

# **Gender Power and Sexuality: Basotho High School Boys' Responses to Risky Sexual Behaviour**

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of the requirements for the Master of Education**

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## **Declaration**

This dissertation is my own work. It has not been submitted for degree purposes at any other University. All the sources used have been indicated and acknowledged accordingly.

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Student's signature

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Date

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Supervisor's signature

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Date

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this dissertation to several people who gave me the emotional supported I needed:

My mother, Mamakhobalo Lebona, for her support, care and the love she gave me;

My daughter, Reitumetse Lebona), for the special way she motivated and supported me;

My cousin, Nthati Molapo, for the support, patience and nurturing of my daughter while I was away and;

My brothers, sisters and the whole family, for the moral support you all gave me.

Thank you all for your support and believing in me.

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To God Almighty, who not only provided me the opportunity to study, but also gave me strength throughout this journey. Thank you Lord for being my Father and my Helper.

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I sincerely thank the research participants in the study. I took your time, invaded your privacy and your beliefs. I am proud of you and the sharing we had.

I also would like to thank the Ministry of Education in Lesotho, the school, the principal and the parents of the study participants' parents who had to listen to my plea and allowed me to conduct the study.

To the many friends who believe in me, encourage me, share thoughts with me, and tolerate long periods of silence from me. Thank you.

To everybody who believes in God. Keep believing, your day is coming. God's time is the best.

## **Abstract**

This study explores young men understandings of, and engagement in, risky sexual behaviours. The group of young men the study focuses on is in a high school in Lesotho. They are aged between 16 and 17 years. The motivation for the study is that, despite a series of campaigns designed to increase awareness and knowledge associated with sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS, young boys in Lesotho continue to engage in risky sexual behaviours and practices. It is in this context that the purpose of the study was to investigate how gender power is intimately tied in with meanings young men in Lesotho attach to sexuality. The related aspect investigated in this study, furthermore, was to investigate ways in which gender power operates, and ultimately contribute into boys' and girls' risky sexual behaviours that make them vulnerable to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The study employs qualitative research methods to achieve these aims and, accordingly, utilises focus group and individual interviews, with six purposively selected high school boys as research instruments. The findings reveal that, while some boys engage in risky sexual practices, others express determination to practice safe sex. Thus, the study reveals that despite the fact that some boys are engaged in unsafe sexual practises and multiple sexual partners in heterosexual relationships to comply with the notion of masculinity and societal expectations of MANHOOD, others are beginning to question such attitudes. There is therefore multiple and varied perspectives on this issue among the small sample selected for this study.

## **Key concepts**

Risky sexual behaviour, gender power and sexuality.

## **Acronyms and abbreviations**

COSC: Cambridge Overseas School Certificate

JC: Junior Certificate

LEC: Lesotho Evangelical Church

RCC: Roman Catholic Church

RCM: Roman Catholic Mission

AME: African Methodist Episcopal

MOET: Ministry of Education and Training

RSP: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

MDG: Millennium Development Goals

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction to the study

#### 1.1 Introduction

Scholarship on gender, sexuality and HIV/AIDS has, understandably, taken a turn, particularly with reference to the younger members of our society. More and more studies, both at international and local (including Africa) contexts (Holland, Ramazanoglu, Scott, Shape, & Thomson 1990; Reddy & Dunne, 2007; Groes-Green, 2009; Leclerc-Madlala, 2004; Selikow, 2004) seem to focus on the sexual practices and behaviours of the younger generation of our time. Selikow's (2004) study, for example, reveals how young men are persuaded that in order to fulfil the demands associated with masculinity, they need to be sexually assertive. In many young men, this has encouraged aggressive sexuality and culture which manifests itself in the pursuit of multiple sexual partners.

With regard to Lesotho, the context under study in this dissertation, there is very little, or even opportunities, to collect data and to compare to findings in studies conducted in other contexts. This is due to the fact that in many parts of Lesotho, and particularly within the school context, talking about sex and sexuality with young people is taboo. In many respects, Lesotho is still a patriarchal society where men are expected to lead and control in the family. Such control and dominance extends itself to sexual relations where women are expected to comply. In this context, men feel entitled to have sex with any woman, yet women are expected to remain faithful to one man (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). These attitudes get transferred to the younger generation due to the resilience of the Sesotho culture. Young people in this community are perceived to be nonsexual and de-gendered (Bhana, 2008), and thus are perceived as unable to think or make critical decisions in life. The dominance of patriarchal values increasingly influence decision making in the lives of younger men when it comes to relationships. The ways in which society in Lesotho expect young people to perform their masculinity and femininity, for example, promotes gender inequality among them as boys tend to dominate over girls, who are in turn perceived as subordinate.

