent unwanted pregnancy, there is, however, a lack of sexual independence as they adopted hegemonic gendered constructions that view men as sexual beings who need to be pleased sexually, and the use of a condom was seen as hindering male sexual gratification. This concurs with MacPhail and Campbell's (2001) argument that women's constraints in negotiating safe sex are exacerbated by the socially constructed ideology of masculinity that identifies men as creatures who badly need sex. The participants' assertions revealed that some female students failed to negotiate safe sexual practices, as they let their partners exercise their power over them by capitulating to their demands for unprotected sex.

Thando added that when a woman starts having sex with her partner, it means she is serious and in love. It makes the relationship stronger, which is different from men's motives, as they can do it without being emotionally involved or without really caring for the girl.

Such statements show that the participants associated female sexuality with love, romance, and caring (Holland et al., 1990), and that they only engaged in sex when they were deeply in love and serious, which is different from men's motives for sex.

6.2.5 Decision making within relationships

The majority of the participants admitted during the individual interviews that their male partners made most of the decisions in their relationships. Typical examples are shown in the excerpts below:

***Carol:** He is the man, he makes most of the decisions. Like if he wants me to come and see him, I will go. I also make some decisions, like what to cook for him, yah.*

***Ayanda:** Mostly it's him because I'm usually the quiet one. He decides like where to go, where to eat, where I should meet him, yah, where we can see each other if we are both available.*

Both Carol and Ayanda were active in the maintenance of gender norms that position men as the decision maker and in charge of a relationship, and women as subordinates and obedient human beings. Carol and Ayanda's statements show that they did gender (Butler, 1990) by conforming to gender norms that subordinate women. Carol felt that since her partner was a man, he had to make most decisions in their relationship. However, she acknowledged that she made certain decisions and the decisions that she made were associated with gender roles such as deciding what to cook for him. Ayanda positioned herself as "the quiet one" in the relationship. This suggests that she performed a passive role in the relationship. She further confirmed that her partner made most of the decisions. From Carol and Ayanda's statements, it can be reasoned that they have learned and internalised gender norms that view women as having a limited world, where they have to comply and be complicit with the version of masculinity that encourages men to be in control of sexual relationships (Muhanguzi, 2011).

Primrose mentioned during an individual interview that her partner was the sole decision maker in their relationship, as indicated in the extract below:

***Primrose:** My boyfriend makes decisions in our relationship. A man is always the one who is making decisions in a relationship. They should always have power over women, because they are men. Men and women would never be equal, because they are the head of the house.*

Primrose's words indicate that she constructed men as natural decision makers and that they "should always have power over women". This shows that she accepted an unequal relationship as the norm. She complied with patriarchal gender norms that construct men as having power over women. She believed that gender equality was not possible. Constructing men as sole decision makers in a relationship creates gender imbalances, which may limit women's ability to negotiate safe sexual practices in their relationships (Jewkes & Morrell, 2012). Mazars et al. (2014) point out that patriarchal gender norms play a significant role in the perpetration of violence against women, because they recognise men and boys as having a higher social value, power, and status than women and girls.

However, Sphe expressed that the decisions in her relationship were made jointly and that she often took the lead:

***Sphe:** I think we both make decisions but I always tend to overpower him when it comes to that, because I'm very firm when it comes to what I want and to be honest, I feel that I need to work on that because it's not fair on him that if I say I don't want this to happen, I want this to happen, and if it does not happen, then we have a problem. I would start throwing tantrums and I will not talk to him. He will call and I will not pick up and he is like come to my house, then he will come to my res sometimes and it's not easy for him to come to campus because of the travelling and petrol, like I said he is not working. As a woman, I think you need to have a lot of respect 'cause what I've noticed with males is that they love a person who shows a lot of respect, so you need to respect your partner.*

Sphe's statement reveals her agency in her relationship. She asserted that she was firm about what she wanted. Although she challenged the gendered norms of decision making, she seemed to accept femininity norms that encourage women to be submissive through respecting their partners. She desired to be loved and believed that men love women who show respect to them and therefore believed that women should respect their partners.

Phume suggested that confidence and strength in a woman can sometimes work against them, as shown in the extract below from an individual interview:

***Phume:** I'm very controlling. I think that was also one of the reasons for our break-up. I am a very controlling person with a very big ego. For the mere fact that I knew that I had everything that he didn't. I knew that I was well off maybe and that I had everything*

that he didn't, and that I could control him as well, and that ego ended up ruining a lot of things and it also ruined me mentally ... We ended up fighting a lot, which wasn't good for both of us. The decisions that I made most of the time was how he should spend his money, what we should do on a certain day. I wanted to control everything, I was the one who made sexual decisions as well, so even if he wanted us to be intimate... I will have this bad attitude rather than state the fact that I'm not comfortable having sex today. But I always change and have mood swings, and just do things that would hurt him emotionally or make him realise I don't want to do this, rather than just saying it to him, so I was just in control, yah.

Phume's statement indicates that women who take control of finances and sexual decisions experience challenges in keeping their relationships. She judged herself harshly because the relationship ended. Phume believed assuming characteristics, which are often associated with masculinity, such as being dominant, might have contributed to ruining her previous relationship. From her statement it is clear that Phume's boyfriend might have felt that his masculinity was being threatened by Phume's assertive behaviour and her providing for his financial needs. This concurs with Jewkes' (2002) argument that violence towards women is an act usually adopted by men who feel that their masculine identity is threatened by their failure to provide their partners with economic support, since manhood is associated with the ability to meet the financial needs of women. In cases where men fail to provide for the financial needs of their female partners, because they have fewer resources, they feel the need to exercise their power through the use of violence. Similarly, Anguita (2012) points out that economic challenges undermine the customary gender roles that make men the breadwinners. As a result, men who lack that economic authority are inclined to use violence as a way of exerting control over women, and this is why rape is widespread in South Africa (Anguita, 2012).

Some participants expressed that there were degrees of gender equality in their relations, as shown below:

Gugu: *We both make decisions. Okay, this sex one I think I made that one, 'cause he wants it and I don't. I don't really like sex and my boyfriend understands that I have a low sex drive, so I do it with him maybe twice a month, yah. At first, he didn't like it when I say I don't like to do it, but now he is okay with it. I told him that you can't force me.*

Thando: *I do make decisions and he also makes decisions, so we both make decisions. Like for sexual issues... like if I say no he doesn't force me, he understands that I don't feel like doing it, although sometimes he gets upset and moody about it. But he understands.*

Khanyo: *What I like about him in comparison to other guys, he doesn't make me feel like it's my duty to provide sex, you know, like the guys that have asked me out before. He doesn't really make me feel like it's a must. It's not a must, you do it willingly, compared to here at university. I have seen relationships, it's like their number one aim is sex and it doesn't go anywhere, it just ends like there. With my guy, a no is a no and he understands, and a no protection is a no. If we don't have protection, we don't have sex, and he knows that. He is not really fussy.*

The extracts above show the ability of Gugu, Thando, and Khanyo to negotiate sex in their relationships and further reflect their agency. Gugu and Thando's statements show how they took charge of their sexuality. They presented their agency by stating their position regarding sexual activities and making it clear to their boyfriends that they could not be forced to have sex. These discussions show that the female students understood that there are multiple versions of masculinities. Khanyo expressed that she adored her partner's behaviour regarding sex. She felt that he was different from some male students and other men who previously asked her out, because he did not make her feel like it was her duty to provide sex in their relationship. Khanyo further showed her agency by refusing to engage in sex without a condom. The statements from Gugu, Thando, and Khanyo reflect how they challenged emphasised femininity norms that comply with the subordination of women and accommodate men's interests and desires (Connell, 1995).

Andiswa made the decision not to engage in sex in their relationship until after marriage. One typical example is illustrated in the extract below from an individual interview:

Andiswa: *I know he is not happy and we talk about and he keeps asking for it all the time, and he tries to make me understand the importance of it, but I don't want to do it, but you can see that he is not comfortable with my decision. I am not ready to have sex until I get married, and I expect my boyfriend to be faithful and to respect my decision regarding sex. At home I was taught that sex is for my husband, not for my boyfriend. So obviously it's not like he hasn't asked for it, he has, but I told him, 'No this is how they taught me at home, that sex is for marriage,' and this is how I have been living my*

whole life, so if he wants it from me, he is gonna wait until I'm his wife. We have to stick to talking and kissing, you know, but not sex, yah.

Andiswa's boyfriend was not happy about her decision to remain a virgin until marriage, but Andiswa wanted to keep her virginity and she wanted her boyfriend to respect her decision and remain faithful. Her views illustrate that sexuality in any context other than marriage is inappropriate and disreputable. She was taught at home that sex is for her husband; she therefore refused to do it with her boyfriend. Their relationship was limited to kissing and talking.

6.2.6 "Women are shy to express their sexual feelings"

When asked whether they could communicate their true feelings about sex in their relationships, the participants gave various replies. Typical responses are as shown in the extracts below:

Zethu: *No, I can't do that. I am too shy to say such things. I also don't want him to feel like he isn't doing it well. I don't want to disappoint him, yah.*

Anele: *I am too shy to tell him that I didn't enjoy it, but I do enjoy it sometimes. Sometimes I do it for the sake of making him happy, especially when I'm not in the mood, you know just to get him off my back. It's like he is obsessed with sex, especially when he is drunk, he can't get enough. I don't enjoy it when we do it every day. Even when I tell him that I don't want to do it, he keeps on demanding it until I give in. If you refuse completely, he gets grumpy and sometimes he gets moody and it's just hectic. I have to do it.*

From the above extracts it is clear that gender plays a crucial role in how young men and women interpret and deal with sexual negotiations. Their statements demonstrate how sexuality is centred on men, where these young women have to subscribe to masculine demands (Shefer & Foster, 2001, p. 378). Zethu and Anele were unable to express their feelings about sex to their partners. Influenced by patriarchal practices and attitudes that frame female sexuality around pleasing men, Zethu believed that making her true sexual feelings known to her partner would hurt his feelings. Her facial expression showed that she was surprised that I asked her about communicating her true sexual feelings to her partner, which she believed was not appropriate for a woman to do as it would send a message that her partner did not sexually satisfy her.

Anele admitted that she did not always enjoy sex with her partner, but she engaged in it to make her partner happy or to “get him off my back”. Such statements demonstrate a reproduction of emphasised femininity (Connell, 1987) as their main focus is on not offending their partners’ self-esteem by disclosing that they were not satisfied. These findings relate to sexual script ideology, which is a set of indirect rules developed by individuals in the context of social and cultural norms in relation to appropriate sexual behaviour for men and women (Lorber, 1994). These gendered sexual scripts position women’s sexuality as inactive, which may prove to make it difficult for them to share their sexual preferences or concerns with their partners (Maas et al., 2015), as reflected in Zethu and Anele’s statements.

Anele thought that her partner was obsessed with sex because of his constant demands for it; when she refused, he got grumpy and moody, which forced her to give in to his demands. This shows that she complied with gender norms that view men as having natural sexual aggression and women as passive and submissive. As a result, she accepted and normalised such behaviour instead of viewing it as abuse. Her utterances indicated the power disparities in her relationship. This unequal balance of power is usually seen in cases where male gratification takes precedence over female gratification, and men have too much control over issues around when, how, and with whom sex takes place (Chong & Kvasny, 2007). In addition, power differences between men and women in societies might influence decisions about sex, which include the rate of occurrence and nature of sexual practices. Vast male power may also lead to them having control over sexual initiation and refusal (Pulerwitz et al., 2002).

Some participants admitted that they were unable to assert themselves and if they did not want to have sex, they lied about menstruating in order to avoid it.

Londi: *If I don’t want to have sex, I just don’t visit him, and if he doesn’t understand that I don’t want to do it, I just tell him I’m having my period, something like that.*

Londi’s words show that she did not have the strength to tell her boyfriend if she was not in the mood to have sex; instead she lied about having her menstrual period.

The participants confirmed during a focus group discussion that it was not easy for women to express their sexual feelings to their partners, as shown below:

Zandile: *It’s not easy for a woman to express your feelings when it comes to sex. As women, we are naturally shy when it comes to these things.*

Zethu: *That's true, how can you tell your man that you are not really enjoying? He will think you are undermining him, yah.*

Andiswa: *And you don't want your boyfriend to think that you know a lot about sex, which is not right, so sometimes you just let him feel like he is in control of everything, you know.*

Angela: *But I think we need to be brave and say how we feel when it comes to sex, so that we enjoy the relationship. I do it sometimes and my relationship is good.*

All: *Yes.*

From the above statement it is clear that some female students complied with gender and sexuality norms that position women as being silent about sexual matters. To protect the heterosexual domain and hegemonic masculinity, they chose to keep quiet about their needs and experience regarding sexual activities (Shefer & Foster, 2001). Andiswa's utterances showed that they did not want their partners to know they were knowledgeable about issues regarding sex. Such views clearly indicate that they constructed sexuality as a male domain; hence only men must be knowledgeable and experienced about issues of sex. Andiswa's views might have been informed by historical and cultural norms that suggest that men are highly skilled in issues of sexuality and they, by nature, find pleasure in sexual interaction, while women are not expected to be knowledgeable about issues regarding sex (Kramer, 2015). Such sexual double standards suggest that men are granted more sexual autonomy than women.