It is against this background that this study, drawing upon qualitative research methods, investigates ways in which gender power and the construction of young men's sexualities put both young men and women at risk in the context of Lesotho high schools. The study hopes to reveal, furthermore, ways in which young men that are influenced, and ultimately

accommodate, traditional expectations and norms, place themselves and younger girls at risk of engaging in risky sexual behaviours. The study hopes to investigate, furthermore, the impact of the efforts such as awareness campaigns by the government and sex education by schools in an endeavour to change young men's risky sexual behaviours. The focus of the study is thus on the ways in which young men in a high school in Lesotho give meaning to their sexualities and how gender power operates in this context. This is particularly important to understand in an era of HIV/AIDS pandemic. For the purpose of this study, young men and boys will be used interchangeably.

## **1.2 Background of the study**

According to the latest WHO and UNAIDS (2008) global estimates on HIV infections, women comprise 50%. Within the sub-Saharan Africa, women constitute 60% of people living with HIV (WHO/UNAIDS, 2005). The highest gender gap in HIV infection rates is recorded between young women and men between 15-24 years old. It is also found that within this cohort, for every young person infected, three out of four are young women (UNAIDS, 2008). There is clear indication in these statistics that younger women are more susceptible to HIV infections, and that such vulnerability is directly linked to gender power relations and gender inequality. In relation to this point, Jewkes & Morrell (2010) found that gender power inequity in relationships and intimate partner violence place women at enhanced risk of HIV infection. Moreover, for young women, the desire to love and be loved is one of the principal reasons girls begin sexual relations and engage in unsafe sexual practices much earlier in their lives (Reddy & Dunne, 2007). There is evidence, however, that homogenising men and boys as the less infected, on the other hand, and mostly responsible for younger girls' infection, particularly in Southern Africa, cannot be necessarily verified. Research, for example, reveals that some men and boys also seek love and strive towards gender equitable relationships and the hypersexual ways in which black men have largely been depicted is being challenged and deconstructed (Jewkes & Morrell, 2004). It is for these reasons that this study further examines the variegated ways in which the young men in a high school in Lesotho both accommodate and resist hegemonic notions of masculinity.

This is particularly important in a country like Lesotho where HIV infections are very high, though it is the smallest part of Sub-Saharan Africa and among the smallest countries in Africa. In 2004, among its estimated population of 2.2 million (Lesotho Bureau of statistics,

2006), the country had the adult prevalence of HIV/AIDS (15-49 years), 26.3-31.7% (National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan (2006-2011)). The estimated number of people living with HIV/AIDS (0-49 years) is between 290 000 and 360 000 people (WHO/UNAIDS, 2005). Lesotho faces a serious and worsening HIV/AIDS problem as one quarter of the population's 15-49 years olds in Lesotho are HIV positive (National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan 2006-2011). This is found to be among the highest rates in the world. However, poverty and social dislocation because of migratory labour are found to be the two main factors driving the HIV epidemic in Lesotho (WHO/UNAIDS, 2005).

Given the role played by the media, government, schools and social networks in HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns, these statistics are shocking. The question for this study is why, in the midst of increasing awareness campaigns and knowledge available for young people through education, young people continues to engage in risky sexual behaviours? A group of boys aged between 16 and 17 are used as the study participants to explore this question.

### **1.3 Rationale for the study**

As a teacher, I have been involved in extra-mural activities at school. These include sports and school choir. Such involvement afforded me an opportunity to be involved with learners beyond academic work. It is in this context that I realised how young people are engaging in risk taking sexual behaviours. As a Life Orientation teacher, I had time to interact with learners in and outside the classroom. We also had school clubs where learners learn more on behaviour, attitudes and morals. What I observed was that some learners do not practice what they are taught at school with regard to abstaining from sexual activity and, if done, needs to be practiced safely with the use of condoms. Some girls, for example, continue to leave school because of pre-mature pregnancies. Clearly, they are not practicing safe sex. This is despite the increasing awareness campaigns and safe sex information available for young people through education. Some young men are still engaging in risky sexual behaviours. My observation and experience with learners motivated me to conduct this study in order to make sense of why young people participate in risky sexual behaviours when they are aware of HIV/AIDS, STDs and early or unplanned pregnancies. These consequences cause girls, and some boys, to dropout from school much early in their lives. This is the reason the government of Lesotho through the Department of Education and the Department of Health and NGOs are putting all the measures to try to reduce the risk of both dropping out of school

and engaging in unsafe sex by enforcing the right to education for all. The effort seems to be working, although the pace is painfully very low. Some learners, especially girls, still leave school early because of teenage pregnancy.