Zethu and Andiswa's statements showed how they viewed sexuality within the male sexuality discourse. Such a discourse encourages them to put their partners' desires and interests ahead of their own happiness. Shefer and Foster (2001) note that in a number of South African societies, women's sexuality is often viewed within the discourse of male sexuality, where the male sex drive is key to the construction of both male and female sexuality. This discourse regards sex as inherently masculine, a male domain, and an activity that is male-centred. Angela presented her agency by declaring that women should be brave and express their feelings towards sex in order to enjoy their relationship. She acknowledged that she sometimes expressed her feelings. Her statement demonstrates her rejection of the femininity norm narrative that positions women as obedient and docile in sexual activities (Gilchrist & Sullivan, 2006).

In some individual interviews, the participants expressed that it was difficult for women to take control of their sexual safety. One typical response is shown in the extract below:

***Me:** Do you use protection?*

***Gugu:** Yes, we use protection, but not all the time. Sometimes we don't, sometimes we do. It just happens that sometimes when there are no condoms, we don't use them, yah, it just happens. But I think he doesn't really like to use a condom, because most of the times he says he forgot to buy, yah. He buys the condoms. I am too shy to buy. It's his responsibility, he is the one who wears it, but I think I should also buy because most of the time he forgets to buy. Sometimes when we had unprotected sex, I would buy the morning-after pill. Sometimes when we are done doing it without a condom, I would just say to myself 'Oh my gosh, what if he is gonna infect me with something,' 'cause I'm loyal, but I don't know about him, if he is loyal as well.*

Gugu's statement reflects how gender norms hinder women from negotiating safe sex in their relationships. Gugu admitted that they sometimes used protection and at times they did not. She would rather have unprotected sex if her partner forgot to buy condoms than go and buy them herself. This brings to mind Gil-Llario et al.'s (2017) argument that gender plays a crucial role in human sexuality, especially in terms of relationship rules. It plays a vital role in how young men and women interpret and deal with sexual negotiations. Individuals learn gender roles, which lead to the development of gender disparities in sexual activities (Butler, 1990). Gugu framed her sexuality within the gender difference narrative, where men and women's roles are different. She believed it was her partner's duty to buy condoms and when they have had unprotected sex, she bought a morning-after pill to prevent pregnancy. By agreeing to have unprotected sex with her partner, she further conformed to femininity norms that encourage women to be submissive. Leach (2002) argues that young people at university usually receive gender signals from their peers that remind women to be feminine and men to be masculine. The university environment is usually inhabited by a number of students who hold ideas that to be masculine means being aggressive and dominant, while to be feminine means being submissive and dependent (Leach, 2002). As a result, young female students who have internalised these gender stereotypes are less likely to insist on using protection during sexual intercourse (Maas et al., 2015). Gugu did not refuse unprotected sex; instead, she opted to buy morning-after pills to help prevent pregnancy.

6.2.7 Nurturing a partner

Some first-year female students in this study mentioned that they performed traditional feminine roles in their relationships. Typical examples are shown below in the excerpts from the individual interviews:

Me: What are your duties in your relationship?

Thando: Umm, I make sure that I cook for him, sometimes I do his laundry, yes [Smiling].

Ethel: When we are together, I try to cook for him. I'm not good at cooking but when he is around, I try to cook for him, you know, prepare for him to have his bath, maybe if he has got washing, just put it in the machine.

The above extracts show that the traditional differentiation of the culturally defined gender roles between men and women persists in the university context. The participants' views show that they have internalised patriarchal norms that endow women with a lower social status, by putting men in control. They constructed their role as that of taking care of their partners by cooking and doing their washing. Thando's statement shows that she had stereotyped gender roles as being masculine and feminine. She spoke with confidence and was smiling to show how proud she was of performing household duties for her partner. By performing duties such as cooking and laundry for her partner, she reinforced traditional cultural meanings that encourage women to take care of household duties. Ethel also cooked, did laundry, and ran her partner's bath.

Their words show that they conformed to gender roles and expectations that give women the responsibility of taking care of their partners. They have internalised traditional cultural expectations that encourage nurturing their romantic partners (Boonzaier, 2008; Wood, 2001). Arnett and Hughes (2012) point out that people in any society experience different gender socialisation during their childhood and adolescence period; when they reach early adulthood, such as the majority of university students, they therefore hold different expectations for men and women.

Some believe that men and women will never be equal when it comes to performing such duties, as shown in the extract below from an individual interview:

Carol: *In terms of chores, I don't think we will ever be equal because, like, I cannot expect to take turns with a guy, like I cook today and he cooks tomorrow, you know, but in terms of other things, like the way we value each other, respect each other, we can be equal.*

Although the South African Constitution offers the basis for equality in society, it seems to be a challenge to implement this because the country is inhabited by people from different social and cultural backgrounds with different views (De Lange et al., 2012). Some societies use culture to rationalise the subordination of girls and women by controlling what they might or might not do; for instance, women are often required to focus on doing their kitchen duties, as well as nurturing their children (De Lange et al., 2012). Informed by patriarchal gender norms that position women as responsible for doing domestic chores, Carol believed that men and women could never be equal when it comes to doing household duties such as cooking. She felt that they could only be equal in terms of respecting and valuing each other. Her views illustrate that she subscribed to unbalanced structuring of gender relations, did not object to them, and colluded with men in a gender power disparity (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010).

On the other hand, some participants challenged normative gender roles and voiced their frustrations about women who perform certain domestic chores. They were fully against conforming to gender roles that construct only women as responsible for doing household chores. This is revealed in the extracts below from the individual interviews:

Gugu: *He wants me to be submissive, that's the problem, so I'm like no, no, no, I can't do that. Whenever he is around, I have to focus on him, forget my friends, do whatever he told me to do, like do his laundry, cook, so I'm like no, I can't do that. Just because I am a woman, I have to cook, no ways. If he doesn't want to cook, he has to buy, that's it.*

Khanyo: *... Why do men think that we can cook for them? I'm a student and you are a student, why don't you compromise by cooking for yourself as a male student? Why do I have to perform wifely duties to you, yet I'm still a student? This happens a lot, when you get to girl's room, she is cooking, washing, and doing things for her boyfriend. So we are making men get used to that lifestyle. Then when we can't actually perform it or*

do it for the guy, they start saying, 'You have changed,' and they start to be violent, because they want us to do what they want; so it happens.

The above statements show how some participants rejected gender norms that construct women as responsible for household chores. Gugu completely rejected the notion of being submissive to her partner through cooking and doing laundry for him. She confirmed that her boyfriend wanted her to focus on him alone when they were together and to forget about everything else. Because she is a woman, her boyfriend expected her to cook for him and do his laundry, which she strongly refused to do. Khanyo could not fathom why men thought that women had to cook for them or why women should perform “wifely” duties for their boyfriends. Although Khanyo was against the idea of girlfriends cooking for their boyfriends, she believed that it was a wife’s duty to do such things. She further mentioned that many female students cooked for their boyfriends and washed their clothes. Khanyo believed that conforming to gender roles and expectations such as cooking and doing laundry for your partner may lead to GBV. She was also of the opinion that if a man got used to such a lifestyle and his partner suddenly stopped providing such services, he might become violent towards her. Such behaviour of being violent towards their partner may be a result of believing that their partner is deviating from gender roles and expectations, which encourages women to take care of household tasks. Her statement suggested that men may feel disrespected by women who became assertive by refusing to conform to their expected gender roles. Martin-Storey (2016) argues that those who differ from established gender norms are more likely to encounter violence than those who conform to gender norms. Various factors, such as gender roles and expectations, legitimise, render invisible, sexualise, and help maintain violence against women (Russo & Pirlott, 2006). Bhana et al. (2009) point out that violence is usually viewed as an expression of gender inequality and a method of constructing and sustaining such inequality. Bhana et al.’s (2009) study, titled “Male teachers talk about GBV: ‘Zulu men demand respect’”, reported that male teachers felt that violence against women was a result of men not feeling respected. Their authority is often challenged by women, who disrespect them. In order for them to uphold familiar and unequal gender relations, they collude with each other to put women in their place – expecting them to perform familiar household roles – and in the process reproduce male hierarchical power.

However, there was also awareness that gender roles need to be redefined towards equality, as reflected in the extract below from an individual interview:

Noku: We need to do away with this notion that men are superior creatures as compared to women. If you are in a relationship, like for me and my boyfriend, it doesn't mean I'm gonna be slaving, cooking, no. Like we take turns because, like, we are equals, like one day you cook, one day I cook. I can iron, like he can iron my dress, you know, because we are both humans, unless if somebody is disabled and we have to help them where they can't help themselves. Women and men need to respect each other and we need to teach boys from a young age that they can do tasks that are known to be for women, like cooking. We need to redefine gender roles and that will help with gender- based violence.

Noku believed that there is a need to redefine gender roles towards more equitable gender relations. Lorber (1994) argues that modification of gender roles is possible; for instance, in some Western countries there are fathers who are actively taking care of their little children and males and females are doing the same jobs. Jaramillo-Sierra et al. (2015) argue that there are some people who oppose, challenge, and transform gender by acting contrarily to what is required of them according to gender norms. Noku rejected the patriarchal notion that positions men as superior. She advised women to get rid of the perception that men are superior to women. This can be achieved by respecting each other in a relationship, and she further illustrated it by sharing information on how she and her boyfriend dealt with household tasks. They took turns to do tasks such as cooking and ironing. She also felt that boys should be taught at an early age that they can also do household tasks.

The discussion in this major theme on partners and partnering shows that heterosexuality is the dominant sexuality on campus. The participants further mentioned their different expectations, which included loyalty, love, respect, and being spoiled by their partners. While some participants were interested in marriage, others preferred long-term relationships without marriage in the picture. Some were afraid of commitment because of the lack of trust in relationships. The majority of the participants highlighted that sex is used as a strategy to keep relationships alive. Although sex is used by many female students to strengthen their relationships, it is quite different from the situation for men, as they do it without being emotionally involved.

There were a variety of responses about decision making in relationships. Many participants confirmed that their partners made most of the decisions in their relationship. However, some participants expressed that they made decisions together with their partners, and some confirmed that they made decisions on issues regarding sex. If they were not interested in having sex, they told their partners so and the partners understood. Some participants made a decision not to engage in sex until marriage, and they expected their partners to understand and respect their decision.

The final theme is about managing freedom at university.

6.3 THEME 4: MANAGING THE FREEDOM OF UNIVERSITY LIFE

The participants expressed that the university environment provided a sense of freedom that most were excited about and others viewed as a complex phenomenon.

6.3.1 Freedom and independence

The majority of the first-year female students in this study mentioned that they enjoyed the freedom associated with coming to the university. Some came from highly controlled environments in their homes that they found oppressive. In the excerpt below from an individual interview, Anele talked about being completely free:

Anele: I absolutely enjoy it, especially freedom from parents, yes. My parents are very strict and are very religious. The kind of freedom that I have here is not at home. When I'm at home, I feel like a bird trapped in a cage because I don't go anywhere except to church. My parents want me to stay indoors because I am a girl and when I am here, I feel like a bird which has been released from a cage. I am free to do what I want here. I can go wherever I want to go without asking for anyone's permission. I go clubbing with my friends at night, which I never do at home. I can date whoever I want. At home, my dad will be mad if he sees me talking to a boy, but here I'm free to chat with anyone. I am not even allowed to wear pants at home because my parents think pants are for men only and girls who wear them do not behave well, they seek men's attention, yah. Our religion does not really encourage women to wear pants because they say they are not decent, so yah, when I'm here, I am really free. I can wear pants. They are even my favourite clothes.

Anele enjoyed being free from the control of her parents. She experienced strict control of her movement, dress, and associations by her family. The university space allowed her the freedom to make her own decisions about where to go, what to wear, and whom to date. Londi and Ethel shared similar sentiments during the individual interviews, as reflected in the excerpts below:

Londi: *It makes me feel better, yah, feel good. I can date whoever I want without my parents shouting at me or telling me that it's not a good idea to date. I can go out any time. It's good.*

Ethel: *I can go out and come back whenever I wanna come back. I never used to do that at home. My parents are very strict and they only allow my brother to go out as he pleases.*

The above statements reveal that the first-year female students who participated in this study considered the university a space that provided freedom, which was a great opportunity for them. Their facial expressions showed great happiness about this newfound freedom. The participants' responses clearly show that they came from patriarchal homes where movement and sexuality were highly controlled for girls. Anele said that her parents were very strict and she felt like "a bird trapped in a cage" when at home; meaning there was no freedom. On the other hand, she felt like a bird released from a cage when at university, where she could find a partner of her choice and go out at any time – there were no rules and no one to discipline her.

Ethel mentioned that only her brother had the freedom of going out whenever he liked, which shows that girls have different rules than boys at home. Due to the patriarchal structures in many African societies, which institutionalise the subordination of women (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010), many young women find themselves embroiled in gender roles that subordinate them in a way that they are not free to make decisions about movement and sexuality when they are at home. The participants mentioned that boys had freedom as they were allowed to go out as they pleased. Patriarchy socialises young women to accept certain feminine roles, which view girls as requiring protection, and they cannot freely go out at certain times. With regard to dating, they are protected by not being allowed to engage in relationships. Anele mentioned that at home, her father would be livid if he saw her talking to a boy. Her statement clearly highlights the extent to which girls' sexuality is controlled and suppressed at home, with her father being infuriated by seeing his daughter interacting with a boy. As a result, the university space is viewed as liberating, because it provides opportunities for gender equality. These findings resonate with Bhana and Pillay's (2018) study, which found that the university

environment provides students with an opportunity to express their sexuality and sexual freedom. Students are able to experiment, enjoy, and exhibit sexuality in an environment where sexual surveillance is limited. They can freely date and go out partying without parental supervision.

Similar sentiments were shared during focus group discussions, as shown below:

Sphe: *The freedom is good, really good. I never thought I would have such freedom in my life. You do what you want here and I like it. You go out and nobody cares, you can go out all night and no one will shout at you because you have been out all night, like what my parents do. Because you are a girl, you are not allowed to spend the whole night out clubbing or partying, so I like the freedom. I am enjoying it.*

Khanyo: *It is absolutely great. You can wear what you want and date whoever you want because there is no one to say no, you can't wear this or that, like what parents do at home, yes.*

Phume: *Yes, it is so cool. You can go out clubbing anytime. I agree.*

Similar to the interviews, the focus group discussion data showed that many first-year female students enjoyed the freedom that university gave them and the opportunity to present their agency through deciding what they wanted to wear, whom they wanted to date, and going out whenever they wanted. Anele's religious background did not allow her to wear pants, because pants are regarded as "male" clothing. As a result, women who wear pants are characterised as seeking men's attention. This gendered kind of dressing is a clear reflection of how religion and patriarchy are used to sustain and maintain the subordination of young women at home. The freedom at university allowed her to reject such stereotypical gender norms, and pants had become her preferred type of clothing, which she could wear freely at university.

During the individual interviews, some participants expressed that the freedom provided by the university also encouraged them to explore life at university as female students and it gave them financial independence, which further provided room for them to explore life freely:

Londi: *I feel that I'm independent now, not that independent, but a little independent, 'cause I can do what I want, go out, and date anyone without anyone telling me off. When I was at home, I had to beg, like now I received my money from NSFAS, if I want*

to buy myself new clothes, I will just buy new clothes, but when I'm sitting at home doing nothing, I have to beg for new clothes from my parents.

Andiswa: *It makes me feel... like I'm in control of my own life, no one controls me, and no one tells me that this is right and this is wrong, I can do whatever I want.*

In the above extract, Londi felt that the freedom at university provided her with an opportunity to be independent. She managed to acquire financial independence through the money that she received from the NSFAS. This kind of independence created an opportunity for her to operate more independently, and she could live her life freely without having to beg for money for clothes from her parents. This resonates with an investigation conducted by Spronk (2000), titled “Female sexuality in Nairobi: Flawed or flavoured”, which revealed that financially self-reliant women are able to operate independently and can live a life that is different from societal expectations and beyond social control. They have the ability to date any man without justifying their behaviour. Freedom gives some female students agency, which is the ability to think and act individually and make their own decisions. Andiswa's statement shows that the freedom at university provides agency to female students, as she could control her own life and was able to make her own decisions at university.

Although the university provides freedom, some participants saw it as an opportunity to display responsibility and make decisions that could positively influence their daily lives. Unlike the situation at home where they sometimes did not listen to orders given by their parents, the freedom provided a space for them to make decisions of their own as adults.

The freedom also provided an opportunity to focus more on their own identity, as shown in the excerpt below from an individual interview:

Phume: *Yes, I actually do like the freedom because I become the adult of that space, so when it comes to decision making, I have to think whether it's going to affect me positively or negatively, rather than being told, 'cause sometimes being told what you already know – especially by parents – like you mustn't have too many boyfriends or you must date this guy, is sometimes very irritating; so it's better if I think of the consequences myself rather than being told about them, so yah. When it comes to university, it's where you focus on yourself, get to know yourself, so it's very different. I got to know myself, who I am... that's where you actually find yourself without being told what to do, because when you are being told what to do, you don't know exactly*

who you are, you are just following rules. So here you get to know who you are, your weaknesses or your strength, what you can or can't do, what you are struggling with, what you think you are not, so yah.

From Phume's statement it is clear that freedom is empowering to some students and allows them to grow. They can make decisions of their own regarding their relationships and are prepared to deal with whatever consequences they encounter. Phume reckoned that freedom at university allowed her to explore herself instead of being in an oppressive situation at home, where she just followed the rules.

During the individual interviews, one participant felt that the campus environment enabled some students to explore their sexuality compared to home, where they are judged. Those who did not conform to heteronormative notions had the freedom to express themselves in ways that they chose to.

Khanyo: ... *Like I know a person that is gay, at home they kinda told him that they don't want the whole make-up thing, but if you see him now, he lives in the residence, he is even putting weaves and he is a man, and I think it's because of the judgement he was getting from home. Yah, the freedom here allows you to do anything.*

The above excerpt clearly highlights that the university space provides freedom that allows some students to explore their sexuality in ways that are not possible at home. The findings from this study concur with the conclusions made by Bhana and Pillay (2018) that campus life enables the expression of sexuality and sexual freedom because there is no parental supervision. Khanyo said that she knew a male student who was freely experiencing his sexuality. When at home, his choice regarding his identity was quite limited as he was not allowed to put on make-up or to wear weaves. The participants' home experiences were characterised by traditional gender and sexuality norms, which hinder some students from freely exploring their sexuality at home. This is a clear indication of how society and history are responsible for the context, and the instructional guide that men and women are supposed to follow to create their identities (Kimmel, 2000). In contrast, the university environment provides a space that is more tolerant of diverse sexual orientations, and is a setting where students are usually not coerced to submit to certain gender roles.

Although some participants were happy about the total freedom provided at the university, some expressed concern during the individual interviews about the challenges of managing the newfound freedom:

Sphe: *The freedom is amazing and I'm abusing it because it's something new. My mom is very strict, so you would have to ask a week or two weeks before if you wanna go out with your friends. So now my friends are gonna call me and say to me let's go somewhere, and I will go the same time. It's not even gonna be argument. Even going out at night, at home it's not allowed at all, you can ask a year before, she is not gonna allow it, but now I can go out at night and I think it's not safe to go out at night although I do it.*

Sphe's discussion suggested that she experienced some internal conflict with exercising her freedom at the university. She seemed to challenge and conform to the ideas of protectionism that she was raised on, where girls were not allowed to go out, especially at night.

Thando: *Some female students they just take it, like yah, I've been waiting for this moment. That moment when you feel like I've always wished to do this, and then they overdo it, not thinking about the future. Many girls I've seen, they go partying with guys who are doing fourth year. So, if you are a first year, you just have to stay at your level, go out with guys in first year. You see girls come back in the morning not wearing shoes. I don't know what goes on out there, but when they come back, they are not looking so good. If someone hadn't slept for a day, a shirt looks like it's torn, or she is not dressed properly and she is barefoot, or maybe she's got one shoe back and she doesn't know where the other one is ... yah, they look like they were just having sex with guys and partying, yah. You have to know where you are going and coming from. If you are on campus, you must know that you are here to study and I can have fun but you've to know your limits of fun. Others they just overdo the fun, so you just have to know your limits. Just like partying. You can party in your room with your friends, you don't have to go out at night.*

From the above statements it is appears that the participants felt that the freedom was at times mismanaged by first-year female students. Thando observed that some female students were unaccustomed to freedom and did not know their limits. She expressed the need to be responsible. Her utterances may have been shaped by feminine norms on how a woman should behave. Society generally agrees on typical feminine traits and women are urged to conform to

these characteristics. This results in the majority of women conforming to and embracing prevailing norms of femininity (Courtney, 2000).

During a focus group discussion, the participants mentioned that the newfound freedom was exciting to many female residence students, and that they tended to abuse it:

Boni: *I was gonna say that with us female students you find that it's newfound freedom. If you want to go to a party, you decide where you are going, whereas if you are living at home, if you want to go, you can ask permission and you may not go or you may be allowed to go... So it's like a newfound freedom... Maybe we overdo it and we do things that end up being out of character for us as females. You might drink too much and end up sleeping around with different guys.*

Gugu: *I agree with that, when you try to make up for lost time. Let's say you were not used to going out in high school because of your parents or whatever, then you find the freedom – you tend to go out more, not realising how much you are using it... You form different habits that may not be good for you, like drinking a lot of alcohol and getting drunk, yes.*

Thando: *I went to a mission school and we weren't allowed certain things done to our hair. We weren't allowed to dye our hair and we weren't allowed extensions, we weren't allowed to do certain things, but when it comes to university, you get so much freedom that when you use it, you use it so rapidly that you end up forgetting how much you are overusing it. Like changing hairstyles every now and then because you are trying to make up for all the time that you lost, all the freedom that they denied you.*

The participants felt that female students sometimes took advantage of the freedom and ended up behaving in ways that put them in vulnerable positions. Boni and Gugu's statements show that they complied with gender norms that consider certain behaviours inappropriate for women, such as drinking too much alcohol and sleeping with multiple partners. They believed that because there is so much freedom, some female students exploit it and ultimately adopt habits that are inappropriate for women. Kyei and Ramagoma (2013) found that campus life gives students freedom from parental or adult interference and that such freedom encourages students to participate in activities such as alcohol consumption. That kind of freedom often leads to students engaging in risky behaviour. Thando felt that the reason why she tended to

exploit the freedom was because she attended a mission school where freedom was highly controlled, and she felt the need to make up for lost time.

6.3.2 Freedom is difficult

Contrary to the views above, some first-year female students found the freedom at university difficult to manage, as shown in the excerpts below from the individual interviews:

***Fikile:** I don't really like freedom. I have to be independent now. I have to stand for myself. Everything is so difficult. I don't know what to say, like I used to stay with my parents. I can't adjust to the university environment. Everything is difficult, like if someone upsets me, I need a shoulder to cry on, like my mom, but now I don't have a shoulder to cry on. I miss home, and some male students here are mean, they say things to you just to make you angry, especially if you don't want to date them. I need guidance, like I used to stay with my mom and she used to protect me and give me some sort of guidance.*

Fikile shows that adjusting to the freedom at the university was difficult. It seems as if having come from an environment where she did not have to make any decisions about her life made her dependent on the guidance and control of her parent.

***Noku:** Freedom comes with a sense of responsibility. I need to be responsible about the choices that I make... I do get homesick because I'm a family person, so I do miss home. I don't feel comfortable when I'm alone, because I get sick now and then and I need parents, and there is no one who is always there as a student to take care of me, yah.*

Noku had similar views. From the above statements it is clear that the newfound freedom is sometimes difficult to manage and often frightening to some students. As they transition from high school and home (where they had parents to take care of them) to university (where there are no parents), they find it difficult to adapt to university life and end up feeling homesick. Wearing a sad facial expression, Fikile expressed her difficulties in adjusting to the university environment. She sometimes felt homesick and lonely. She felt that she had to be independent and stand by herself in difficult situations, which was a challenge for her. Fikile believed that she needed someone to provide her with a “shoulder to cry on”, which used to be her mother’s task when she was faced with challenges. Her statement shows that she felt isolated and lonely,

and constructed the university environment as an uncaring place. She depicted herself as a vulnerable victim of such freedom. She felt that she needed guidance and protection from her mother, which lacked at university as she faced harassment from male students whom she refused to date.

Noku was also not comfortable and felt that she needed her parents to “take care” of her. Noku felt that freedom brought a sense of obligation, and she had to be in charge of the choices that she made. She felt that she needed her parents to be there for her, as she fell ill from time to time. Fikile and Noku constructed themselves as helpless individuals who needed protection. Their accounts contained a culturally embedded story of women who construct themselves as passive and emotional, and hence cannot protect or take care of themselves (Muhanguzi, 2011).

The freedom to make choices was also considered to be more of a burden than an opportunity for Busi:

***Busi:** It's very overwhelming 'cause now everything... When you think about what am I gonna eat tonight? What am I gonna wear tomorrow? There is no uniform to wear now. It was easier with uniform 'cause if you wear uniform every day, you don't think about clothes. When you are here at university, it's like okay, I need to get new clothes 'cause the ones I have I have been wearing them for a month or so, so now I need to get new clothes and you don't have the money to buy, maybe you need R200 or R300 to buy a pair of new jeans and you need to work around the money you get from funding. It's a lot 'cause with me, I used to get home every day and my mom will ask me how was school? Do you have homework? Then I do that, then she will say, 'Come let's pray after eating,' then we pray and then we go to sleep. Then we wake up in the morning, have breakfast, go to school, it's like the same routine every day. But having to adapt to that like I go to class and then I go back to my room, where is my mom, where is my sister? So it's hard for me to try to adapt.*

The extract above indicates that for Busi, the transition to university was a challenge. Busi's personal experience of change was quite difficult. According to Schlossberg (2011), the ability to adapt to change differs between people. One person may find a geographical move to be a great opportunity, while another may see it as a loss of identity and support. Busi found it difficult to adapt to the new university environment, and it was quite overwhelming for her. She had to make certain decisions regarding her day-to-day life at university as a student, from thinking of what to wear and what to eat to buying new clothes, which are expensive.

Schlossberg (2011) argues that gender role identification plays a crucial role in adapting to transition. Men and women are usually socialised to different behaviours and attitudes, and the degree to which they adopt these norms may affect their ability to adapt in a significant way. A female who conforms to the stereotypical femininity, which is passive, dependent, and helpless, might find it difficult to adapt to situations that require her to be assertive, autonomous, and self-sufficient. Busi found it difficult to adapt to the new environment, which required her to be independent and self-confident.

6.3.3 Freedom at university is gendered

The majority of the first-year female students asserted that freedom at university was experienced differently by male and female students. Many of the participants indicated that freedom was a complex phenomenon and that it had positive and negative outcomes for female students; for example:

Ethel: Okay, it's good and like bad at the same time, because as much as we deserve freedom, there has to be rules for us, because like we are still young. So like if we are too free, then we are gonna make more mistakes You are gonna go out maybe with friends, you know, then maybe at a party or something you are gonna drink and then end up sleeping with guys.

Ethel suggested that freedom was a strange experience for women and that it being a new experience meant that they did not have the tools to make good decisions.

Niki: It depends. Sometimes it is nice staying alone, but at some point in time it is not nice to stay alone because there are so many difficulties that we come across when we are staying alone. Sometimes we struggle for food, we struggle for clothes, and sometimes you can even go for blessers [rich partner], so that we can get something, and there is peer pressure.

Niki's statements show that even though she enjoyed the freedom, the responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, sometimes forced female students into transactional relationships.

The statements above lay bare the complexities of freedom. There was consensus among some of the participants that freedom was sometimes good and sometimes bad. Although there is an upside to freedom, there are also some drawbacks. The freedom on campus may encourage

some first-year female students to engage in risky behaviour; for example, increased alcohol use and spontaneous sexual activities. Ethel acknowledged that as first-year female students they were still young and they needed some rules to guide them so that they do not make mistakes.

Niki's words suggest that some young first-year female students felt trapped by the freedom provided at university; they were expected to engage in what others are doing. Niki felt that peer pressure may force some students to engage in risky behaviour such as transactional sex or alcohol consumption. Paul et al. (2000) note that alcohol consumption among college students is common and is usually associated with casual sex. As a result, women who consume alcohol are often seen by male students as readily available for sex. This often leads to many young women who consume alcohol to engage in spontaneous sexual activity.

Niki's statements suggest that some students were constrained by the freedom at university, as they reluctantly engaged in behaviour that they were not comfortable with, simply because others were engaging in it.

Some of the female students were explicit about the differences in gendered experiences and expressions of freedom at the university; for example:

***Sphe:** Freedom is there but it's different, because we cannot do the same things with boys. If maybe you go to parties or go out, it's a problem. As a female, you cannot do that all the time because they will judge you, they will call you all sorts of names, and even bringing male visitors, you can't be bringing visitors on a daily basis because they will start placing names on you and all that. As female students we are just so judgmental towards each other. Guys can exercise their freedom however they please. They can have many girlfriends, nobody will say anything, and instead they blame the girls for being stupid. They will praise the guy for having 10 girlfriends or something, they will praise him for drinking on a daily basis. I don't understand how it works.*

Sphe mentioned that there were limits to female students' freedom. Female students' sexuality was policed and they faced harsh judgements for exercising their freedom. This was not the case for male students. Anele had a similar view and added that certain activities were reserved as normal for male students:

***Anele:** Male students do whatever they want here without being judged. They date many girls here and their behaviour is seen as normal, but if a girl is found to be cheating on*

her guy, she is talked about as if she is a prostitute. Even if a girl has friends who are males, people talk about her as if she is doing a horrible act. Yoh, it's not fair. Guys drink alcohol here and some of them, when they are drunk, they behave like they are crazy, like shouting at other students, but if a girl goes out and get drunk and does something crazy, like sleeping with someone, she is criticised. It's not right. Male students think they can get away with anything here.

Anele spoke out against the judgement that female students faced for acting in the same ways as male students do. She challenged the double standards and called them unfair. In the excerpt below, Angela showed that the policing of female students' behaviour constrained her freedom of movement and forced her to remain in her room:

Angela: *As for me, it is different because mostly male students they drink and smoke and they are always together. They can do what they want without questions asked. I'm always in my room, because I don't want people to say bad stuff about me. Girls who have male friends are seen as prostitutes and people say bad stuff about them.*

The above extracts reflect a kind of freedom that is gendered, where male students enact performances that are often socially acceptable for their gender, while female students are condemned if they act in the same manner. These gendered differences in sexuality are clearly shown in the above excerpts. Similar views were shared during the focus group discussions, as shown in the excerpts below:

Primrose: *You cannot exercise the freedom that you have, because of what people are going to say about you. So living in residence and being a female is really hard, because of what people would say, so you would find yourself being trapped or being enclosed in a small box of things that you can actually do and things that you can't do.*

Fikile: *And also we are socialised differently because of our gender, so boys are allowed to do certain things that girls are not allowed to do. For example, if I have friends who are always coming to see me, if it's a male, then I'm going to be seen as a whore or something like that, but if it's a guy – even if you see a female friend or you see a male friend and they come to visit you and stuff – it doesn't matter to anyone, but if you are a girl and you have male friends who come to see you at resi, people are going to start talking and whispering behind your ear, and you hear hearsay that this girl said this and that and you are labelled because of that. So you are not allowed like to have friends coming over to visit you, even if it's during the day they count, like oh*

you have had that guy coming to you and that guy coming, you know, so you are seen as being like promiscuous, yah.

The participants felt that although there was freedom at university, it was men who exercised this freedom freely, especially sexual freedom. Many students have internalised and normalised gender role stereotypes by praising male students with many girlfriends and approving alcohol consumption among male students, while female students are condemned for the same. This praise for men for such behaviour and condemnation of women may emanate from socially acceptable gender norms, which view men as having uncontrollable sexual desires that need to be satisfied through having multiple women (Muhanguzi et al., 2011). In contrast, women are supposed to perform feminine roles, which require them to be faithful to their partners and to serve only their partners (Muhanguzi et al., 2011). Those who do not act according to their gender are usually ridiculed within the culture, since the power structure gives precedence to preserving the gender binary (Butler, 1988). As a result, female students' sexual reputation seems to suffer if they make male friends, bring male friends into their residence, or go out partying or clubbing and drinking alcohol.

Milnes (2004) notes that the gendered sexual behaviour discourse mainly serves to naturalise female monogamy and male promiscuity. The existence of sexual double standards at this university campus, where male students engage in relations with multiple sexual partners and are praised for such behaviour, while female students who hang out with or date different men are criticised, is an indication that many students accept male promiscuity and female monogamy. Maas et al. (2015) maintain that the sexual double-standards phenomenon allows males access to greater sexual freedom than females.

The extracts from the individual interviews above show that female students who cheat on their boyfriends are often gossiped about; they are expected to engage in stable relations with one man, whom they are required to be faithful to. However, other female students like Anele rejected this expression of sexuality through sexual double standards by stating that it was not right for women to be judged. On another level, Angela conformed to norms of female sexuality that are constructed around morality and self-discipline. Chong and Kvasny (2007) note that female sexuality is often created around conservative descriptions of pureness, abstinence, morals, self-discipline, and denial of sexual satisfaction. This patriarchal belief mandates women to be faithful, to abstain from sex, and to be self-disciplined, instead of addressing the sexual practices of men. Angela's utterances might also have been shaped by stereotypical feminine norms that view women as asexual and that often require them to be faithful and

desist from having multiple partners (Muhanguzi et al., 2011). Reddy and Dunne's (2007) investigation on young heterosexual femininities in the South African context of HIV/AIDS revealed that young women in South Africa are often worried about their sexual reputation, and that young women who engage in sexual activities with many boys are often labelled as sluts. As a result, they often steer clear of engaging in relationships with many partners in order to protect their reputation.

The female students felt that their freedom at university was also often limited because it was unsafe for women, as reflected in the extracts below from the individual interviews:

Sphe: *Living here is not really safe 'cause some of the boys that reside in the residence they tend to... when they are drunk and maybe you are walking past them, maybe at night, they can be very violent towards you. The manner they speak, what they say, and pushing you around, 'cause one thing has happened where I was walking back to my room at night, and then they were coming and they had their alcohol, and this guy was saying, 'Hey how are you?' And I'm like, 'I'm good, how are you?' And he was like, 'Can you come to our room with your friends then we can chill together and continue drinking?' and I was, 'No, I just want to go to sleep,' and he was like, 'Why are you being like that 'cause I'm asking you nicely?' At that time I was shaking his hand and he held onto it and he was gripping it harder and harder, and I'm like, 'Can you please let go of my hand?' and he was like, 'Why? We are still talking,' and I said, 'Okay, I'm not comfortable with what you are doing now, so can you please just let go of my hand, I want to go to my room and sleep.' Then he really got angry and told his friends that I think I'm better than everyone, and his friends were entertaining him and laughing, and the way he let go, it was so painful, so I would say we are not safe and as well as letting people in. Anybody can come in. It's so easy to come in, so I think security needs to be tightened 'cause who knows, maybe a person who intends to abduct girls or rape girls can just come in 'cause it's so easy to get into the campus.*

Fikile: *We have freedom here, but it's not safe and that's a problem. Sometimes you find men knocking on doors for no reason when they are drunk, pretending like they are looking for someone and they do that often.*

Phume: *It's not safe. I was attacked by three drunk guys trying to go upstairs within the residence. They attacked me. We are supposed to have tight security so that we can move around at night without being scared; we shouldn't have people who are not*

students inside the school premises. Now most of us are scared to move around campus alone at night. You will need someone to accompany you if you are going somewhere like to the library, so yah, it's not safe.

The above excerpts suggest that the freedom available on campus is compromised by an unsafe environment for women. Hollander (2001) asserts that the socially constructed notion of femininity is that it is usually associated with vulnerability, and vulnerability to violence is a main feature of being female because women are often perceived as lacking strength. The excerpts above show that some female residence students cannot move around freely at night because they fear that something bad might befall them. Sphe and Phume shared their experiences, where Sphe was attacked by male students and Phume was attacked by male outsiders. Their experiences reveal how female students are worried about the perpetration of violence by men. This supports the view that men are the most frequent perpetrators of GBV (Boonzaier, 2008). Their perpetration of violence has been attributed to patriarchy, which aims to sustain and perpetuate itself through the subordination of women (Connell, 2003). In addition, men use violence as a tool for the construction and reproduction of dominant gender relations, in particular certain versions of dominant masculinities.

Sphe and Phume both agreed that there were no stringent security measures in and around campus residences. Phume mentioned that many female residence students were scared to go out alone, since they were vulnerable to violence. Her utterance indicates how she conformed to femininity norms that regard women as beings who are unable to protect themselves. Fikile also talked about men who pretended to be looking for someone by randomly knocking on their doors. Their accounts show that female residence students are vulnerable to violence on campus. The amount of freedom provided at university was a cause for concern to many participants, as it compromised their safety. From the statements above it was clear that people entered the campus as they pleased, which put the lives of many female students at risk. The participants feared that people who freely gain access to their residences at any time are a danger to their lives. This finding resonates with Gordon and Collins' (2013) findings on female students' understandings of GBV at a South African university. They found that female students experienced violence on campus, which often led to them being continuously afraid of becoming victims of sexual violence and that such anxieties affected their daily activities and behaviours.

The discussion in this theme on managing freedom at university shows that the majority of the participants, as female first-year university students living in residences, considered the

newfound freedom as liberating and enjoyable as it was different from their homes where strict rules were imposed on them mainly because they were female. The participants' responses showed that their patriarchal home environment hindered them from exploring their sexuality. As a result, the freedom provided by university life was enjoyable. However, although many participants considered university life as liberating, there is evidence from the data that the freedom also constrained some female students, who often found themselves trapped in a culture of doing what others were doing; they were free from their parents, but constrained by the expectations of their fellow university students. In some cases they did not enjoy the freedom, since the kind of freedom that is provided is gendered. Female students who opted to enjoy their freedom by going out and dating whomever they wanted were often judged, while male students who engaged in sexual relations with multiple girlfriends were praised. Because they feared being judged by other students, especially female students, they found themselves not freely enjoying their newfound liberation.

6.4 CONCLUSION

This second data analysis chapter presented the final two themes that emerged from this study.

The theme "Partners and partnering" showed that the majority of participants were in heterosexual relationships and that those who aspired to be in a relationship wanted to date males. The participants shared the challenges they encountered and their expectations in a relationship. Some first-year students showed their agency by taking control of the decision making in their relationships.

The theme "Managing the freedom of university life" revealed that many participants came from patriarchal homes where their movements were controlled and rules were imposed on them; they therefore constructed the university environment as liberating to them. Although many participants considered university life as liberating, there is evidence from the data that the freedom also constrained some female students, who often found themselves under pressure and trapped in a culture of doing what others were doing. They were free from their parents, but constrained by the expectations of other university students.

The next chapter provides the conclusion of this study, and provides recommendations based on the findings.

CHAPTER 7:

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous two chapters presented and analysed the data that emerged from this study. This chapter concludes the study by summarising and synthesising the findings that respond to the purpose of the study and the three critical research questions, as well as presenting recommendations based on these findings.

The purpose of this study was to explore first-year female residence students' experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality in the context of GBV. The following three critical research questions guided me in conducting this study:

- What are first-year female university residence students' understandings of GBV?
- How do students experience being female, first year, and resident at university?
- How do first-year female university residence students construct their gender and sexuality in the context of GBV?

The responses to these three critical research questions were intimately intertwined and cannot be separated, since first-year female university residence students' understandings and experiences mutually shaped each other and their sexualities in the context of GBV. The next section presents an overview of the chapters of this study.

7.2 OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS

This study on first-year female university residence students' experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality in the context of GBV was presented in seven chapters. Every chapter presented comprehensive sections that assisted in answering the three critical research questions. As a result, it is useful to present a brief summary of the contents of every chapter in this study, and highlighting the relevant aspects that were significant.

Chapter 1 outlined the background and the context of the study. The purpose of the study, its objectives, and the three critical research questions were presented in this chapter.

Chapter 2 provided a comprehensive review of international and South African literature on constructions of gender and sexuality, GBV in South Africa, gender, femininity and GBV,

masculinity and GBV, gender, sexuality, and power. GBV at universities, university students' experiences of gender and sexuality, risk factors of GBV, and empirical studies carried out on gender and sexuality were discussed.

Chapter 3 discussed the theories that I used to analyse the data in this study. The study utilised social constructionist theories of gender and sexuality. The chapter motivated the usefulness of these theories for analysing the data that were generated.

Chapter 4 outlined in detail the methodology and research methods that I utilised to conduct this study. The study used the interpretive paradigm and a qualitative approach. A case study approach was employed in this study, and the tools that were used to generate data were individual interviews, focus group discussions, and a research diary.

Chapter 5 focused on discussing two main themes. The themes were "Gender, power, and violence" and "Fitting into university culture". The two main themes were not discussed in any particular order and responded to the three critical research questions. Supporting subthemes were utilised to discuss these themes in detail.

Chapter 6 discussed the remaining two themes of "Partners and partnering" and "Managing the freedom of university life". The two themes included supporting subthemes to discuss the main themes in detail.

This chapter concludes the study by summarising and synthesising the findings that respond to the purpose of the study and the three critical research questions, as well as presenting recommendations based on the findings.

7.3 SYNTHESIS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

This section synthesises the main findings of this study. Social constructionist theories of gender and sexuality and various concepts such as heterosexuality, sexuality scripts, gender, and power and GBV were utilised to analyse the data.

This study contributes original insights on how first-year female university residence students negotiate their lives within a context of gender, power, and violence. The voices of the first-year female students at the selected university were privileged in this study and direct quotations were generously presented in the analysis chapters.

7.3.1 Freedom and independence

The newfound freedom that being at university and residing there brought to first-year female students was understood and experienced in complex and contradictory ways. Many came from conservative patriarchal contexts where the freedom of girls and women was severely restricted. The majority of the sample of first-year female university students living in residences considered their newfound freedom as liberating, empowering, and enjoyable, as it was different from their homes, where strict rules were imposed on them. Some participants were aware of how a patriarchal home environment, which institutionalised the subordination of women by restricting their dress, movement, and activities, constrained their freedom. The freedom available at university allowed the first-year female university residence students to make their own decisions regarding dress and activities. With this newfound freedom, they had an opportunity to freely explore their sexuality, as they could date whomever they wanted without strict rules or discipline being imposed on them. They were also at liberty to wear whatever they wanted and they could freely go out partying and clubbing at any time of the day without any restrictions. In these ways, they experienced the freedom provided by the university as liberating.

Many found the freedom to be empowering, since it enabled them to become independent and take control of their lives. They experienced satisfaction in being able to manage their time, finances, and associations. However, some first-year female university students who lived in residences feel overwhelmed by such freedom. They struggled to adapt to the sudden lack of guidance and control that they were accustomed to at home and school. These female students saw themselves as helpless individuals who needed the protection of their parents.

Freedom at university is a gendered performance and experience. Female students' freedom is constrained by broader structures of gender and sexuality that accept and promote the risk-taking behaviour of male sexuality and that police and judge female sexuality. The participants identified the gendered nature of freedom and that female students were more vulnerable to violence. They chose ways in which they could exercise some level of agency, but were restricted by the gendered nature of violence, which forced them to conform to restrictions placed on their movement and behaviour.

However, some female residence students learned how to manage the newfound freedom by enjoying it, while at the same time taking control of their safety. Female students found

themselves caught between freedom to experiment, judgement, and possible violation if they engaged in sexual relationships with multiple partners.

This study argues that within this new space that is characterised by freedom and independence, the freedom of first-year students who reside at the university residences is constrained by prevailing gender norms that are connected to violence. Comprehensive approaches are required to create an enabling environment that addresses the transition into the university space and to disrupt dominant heterosexist constructions of femininity and masculinity within which violence against women is normalised.

7.3.2 Managing cultural displacement

The majority of the female students in the study came from cultural contexts within which young women were strongly controlled. This included staying indoors (unless working outside), not going out at night, wearing skirts and dresses, and avoiding sexual activities. When they came to university, they found the culture to be very different. Being a first-year female university residence student means adopting new and sometimes strange identities and behaviour, and these put pressure on many of them as they attempted to fit into a specific culture at university. This included pressure to dress in particular ways, pressure to go clubbing and drinking, as well as pressure to engage in a relationship and have sex. This kind of pressure was at odds with socialisation at home.

Female students faced immense pressure to wear trendy clothes, make-up, and weaves. This pressure faced by female students to dress in certain ways is often gendered, since there is greater focus on women's appearance. Since the university comprises students from different socioeconomic backgrounds, many female students cannot afford to compete with those from rich backgrounds, and as a result may resort to transactional sex to meet the standard of dress encouraged by the environment. Transactional relationships are characterised by unequal gender relations that diminish women's capacity to negotiate the terms of relationships. The male partner, who is the provider of financial rewards, becomes the decision maker in the relationship and may exercise violence to show his power in the relationship. As a result, young women are rendered powerless to make sexual decisions as the provider of financial rewards is often in control of the situation (Jewkes, 2010). This therefore shows that female students, especially those from poor backgrounds or the marginalised, who engage in transactional sex

may not be in a position to reject the patriarchal and hegemonic masculinity norm that subordinates them.

The pressure to conform to the prescribed version of culture and femininity at university is experienced as harassment of those who are regarded as not complying with the norms of dress. Such harassment further undermines their sense of belonging on campus. Female students were often teased by being called *gogo* (granny), to show that their kind of dressing was old-fashioned. As a result, they were forced to change the way that they dressed or looked. Despite the availability of national legislative tools such as the Constitution of South Africa (1996) that specifies the need to treat one another equally and with dignity, harassing someone because of the way they dress continues to undermine the dignity and equality among some first-year female students. There is a need for more approaches regarding transformation at universities, besides the provision of legislative frameworks. First-year female students are expected to adapt to circumstances and unwelcome higher education cultures and to endure humiliation and other types of marginalisation as they transition to university. Although the pressure to dress in a particular way is quite intense, some first-year female residence students did not submit to such demands. They rejected this new role by opting not to conform to the kind of dressing that required them to wear make-up, pants, or trendy clothes, as well as using skin bleaches to lighten their skin.

Being a first-year female university residence student often means conforming to university culture that often goes against their culture at home. Some found the more liberal norms at the university to be positive, and enjoyed it, but were aware that they could not carry it back to their communities. Many female students ended up resorting to living a double life; at university they adopted the university culture of wearing certain clothes, such as pants and crop tops, while at home they wore different clothes, such as long skirts and dresses. Some consumed alcohol at university, while they maintained sobriety at home. Many first-year students found it challenging to maintain two different lives.

Some first-year female university residence students conformed to conventional norms of femininity and believed that women should not drink alcohol. They believed that alcohol consumption among women can put them at risk of being violated, or cause women to behave inappropriately. Other female students drank alcohol even though they believed that they were acting against socially acceptable feminine norms. They felt conflicted in their choices and hid it from others, especially their partners in the fear that they might lose them if they found out.

First-year female students felt pressure from peers to conform to norms regarding sexuality, with heterosexuality being dominant. First-year female residence students faced pressure to be in a relationship and to engage in sexual activities. Many asserted that the dominant culture at university was heterosexuality and this culture shaped how first-year female students behaved on this campus. Because the expected norm at this university campus is to be in a relationship and to have sex, some first-year female students found themselves experiencing their first sexual encounter when they entered university. This contradicts conservative femininity norms from some first-year female residence students' communities that prescribe that women must remain virgins until they get married.

Some participants demonstrated contradictions in their constructions of gender and sexuality. Some female students did not capitulate to pressure to have sex. This is reflected in cases where some female students were not comfortable with being a virgin, but continued to uphold their virginity because they did not want to disappoint their parents, or where they wanted to remain virgins because their culture promotes abstinence and virginity among young women.

It is important for university stakeholders to understand the implications of the cultural displacement that new students face and which facilitates their transition into the new culture at the university. Induction programmes for first-year female university students can be organised by older students who are familiar with the challenges that many first-year female students face as they transition from high school to university and from home to a university residence.

7.3.3 Gender, power, and violence

This study found the university campus to be a space for various forms of explicit and implicit gender violence. For female students entering university and residing on campus, the environment on campus is fertile grounds for gender inequity, sexual coercion, and danger. It seems that being a first-year female university residence student is synonymous with vulnerability to GBV. Many first-year female university residence students are vulnerable to explicit violence, including verbal abuse, sexual coercion, and physical assault (Dunne et al., 2006). Violence is mainly from people that are known to them, with intimate partners being prominent.

Many female students internalise notions that women in general are fragile and soft, and therefore unable to fight back when faced with a violent situation. By constructing women as

fragile, emotional, and weak, many first-year female university residence students accepted versions of hegemonic masculinities as natural and therefore accepted dominance and abuse from men as normal. Violence, especially in intimate relationships, was seen as normal. Many female students would rather stay in an abusive relationship and risk being violated than risk losing the relationship. Those who were beaten by their partners often blamed themselves for their partner's behaviour, instead of blaming their abusive partners. Some female students normalised sexually coercive situations with their male partners and they did not regard forced sex as rape. Instead, they considered such behaviour as men's typical sexual behaviour. Some were forced to have sex by their drunk partner, and they blamed alcohol for this. Such responses show that they excused and accepted "male gender inequitable behavior" (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010, p. 9). Furthermore, some female students indicated that they were attracted to men who possess dominant and aggressive qualities. They believed that it was a good thing for a woman to be in a relationship with someone who has power and is in charge. Such beliefs show that they helped to maintain and strengthen hegemonic masculinities that perpetuate the subordination of women. Such views show that there is a need to interrogate the ways in which first-year female students' constructions of gender serve to perpetuate an unequal gender order that makes them vulnerable to gender violence on campus.

Accepting their partner's aggressive behaviour is an indication of the power imbalances that are found in first-year female students' relationships and their inclination to participate in their own subjugation. Such power imbalance between partners constrain women's sexual freedom and increase men's sexual independence (Chong & Kvasny, 2007). Information and support provided to first-year female students need to pay particular attention to issues of power relations, sexual entitlement by men, and women's tolerance of violence to maintain a sexual relationship (Bhana & Pillay, 2018). Interventions may also include mobilising support from young women who experience violence from their partner.

Although many first-year female university residence students believed that men were the main perpetrators of violence, they mentioned that female students were not always innocent victims of violence. Female students also perpetrate violence against other women on campus. While this is evidence of the challenge to gender stereotypes that position women as passive and submissive, in most of the cases the fights were over men.

Gender inequalities on campus are exposed by explicit violence that exists, which is perpetrated through sexual harassment. First-year female students often experienced sexual harassment from some male members of the SRC, who often asked for sexual favours in exchange for

accommodation and other services. Some SRC members even went as far as asking first-year female students to cook for them or to clean their rooms in exchange for help. They exploited first-year female students because they knew that they were new to the environment, and they also believed that they were naïve. They used sexual harassment as a tool to exert their power and dominance over first-year female students. SRC members who hold positions of power are supposed to protect first-year female students and participate in gender transformation. However, their behaviour shows that they are liable for shaping and producing the very gender imbalances that promote and maintain a culture of violence. First-year female students also experienced sexual harassment from senior male students, who often asked first-year female students to date them; if they refused their requests, they resorted to spreading false rumours, accusing the female student of sleeping around with different men.

Heterosexuality is the dominant sexuality on campus. The lives of some gay and lesbian students are defined by homophobic violence that they face on campus. They are often subjected to name-calling such as *isitabane*. These insults show how gender influences dynamics and homophobic violence. Male students perpetrate violence in a bid to protect their masculinity, as well as to validate a gender conformity that is related to a social system that privileges heterosexuality (Tomsen & Mason, 2001). Male students continue to assert their power through sexually harassing gay and lesbian students, as well as female students. Such behaviour is a clear indication of the challenges that prevail of changing gender relations at university. Patriarchal gender and cultural norms that maintain relations of domination and power continue to influence male students' views of women.

Some female students conformed to conservative gender norms that prescribe that women should not wear revealing clothes, because they might attract men's attention sexually, or they may put themselves in danger of being violated. They internalised ideas that a woman is defined by the way she dresses. Such beliefs show that they conformed to femininity norms that require women to hold themselves with decorum and dignity. However, some first-year female students rejected the notion of blaming women for being raped because of the manner in which they dressed. They believed that men should learn to control their sexual feelings.

First-year female university residence students' agency in violent relationships was constrained because of fear of stigmatisation. They suggested that stigma was associated with being a victim of abuse, as well as reporting abuse by a partner. They may not disclose their personal experiences of violence or may not report being violated because they felt embarrassed about such an encounter, and they believed that reporting such an experience would damage their

reputation. Others might not report IPV because they wanted to paint a picture that they are in a happy relationship, and they also did not want to lose their relationship. As a result, they remained in abusive relationships. These findings clearly indicate how social institutions might undermine these young women's agency in taking decisive action by reporting violence perpetrated by their partners. Interventions must be put in place to raise the "visibility of and support" (Bhana & Pillay, 2018, p. 77) for female students to report violence.

This study also established that some first-year female residence students reproduced their socially and culturally constructed versions of femininity in the university setting. Many of the first-year female residence students defended and upheld gender roles that consider women's duty to be in the kitchen and doing domestic chores. They considered domestic tasks such as cooking and doing laundry for their partners as their obligation in relationships, because they were by nature women. Such behaviour shows that they have internalised traditional cultural expectations that encourage nurturing their romantic partners. Some female students believed that men and women could never be equal in terms of doing domestic chores. Such views show that they subscribed to unbalanced structuring of gender relations, did not object to them, and colluded with men in gender power disparity (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010).

Although many first-year female students still held the view that women should take care of their partners by doing domestic chores, some presented their agency by entirely rejecting such gendered views. They believed that gender roles should be redefined and that men should do tasks that are usually regarded as for women. They believed that conforming to norms that require women to do household chores often led to violence; for example, a man who is used to being cooked for by his girlfriend might feel disrespected if she decided not to cook for him, and he might decide to punish her by using violence.

The university should conduct awareness campaigns (including workshops) for first-year students on gender equality. This could assist in curbing assumptions often made about gender roles, where roles such as domestic chores are often associated with women. This might also assist in decision making in relationships where male partners often make most decisions.

It was also evident that patriarchal culture and gender played a significant role in the first-year female students' sexuality. They mainly conformed to femininity norms that made it difficult for them to challenge or make positive decisions around them. Maintaining and holding onto a relationship was important to many of the first-year female students. Understanding how first-year female students construct their sexuality and the length to which first-year female students

go to preserve their relationship is important in designing intervention plans to deal with violence in higher education institutions, as well as targeting issues and concerns that are of importance to them.

Some of the first-year female students used sex as a tool for keeping a relationship strong and alive. The first-year female university residence students often held the belief that men were generally interested in sex, and were happy when they got it, which led to a stronger relationship. Such an assumption is usually associated with patriarchal gender and sexuality norms that position men as naturally erotic human beings. These gendered scripts cause women to assume that men desire many sexual activities and in order to keep their men to themselves, they have to provide more sex to them, at the expense of their own sexual satisfaction. As a result, women may continue to engage in unwanted sexual activities with their partners in a bid to salvage their relationships (Kaestle, 2009). Constructing men as sexual beings shows that the first-year female students complied with and assisted in maintaining the dominant version of masculinity (hegemonic masculinity) that subordinates and oppresses women (Connell, 2005). Because sex is a tool that is utilised to strengthen a relationship, the first-year female students often conformed to feminine norms that put them at risk of being violated. They experienced gender power disparities in their relationships, which left them vulnerable to sexual risk and abuse. Although there are measures in place on this campus to assist students, such as the availability of a health clinic (where registered nurses provide sexual health education focusing on safe sex, unwanted pregnancies, and STIs), peer education, and a women's forum, more needs to be done to address the way in which femininity is socially constructed on this campus. Through social interaction, they learned gender roles that led to sexual differences in sexual activities. The power differences between men and women in societies might influence decisions about sex, which include the rate of occurrence and nature of sexual practices. Vast male power may lead to men having control over sexual initiation and refusal (Pulerwitz et al., 2002) and constrains female students' ability to make positive choices regarding their sexuality.

The first-year female students justified and embraced shy behaviour by expressing gender essentialism notions that position women as naturally different from men. They expressed views such as that women are by nature shy to express their true feelings about sexual activities, or men may feel undermined if they are told that they did not satisfy their partners sexually. Some of the female students believed that if they expressed their feelings, they might be seen as having broad sexual exposure, which they felt was not appropriate for women.

These gendered sexual scripts position women's sexuality as inactive, which may prove to make it difficult for them to share their sexual preferences or concerns with their partners (Maas et al., 2015).

Some of the first-year female university residence students were complicit in maintaining gender power disparities. They constructed men as decision makers (of all or most decisions) and in control of relationships. They believed that by nature men have a right or are entitled to make most or all decisions in relationships. Such assumptions show that they have learned and internalised gender norms that view women as having a limited world, where they have to comply and be complicit with the version of masculinity that encourages men to be in control of sexual relationships (Muhanguzi, 2011). By constructing men as the sole decision makers, the first-year female residence students continued to reproduce patriarchal notions that position men as the heads of households, and further create gender imbalances that may limit women's ability to negotiate safe sexual practices in their relationships. Understanding the ways in which first-year female students construct gender and sexuality in this regard is important in establishing conditions that are necessary to achieve gender equality and in developing plans to deal with gender violence at university.

Some first-year female residence students showed agency by making firm decisions regarding sexual choices. They expressed their sexual desires and took control of their sexual safety. This therefore indicates the need to review misconceptions related to female sexuality as organised around masculine principles (Fiaveh, 2017, p. 101). Women can be supported by paying attention to their ability to negotiate sex. Some first-year female university residence students openly challenged conservative gender norms by rejecting the common ideal of commitment in relationships. Others based interactions with partners purely on satisfying their own sexual desires, without commitment or any future plans for marriage. This shows that not all first-year female university residence students comply with the romantic narrative that often associates women with strong feelings of love for a partner and serious long-term relationships, which, according to Milnes (2004), may constrain women's decisions to negotiate their sexual relationships and safeguard their own sexual wellbeing.

Sexuality education modules based on gender equality should be part of the university curriculum. This would be useful in addressing "diversity within relationship dynamics that go beyond relationship and danger" (Bhana, 2017, p. 77). Topics such as diversity in sexual experiences, as well as in negotiation of sexuality, may be included in sexuality education.

This will assist in dealing with the power disparities found in sexual relationships, as well as toxic masculinities that encourage men to have multiple partners (Bhana, 2017).

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study makes the following recommendations for future research:

- It would be useful to conduct another study at a later stage of the participants' lives at university, to determine whether they still hold the same views regarding gender and sexuality, or whether there are changes in their understandings of GBV or their experiences of gender and sexuality.
- This study focused on first-year female residence students on a particular university campus. Future research is required to examine first-year female students in a different contextual environment, such as those who reside off-campus. This will extend research to understanding first-year female university students' experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality beyond the on-campus residence context.
- The sample utilised in this study comprised young African women mainly from poor backgrounds. A study with a diverse sample of young women may expand the understanding of how women from different racial backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender identities, language, and nationality construct gender and sexuality in the context of GBV.
- This study focused on female students only. An investigation examining young men's experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality in the context of GBV may possibly provide complementary data about gender and sexuality in higher education institutions in South Africa.
- Future research may also include both male and female students' understandings and experiences since men featured prominently in the discussions in this study.

7.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided an overview of the chapters in this thesis and further provided a synthesis of the findings and implications for higher education. Recommendations for future research were also provided.

In this qualitative case study conducted at a UKZN campus, it was found that the university is a space that is very different from schools and homes. Coming to university is a new experience

for all students, but there are particular experiences and challenges that first-year female students who reside in campus residences encounter. When they come to university, they often experience and understand their freedom in complex ways. They can explore their sexuality, wear whatever they want, go out anytime, and consume alcohol without any restrictions or rules. However, some first-year female residence students find it difficult to manage such freedom, and they end up unhappy. As first-year female students attempt to adapt to the new environment, they might find themselves not making the most of the freedom provided at the university, because the kind of freedom provided is gendered, where men can date multiple women and female students are judged for simply befriending male students.

Cultural displacement is a major challenge for first-year female residence students. Given the different cultures at home and at school, they often find themselves under pressure to fit into the new culture at university. Some students reject their previously held norms regarding alcohol consumption, dressing, relationships, and sex, and they adopt the new culture at university. Some first-year female residence students struggle to fit in, and they often find themselves living a double life where they wear clothes at university that are different from what they wear at home. Other female students do not have the financial means to meet their fellow students' expectations of standards of dress, and they end up engaging in transactional relationships to manage this pressure. Some totally reject the new culture and continue to uphold the norms that they learned at home.

Most of the first-year female students in this study conformed to heterosexual norms and they took care of their partners by doing domestic chores. In their heterosexual relations, men are usually responsible for making most or all decisions. Sex is sometimes utilised to make a relationship stronger. These female students were, however, shy to express their sexual desires in these relationships.

First-year female students are also affected by issues of gender, power, and violence at university. Within this new space, which is characterised by freedom and independence, first-year students living in the university residences negotiate their gender and sexuality constructions.

Programmes that pay particular attention to power relations, love, sexuality, and gender equality may assist in developing an empowered version of femininity. In order for these programmes to thrive, they need to be informed by female students' realities or the meanings they attach to gender and sexuality.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethical Clearance Certificate



23 November 2017

Mrs Sibonile Kabaya 215079966
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Kabaya

Protocol reference number: HSS/1760/017D

Project Title: First year female residence students' construction of gender and sexuality in the context of gender based violence at a South African university

Full Approval – Full Committee Reviewed Protocol

In response to your application received 21 September 2017, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully


.....
Dr Shamile Naidoo (Deputy Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

cc Supervisor: Professor Shakila Singh
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr SB Khoza
cc School Administrator: Ms Tyzer Khumalo

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

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Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8360/4567 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

Appendix 2: Gatekeeper's Permission



14 August 2017

Mrs Sibonile Kabaya (SN 215079966)
School of Education
College of Humanities
Edgewood Campus
UKZN

Email: sibonilembanje@yahoo.com Singhs7@ukzn.ac.za

Dear Mrs Kabaya

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

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

"First year female residence students' constructions of gender and sexuality in the context of gender based violence at a South African university".

It is noted that you will be constituting your sample by conducting interviews, and/or focus groups with first year female students residing in the residences on the Edgewood campus.

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

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

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

Yours sincerely

MR SS MOKOENA
REGISTRAR

Office of the Registrar

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, South Africa

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

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Washville

Appendix 3: Informed Consent Letter



INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

My name is Sibonile Kabaya. I am a PhD student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, School of Education. I would like to invite you to participate in a study that I am undertaking.

Title of the study – First year female university residence students’ experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality in the context of gender-based violence at a South African university.

Research shows that entering university for the first time is a huge change to many female students who are mainly coming from different backgrounds. This period is often associated with freedom and exploration of gender and sexuality, and this may expose them to gender-based violence. As new students in a university environment, their exposure to traditional gender and sexuality stereotypes such as male sexual aggression, sexual objectification of women and compulsory heterosexuality is likely high. First year female students have to learn to negotiate their gender and sexuality within this environment. I am interested in finding out about your experiences and how you understand and experience gender and sexuality in the context of gender-based violence while at university residence.

The study will utilize individual interviews, FGDs and a reflective diary with first year female students who reside on campus residences.

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.

- The individual interview and an FGD may last for about 45 minutes to 1 hour and may be split depending on your preference.
- You will be required to participate in one individual interview and one FGD.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and data generated will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- The results of the study and any publications arising from the study will be sent to you by email.
- The study is not designed in to create any stress or anxiety but if your participation gives rise to any anxiety or stress then you may contact the psychologist who is based at the Edgewood campus: Ms Lindi Ngubane. Her telephone number is 031 2603653 and email address is ngubanel@ukzn.ac.za.

For further information. my contact details and my supervisor's details are given below.

Sibonile Kabaya

Student no: 215079966

Cell: 084 4284551

Email: sibonilembanje@yahoo.com

Supervisor

Professor Shakila Singh

Email: Singhs7@ukzn.ac.za

Tel: 031 2607326

You may also contact the Research Office through:

P. Mohun

HSSREC Research Office,

Tel: 031 260 4557

E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Appendix 4: Informed Consent Declaration

CONSENT DECLARATION FORM

DECLARATION

I..... (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I hereby *consent/ do not consent* to an audio recording of the interview. (Please mark your selection with an **X**)

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

.....

Appendix 5: Focus Group Discussion Confidentiality Declaration

DECLARATION

I..... (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I will not disclose the identities of participants who participated in this focus group discussion and the information they provided to anyone. What we are going to discuss in this focus group discussion will remain confidential.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

.....

Appendix 6: Semi-Structured Individual Interview Questions

INTRODUCTION AND ICE-BREAKING

1. Thank interviewee for participation.
2. Remind participants about the purpose of the research which is to explore first year female university residence students' experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality in the context of gender and sexuality.
3. Stress CONFIDENTIALITY and anonymity of the participant and seek consent to RECORD the interview.

Questions

- How long have you been living in the residence?
- How does it feel to be living alone, far away from home? Is it what you expected before you came? If No, clarify.
- Do you enjoy having freedom from parents and teachers?
- What are you able to do now that you were not able to do while at school/at home?
- How does that make you feel?
- What are your experiences as a first-year female student at university?
- Do you think this might have been different if you were a male a student? Explain
- As a first-year female student who resides on campus residence is your life different to male students? Other female students? Please tell me more.
- Are you in a relationship with anyone or have you ever been in a relationship? If yes,
- How do you deal with challenges that you encounter in your relationship?
- Who makes decisions in your relationship and why?
- Do you find the university residences to a safe place to live and study? If no, explain.
- What do you understand by gender-based violence?
- Do you think it happens on campus? Please tell me more
- Who are the perpetrators?
- Why do you think they engage in such behaviour?
- Who are the victims?
- Do they report? If no, why not?
- Why is this case?

- What are some of the things that you have to do to adapt to/survive in/enjoy their lives at the university residences?
- Is there anything that you would like to tell me from what we discussed today or from the group discussion?

Appendix 7: Individual Transcript (Anele)

Individual interview

Me: Thank you for taking part in this interview. I have a few questions that I would like to ask you. How long have you been living in the residence?

Anele: Umm for about 7 months now, yah.

Me: How does it feel to be living alone?

Anele: To tell you the truth, it's being free to do whatever you want. No parents, wow. The freedom here is amazing. It's something that I never imagined, you know.

Me: Are you enjoying the freedom from parents?

Anele: I absolutely enjoy it especially freedom from parents, yes. My parents are very strict and are very religious. The kind of freedom that I have here is not at home. When I'm at home I feel like a bird trapped in a cage because I don't go anywhere except to church. My parents want me to stay indoors because I am a girl and when I am here I feel like a bird which has been released from a cage. I am free to do what I want here.

Me: Ok, what are you able to do now that you were not able to do while you were at home?

Anele: A lot. I can go wherever I want to go without asking for anyone's permission. I go clubbing with my friends at night which I never do at home. I can date whoever I want. At home my dad will be mad if he sees me talking to a boy but here I'm free to chat with anyone. I am not even allowed to wear pants at home because my parents think pants are for men only and girls who wear them do not behave well, they seek men's attention, yah. Our religion does not really encourage women to wear pants because they say they are not decent, so yah, when I'm here I am really free. I can wear pants. They are even my favourite clothes.

Me: Ok, so do you take your pants with you when you go home for the holiday?

Anele: No, my parents doesn't even know that I wear them here. I am sure they will disown me the day that they discover that I wear pants here. I usually leave my stuff with my friends. I don't like the holidays because life at home is not really fun, yah.

Me: Ok, so how does this freedom make you feel?

Anele: Great, I feel great. I have never felt this good in my entire life. I am enjoying the freedom.

Me: Do you know about students drinking alcohol on campus?

Anele: Yes, a lot of students drink alcohol here.

Me: Why do you think they do that?

Anele: Umm, I think they just enjoy it and the feeling of being drunk is great. Some students enjoy it because you get to socialize with your friends and enjoy life, yah. Maybe some drink to forget about their problems. Some students have problems here like relationship problems and also problems with their studies

Me: Ok, what kind of relationship problems?

Anele: For example if your boyfriend is cheating and you don't want to lose him you might end up drinking just to de-stress, yah. Guys here cheat and they don't care if they are hurting their girlfriend

Me: Ok, Do you drink alcohol?

Anele: Yes, I started drinking here. Umm my friends were drinking and I had to. I like drinking beer, but at home I don't even attempt to drink. They don't know that I drink and I don't even want to imagine what they will do if they find out that I drink

I like drinking beer but at home I don't even attempt to drink. They don't know that I drink and I don't even want to imagine what they will do if they find out that I drink.

Me: Ok, what are your experiences as a first-year female student so far?

Anele: I have some positive and negative experiences. I am enjoying my studies and that's a positive experience. As for the negative experiences, a lot has happened to me. When I came here it was not easy to get accommodation and one guy even promised to give me accommodation only if I slept with them. I refused to give in to his demands and he said he was not going to help me. I thank God that I managed to get accommodation at the end without having to sleep with anyone but I know some girls who had to sleep with SRC guys to get accommodation. Life at university is not easy especially when you don't have money to keep up with the trends like clothing, make up etc. When I came here I was wearing clothes that I

normally wear at home and I could tell that some girls were laughing at me so I had to change the way I dress and that's why I started wearing pants and make up as well. It was not easy for me here, yah. Some boys even looked at me like I was an alien because of the way that I used to dress, I think my clothes were a bit old fashioned, I don't know, so I had to change my kind of dressing and the challenge was that I didn't have enough money to buy new clothes. It was not easy, yah.

Me: So where did you find money to buy new clothes?

Anele: Umm, I guess I was lucky because I started dating a guy who has a good job and he started buying me some clothes and other things that I wanted. He provided for all my needs but we are not together anymore, yah. I discovered that he was married and we broke up.

Me: Do you think your experiences might have been different if you were a male student?

Anele: Definitely, male students do not face pressure of having to change the way they dress like us women here. I think they are better. Male students are not in a lot of pressure than us. I can see from what I am observing but it's about girlfriends... like I have many girlfriends, my girlfriends are beautiful. Those kinds of things, and they brag a lot. They brag about alcohol, like my alcohol is better than yours. As for accommodation I am sure they don't have to go through the experience of being asked for sex in exchange for accommodation. It only happened to girls because the SRC men are involved somehow in assisting with accommodation so they just use their power to ask for sex from us first years because they know that we are in an environment that is not familiar to us and we don't really know how things work here.

Me: As a first-year student who resides on campus residence do you think your life is different to that of male students?

Anele: Umm, I think it is different. Male students do whatever they want here without being judged. They date many girls here and their behavior is seen as normal but if a girl is found to be cheating on his guy she is talked about as if she is a prostitute. Even if a girl has friends who are males, people talk about her as if she is doing an horrible act, yoh, it's not fair. Guys drink alcohol here and some of them when they are drunk they behave like they are crazy like shouting at other students but if a girl goes out and get drunk and does something crazy like sleeping with someone, she is criticized. It's not right. Male students think they can get away with anything here.

Me: Ok, Are you in a relationship with anyone?

Anele: Yes

Me: Are you in a relationship with a male or a female?

Anele: A male of course, I am not attracted to girls.

Me: Is he a student or not?

Anele: Yes he is a student on this campus

Me: Ok, what kind of challenges do you encounter in your relationship?

Anele: Umm, he likes to talk to a lot of girls and I'm not comfortable with that. He even has a best friend who is a girl and what I don't understand is what they will be discussing or chatting about with that girl, so we often fight over that girl whom he considers his 'friend'. Another challenge is that he likes to have sex too much and I don't like that. It's like he is obsessed with it, especially when he is drunk, he can't get enough. I don't enjoy it when we do it every day, even when I tell him that I don't want to do he keeps on demanding it until I give in. If you refuse completely he gets grumpy and sometimes he gets moody and it's just hectic.

Me: Ok, How do you deal with those challenges?

Anele: I try to talk to him but it does not help. Sometimes I just give in especially the sex thing. I tried to talk to him about the girl; that he is friends with but he says they are just friends and there is nothing more. It's difficult to deal with such challenges. Sometimes he shouts at you if you want to talk.

Me: Does he drink alcohol?

Me: Are there any challenges associated with him drinking alcohol?

Anele: Yes, when he is drunk he is difficult to deal with especially the issue of sex. He wants it and he wants it so badly that we do it 2 to 3 times per night and he sometimes hurt me. It's difficult to walk properly if you hurt after doing it the whole night. He shouts at other people for nothing when he is drunk. . That's my biggest challenge, but I love him, you know. It's true what people say, that that men like sex. [Smiling]

Me: You believe that men like sex?

Anele: Yes, I do. I can see it happening with my man.

Me: Who makes decisions in your relationship?

Anele: We both make decisions but he makes most of the decisions

Me: What kind of decisions do you make together?

Anele: Umm, like when to meet and time to meet, yah

Me: What kind of decisions does he make?

Anele: Usually...ummm like when I want to cook he decides his favourite dish and I cook it or if he has some clothes to be washed he might ask me to come and do his laundry and I go.

Me: How about decisions to do with sex?

Anele: Usually, it just happens like we start kissing and it leads to sex. Sometimes if I don't want he demands it and I end up doing it, you know because if I don't he usually gets angry with me.

Me: Do you enjoy it?

Anele: Yes, I do enjoy it sometimes but sometimes I do it for the sake of making him happy, especially when I'm not in the mood, you know just to get him off my back.

Me: Do you tell him that you did not enjoy it?

Anele: No, eish I don't do that. I don't think I can do that, I am too shy. I just let him do what he prefers, yah. I am too shy to tell him that I didn't enjoy it, but I do enjoy it sometimes. Sometimes I do it for the sake of making him happy, especially when I'm not in the mood, you know just to get him off my back. It's like he is obsessed with sex, especially when he is drunk, he can't get enough. I don't enjoy it when we do it every day. Even when I tell him that I don't want to do it, he keeps on demanding it until I give in. If you refuse completely, he gets grumpy and sometimes he gets moody and it's just hectic. I have to do it.

Me: What are your expectations in a relationship?

Anele: I expect him to love me and respect me. I also want him to spoil me like buy me presents, take me to dinner yah. I don't want him to cheat on me.

Me: Does he treat you like that?

Anele: Yes, he spoils me like he buys me clothes, perfume. He has the money, he is from a rich family and I think he really loves me that's why he can't get enough of me, I mean sexually. As for the cheating part, I don't know because he talks to girls and he doesn't want me to talk to male students

Me: Does he expect you to behave in any way?

Anele: Yes, he wants me to respect him as well and he doesn't want me to cheat, yah.

Me: Ok, do find the university residences a safe place to live and study?

Anele: I don't think it's safe here. People are allowed to come in and go as they please. Who knows what might happen if there are strangers around.

Me: What do you understand by gender-based violence?

Anele: Umm, Umm, I think its violence that is directed to someone because of their gender, for example, beating up lesbians because they are lesbians or raping them just to show them that they can enjoy sex or something, yes. Like women being beaten up by their partners and that's gender-based violence.

Me: Ok, do you think it happens on campus?

Anele: I think it does happen. I have heard some stories of women that are beaten by their boyfriends but I have never really witnessed it. I heard also that some girls are raped here on campus. What I have witnessed is sexual harassment of girls here on campus. Some boys want to verbally abuse girls by saying nasty things to them like she has a big body or she is not attractive, yah.

Me: Who are the perpetrators?

Anele: I think it's the male students, they even abuse the gays and the lesbians. They say some nasty things to them like I'm gonna sleep with you to prove that you are not really lesbian, you are a woman.

Me: Why do you think they engage in such behavior?

Anele: I think it's because they think they can do anything they want because they are men. They can get away with anything, they have power, yah. Men think that if a woman disrespects them she has to be disciplined and they discipline by beating them yes. Another thing is that if you are a man and you grew up in a home where violence was a norm or where your father abused your mother and your mother did nothing you might think it is right to beat up a woman. Women are also to blame because they don't speak you know when they experience violence, they are silent about it maybe it's because in most families women are taught that you need to respect men and if you are beaten you don't fight back you just remain silent about it. They are taught to be submissive, yah. Women allow men to beat them up and they think it's love, yah. Some lesbians and gays experience violence because the perpetrators find it difficult to understand their sexual orientation, they think that what they are doing is against the norm, yah.

Me: Who are the victims?

Anele: I think it's women, gays and lesbians.

Me: Why do you think they are targeted?

Anele: I think it's because women are not strong enough to defend themselves and men take advantage of that. They know that nothing will happen to them if they violate them. As for the gays and lesbians, I think they are targeted because the society hasn't really accepted them. They think what they are doing is against our culture and religious people might think it's ungodly behavior, like a man is supposed to have sex with a woman or to date a woman not another man, yah.

Me: Do you think they report the violence?

Anele: I think some people report but the majority do not report.

Me: Why is it that they don't report?

Anele: I think some are embarrassed to report. It's difficult to report that you have been raped especially if you are a woman. What will people say? They will automatically look at you in a different way, like you are dirty. Some women are scared of their partners such that if you report you might put yourself in more danger, yah.

Me: What are some of the things that you have done to survive on campus?

Anele: To be honest I changed the way I dress here at university because of the pressure. I even dated a man to get new clothes. It was the pressure that I felt from my peers. Pressure to wear trendy clothes like jeans and crop tops, to wear make-up, and Brazilian weaves, yah. When I first dated my first boyfriend it was merely for survival purposes. I wanted to buy myself new clothes and make-up. I wanted to change from the girl that I was at home to a woman at university. A woman who wanted to keep up with the trends at university. It was not easy for me when I first came here. I was feeling out of place with the kind of clothes I wanted to buy myself new clothes and make up. I wanted to change from the girl that I was at home to a woman at university. A woman who wanted to keep up with the trends at university. It was not easy for me when I first came here. I was feeling out of place with the kind of clothes that I had but now I have adjusted even though my boyfriend is taking care of me.

Me: Have you ever done something because others are doing it?

Anele: Yes, I started drinking beer here because others are drinking. I started going out like to the clubs because others are doing it. I even dated a men to get new clothes. It was the pressure that I felt from my peers. Pressure to wear trendy clothes like jeans and crop tops, to wear make-up, and Brazilian weaves yah

Me: Ok, thank you so much for participating. Is there anything that you want to add from what we discussed?

Anele: No, nothing

Me: Ok, thank you so much

Appendix 8: Analysed Individual Transcript (Zethu)

Individual interview-Zethu

Me: Thank you for coming. How long have you been living in the residence?

Zethu: It's been a couple of months now. Umm about 7 months now.

Me: Ok, how does it feel to be living alone?

Zethu: Umm it actually varies. Sometimes you feel...ok when you start because you know that you are away from home so you are actually excited for the freedom that you are getting freedom. I am not someone who is naughty, ^{views these words as naughty} who goes out and does all that but I am just happy to learn how to live on your own, to be independent so yah it actually feels nice but then sometimes you get home sick like now and then

Me: Are you enjoying the freedom?

Zethu: At times, yes then at times you get home sick so it's not all the time.

Me: What is it that you are able to do now but could not do it while you were at school or at home?

Zethu: Ummm like going out at the time that you like to go out like late at night. Some parents hinder you from going out with your friends so I actually got that freedom of going out with my friends wherever I want to go without asking for permission, yah.

contradiction!

Me: Do you know about students drinking alcohol on campus?

Zethu: Yes

Me: Why do you think they do that?

Zethu: Maybe its because...maybe they feel more comfortable being in the house and drinking and not going out or they just like alcohol. I don't really know.

Me: Do you drink alcohol?

Zethu: Occasionally not often maybe just once a year when I'm around people but I'm not an alcohol person.

Me: What do you think of women drinking alcohol?

Zethu: I would say its unprofessional and its kind of inappropriate because women play different roles. Our society expects a woman to be a respectful person and expects the guys or men to be drinking more than women

Alcohol consumption as a male activity - comply to masculine norms

Alcohol consumption by women inappropriate against feminine ideals of a respectful woman.

Me: Ok, so far what are your experiences as a first year female student?

Zethu: So far things have been good except that that there are some guys here whom like to ^{body shaming -} pass bad comments about you, like she needs to burn all that fat, yah or talking behind your back, like she has a big body yah things like that, they just criticise people.

S.H

Me: Are you in a relationship with anyone?

Zethu: Not anymore, I was in a relationship before and we broke up

Me: Were you in a relationship with a male or a female?

Zethu: A male ^{heterosexual}

Me: Why did you break up?

Zethu: ^{Agency -} He exposed the truth of him being in another relationship so I pulled out.

expect not ideal relationship.

Me: How was your relationship like before you broke up?

Zethu: It was nice, I thought I found a good boyfriend until he revealed himself.

Me: Is he a student

Zethu: No he is not a student, he is working

Me: How old is he?

Zethu: He is 29

Me: How old are you?

Zethu: 21

Me: So he cheated on you?

Zethu: No, he actually cheated on his other girlfriend but he didn't tell me that he was in a relationship when we started dating.

Me: Oh, ok . Who was making decisions in the relationship?

Zethu: We both made decisions like sometimes I would say something and he would do it and sometimes he would say something and I would do it.

Me: What kind of decisions were you making together?

Zethu: Umm decisions such as going out and we were planning the future even though I did not know the real truth.

Me: When you say planning the future do you mean getting married?

Zethu: Not exactly that but relationship stuff like going out, places that you want to visit together, things like that. I didn't know that he was not serious, its like he was just using me for sex. Women wants more in a relationship - trust, love, commitment in a relationship.

Me: Where you having sex?

Zethu: Yes

Me: How was it?

Emphasized femininities
enforced men as wanting sex not commitment
Zethu: ^{to catering for men's interests and desires.} It was ok and sometimes it wasn't that good. I will just agree to do it because he wanted to do it and even if I didn't enjoy it sometimes I would make him think it was good. We didn't see each other so often so when we are together it would just happen and it was unfair for me to say no because we didn't see each other everyday. *Justifying why she couldn't refuse even though she was unwilling.*

Me: Were you able to communicate your feelings about sex especially when it was not good?

Put their partners' interests first than theirs. Male stratification takes over female stratification
Zethu: No, I couldn't do that. I was too shy to say such things. I also didn't want him to feel like he wasn't doing it well. I didn't want to disappoint him, yah. *femininity - passive, shy.*

Me: Did you use a condom?

Power imbalances
Control women thru sexually exploiting them.
Zethu: ^{Reminded to be feminine} Yes, most of the times but there were other times that we didn't use. I didn't agree to ^{Failure to negotiate safe sex} not using a condom because when I asked him to go for an HIV test he wouldn't make time to go. But there are a few times that we did not use a condom because he didn't want to use it ^{subordination of women} and there was nothing I could do about because I loved him. *Being submissive - less likely to insist on condom use during sex or refuse unwanted sex*

Me: Who used to buy the condoms?

Zethu: He used to buy and even if there were some condoms in the house he wouldn't use them if he didn't want to. *Male duty to buy.*

Me: Does he drink alcohol?

Zethu: Yes

Me: Where there any challenges associated with him drinking alcohol?

Zethu: Not much but sometimes he would shout at me for nothing, maybe when he is in a bad mood he would get drunk and shout and swear for nothing. When he found certain messages on my phone, messages that he was unclear of what is going on he would get angry and when I try to explain to him he wouldn't understand. It would take time for him to understand.

Me: What were you doing to keep your relationship alive?

Being submissive
Zethu: I tried my best to make him happy. I tried to abide by the things that he wanted like if he says he wants to go out I would go out with him, I would make time for him. I didn't even refuse to have sex with him even though sometimes I felt like I didn't want it.

Me: What was your role as the girlfriend in the relationship?

Zethu: Not so much, I would just make time for him. When I was at his place I would do the house chores whilst he is at work. I would cook, wash the dishes, wash his clothes, yah *gender roles*

Me: What are your expectations in a relationship?

Zethu: I expect to get respect, to be loved, the guy to be romantic with you, to be spoiled.

Me: Did your ex-boyfriend used to spoil you?

Zethu: Yes, we used to go out like to different restaurants, he would have something planned at his place which I wasn't expecting maybe dinner. He would buy me clothes that maybe I had pointed out at a store and he would buy it as a surprise. *being romantic*

Me: Did he expect you to behave in any way?

Zethu: Yes, he partially did. Maybe sometimes when I come dressed in a certain way then he would be like he doesn't like this.

Me: What kind of dressing did he not approve?

Male control
obedient
Zethu: Maybe ripped jeans or things that expose your body, things like that. Then automatically when he says he doesn't like this then you know that ok I wasn't supposed to wear this. He doesn't want me to dress like this and I would stop wearing it. *submissive*

Me: Were there any challenges in your relationship?

Zethu: Yes, there were challenges. At times he would make excuses not to see when he was with his other girlfriend and at that time I didn't know that he was with her. He would tell me that he is busy doing something or he is at the car wash and he would not text me for like 2

hours then I would wonder why. He was so distant from me at times, the communication used to break and then it caused some tension between us. Sometimes he would just shout at me especially when he was drunk and I didn't understand why.

endianly
abused
but failed
to see it.

Me: Ok, what do you understand by gender based violence?

Zethu: Gender based violence is... I think it has got something to do with women getting beaten up by men whether you are in a relationship or not. Mostly it's the women that are beaten up and children as well. Me: Do you think it happens on campus?

Zethu: I think so because recently there has been a lot of incidences happening regarding boyfriend shooting girlfriend in universities so I think it does happen here. Concluding with what has been happening in other universities I think it does happen in our residences. There are students who beat up their girlfriends. What's happening here is emotional abuse like a boyfriend ill-treating the girlfriend. For example if a guy wants a relationship to end they don't tell you but they just start to ill-treat you and they don't give you the love and attention that they used to give you and that leads to your emotions being hurt. Oh, I think the gays and lesbians are affected well because they are looked at in a different way. They are criticised more than someone who is normal. They say things such as isitabane, they make them feel that they are not normal and not equal to other people.

Me: Why do you think they do that to the gays and lesbians?

Zethu: I am not sure but I think it's because they think they are not normal. The fact that they are gay makes other men angry.

Me: Ok, who are the perpetrators of gender based violence?

Zethu: I think its males. Violence as male perpetrated

Me: Why do you think they engage in such behaviour?

Zethu: I think it's because they think that they have more power over women and also because they are against the whole gay and lesbian thing. They don't care about the other gender. With women they know that they have more power than them. They hit them because they know that they are in love and the chances of them reporting are less.

Me: Who are the victims?

Zethu: It's more or less women

Me: Why do you think women are targeted?

Zethu: Because they are seen as people who are inferior and with less power compared to men.

Me: Do you think they report?

Zethu: Some do and some don't

Me: Why is it that they don't report abuse?

to protect their partner

Zethu: Maybe if they are in a relationship they wouldn't like their boyfriends to be arrested or they don't want to lay charges because they love them

Me: Would you report abuse if you are being abused by your boyfriend?

Zethu: Yes, I would or I would leave him

Me: Have you ever done something because others are doing it here at university?

Zethu: Not really, I am not someone who follows trends or who likes things. I am not someone who just falls for things that other people are doing.

Me: Do you think there are some first year female students who do things because others are doing it?

Competitor

Zethu: Yes some female students do that. It happens a lot here especially with the dressing thing. A lot of them...like for example if you see some new trend and people are wearing it here on campus they develop that interest for it. And also things like going out to bashes that are hosted here on campus and maybe you would come here on campus and maybe you are someone who doesn't go out but because your friends are people who like drinking or going out and then you also develop that interest of wanting to go out.

indulge in partying & drinking - puts them at risk.

Me: What are some of the things that you have done to survive on campus?

budgeting

Zethu: I just learn to budget and because my parents don't have control of my money so I spend it the way I want to, yah., that's how I just enjoy myself.

Me: Ok, is there anything that you like to add from what we have discussed?

Zethu: Not in my mind, no.

Me: Ok, thank you for taking part in this study.

Appendix 9: Focus Group Discussion Questions

INTRODUCTION

1. Thank the interviewees for participation.
2. I introduce myself.
3. I explain the purpose of the research which is to generate information pertaining to the participants' experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality in the context of gender-based violence.
4. Stress CONFIDENTIALITY and anonymity of the school and the participant and seek consent to RECORD the interview.
5. Get agreement from the participants that discussions within this session will not be shared with anyone outside this group.

Explain that:

Research shows that entering university for the first time is a huge change to many female students who are mainly coming from different backgrounds. This period is often associated with freedom and exploration of gender and sexuality, and this may expose them to gender-based violence. As new students in a university environment, their exposure to traditional gender and sexuality stereotypes such as male sexual aggression, sexual objectification of women and compulsory heterosexuality is likely high. First year female students have to learn to negotiate their gender and sexuality within this environment. I am interested in finding out about your experiences and how you understand and experience gender and sexuality in the context of gender-based violence while at university residence.

Questions

- How does it feel to be a first-year female student at the university?
- Is it different from girls in high school? Explain.
- Are first year female residence students' (FYFRS) lives different to male students? Other female students? Please tell me more.
- How do FYFRS manage the new found freedom from parents and teachers?
- Do first year female university students form relationships with other first year students/older students/outside? Explain

- Why do you think this is the case?
- Are there any advantages or disadvantages of engaging in such relationships? Are there any challenges?
- Is the university residence a safe place to live and study? Explain.
- Are there particular dangers that first year female residence students face? Explain
- Do first year female residence students face pressure to do things that they don't want to do? Explain.
- What are some of the challenges that first year female residence students face at the university? At the residences?
- What is gender-based violence? What are the different forms of GBV? Give examples
- Are first year female students more likely to experience gender-based violence than others? Explain.
- What are some of the things that FYFRS do to adapt to/survive in/enjoy their lives at the university residences?

Appendix 9: Turnitin Originality Report

Revised thesis

by S Kabaya

Submission date: 13-May-2020 06:07PM (UTC+0200)
Submission ID: 1323396698
File name: Chapters_revised.docx (368.42K)
Word count: 98355
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Revised thesis

ORIGINALITY REPORT

6%

SIMILARITY INDEX

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STUDENT PAPERS

Appendix 10: Editor's Confirmation Letter



26 June 2020

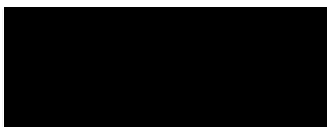
To whom it may concern

Re: Proofreading and academic editing: S. Kabaya

I, J.L. van Aswegen of Grammar Guardians, hereby confirm proofreading and academic editing of the thesis entitled "First-year female university residence students' experiences and constructions of gender and sexuality in the context of gender-based violence in South Africa" (excluding annexures) by Sibonile Kabaya (student number: 215079966) in May/June 2020.

Please contact me on 082 811 6857 or at jeanne@grammarguardians.co.za regarding any queries that may arise.

Kind regards,



J.L. van Aswegen

Grammar Guardians