#### **1.4 Research questions**

This study is guided by the following research questions:

- What do the Lesotho high school boys in this study regard as risky sexual behaviour?
- What explanations do these boys offer for engaging in risky sexual behaviour?
- What is the relationship between these boys' cultural beliefs and their beliefs around sexuality?

#### **1.5 Focus and purpose of the study**

Previous and current studies are mostly focusing on girls with regard to sexuality issues (Reddy & Dunne, 2007; Jewkes & Morrell, 2011; Mudaly, 2012) and, despite the prevalence of HIV infections in Lesotho, there is no study of this type relating to this country. As a result, this study focuses on a group of Lesotho high school boys aged 16 turning 17 years. The emphasis in this study is on the boys' responses to risky sexual behavior and attempts to explore the ways in which context and gender power is intimately tied in with meanings these boys attach to their sexualities. The study further explores factors that influence young men sexual behaviors and, in so doing, offer some insight into the reasons young people continue to expose themselves to risk despite the knowledge and awareness that has been created around risky sexual practices.

#### **1.6 Demographic profile**

Lesotho is a small country in Southern Africa, with a total area of 30 350 square kilometers (Gay, Gill & Hall, 1996, p.37) and a total population of 2.2 million (Bureau of Statistics, 2006). It is completely landlocked by the Republic of South Africa. The Basotho (the people of Lesotho) speak Sesotho, referred to as Southern Sotho in some literature. Lesotho is commonly known as „The Kingdom in the Sky'. The „kingdom' indicates that Lesotho is a

constitutional monarchy presently under the chieftaincy of King Letsie III. Figure 1 below shows the geographical location of Lesotho.

### 1.6.1 Figure 1: Map of Lesotho



Lesotho operates under a patriarchal structure and this is observed and marked by a belief in the power, privileges and superiority enjoyed by men. This system supports the subordination and inferior status of women, which seems to be accepted and supported by the status of women as minors in traditional law (Mapetla & Tuoana-Nkhasi, 2003). Thus, Lesotho is a highly patriarchal society, with men still considered to be the head of the family and the key decision maker, based on the customary and common laws enshrined in the Constitution. It should, however, be noted that due to strong advocacy in the areas of gender equity and equality, as well as through the approval of international agreements and protocols, the Sexual Offences Act was enacted in 2003 to protect women from the injustices that had been socialised into society (Hlalele & Letsie, 2011). The Sexual Offences Act of 2003 was further complemented by the Legal Capacity of Married Persons Act of 2006, which also aims to protect women within the different forms of union, whether married, or co-habiting and single women and men in various relationships (Hlalele & Letsie, 2011).

Hlalele & Letsie, (2011) further explain that marriage in Lesotho occurs relatively early on in life, and one in five girls between the ages of 15-19 has been married. The same researcher also found out that in Lesotho; traditionally, women have been dependent upon male family



members for economic support and representation. In Lesotho, women were unable to own or inherit property. They were thus legally considered minors until the Government passed the Legal Capacity of Married People's Act in 2006 (Hlalele & Letsie, 2011).

The Kingdom of Lesotho is a mountainous landlocked country, entirely surrounded by the Republic of South Africa (RSA). Lesotho has the population of 2.2 million people and has very limited natural resources. More than 99% of Lesotho's population is ethnically Basotho; with Europeans and Asians occupying a tiny population. The country's population is 80% Christian, with a majority being Roman Catholic. Others are Moslems, Hindus, and followers of indigenous beliefs. Sesotho and English are the official languages; and IsiZulu and IsiXhosa are among the other languages spoken. Lesotho has 10 districts, with Maseru being the capital town of the country and, most importantly, the location for this study.

### **1.6.2 The education system of Lesotho**

For historical reasons, the majority of schools (90%) in Lesotho are owned by churches, including the Roman Catholic Mission (R.C.M.), Lesotho Evangelic Church (L.E.C.), which is the research site for this study, Anglican Church of Lesotho (A.C.L.) and African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.). Church schools are under the management of their respective church authorities, but teacher salaries are paid by the government. There is a much smaller number of less than 10% of schools which are fully government owned, and also a small number of true private schools funded entirely from fee income (Country Status Report 2005). The Ministry of Education and Training (M.O.E.T.) is responsible for the management and regulation of education in Lesotho and is headed by a minister (assisted by an assistant minister).

The government of Lesotho recognizes the importance of education for the future of the country. Education and training is identified as a national priority in the recent Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). Further, as a signatory to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), the government aspires to achieve 100% primary education completion and gender equity in primary and secondary education by 2015 (Country Status Report 2005). The government has also set its own ambitious goals to improve the quality of education at all levels.

### **1.6.3 Challenges faced by education in Lesotho**

Lesotho faces serious economic challenges. The high HIV infection rate (29%) is having an impact on growth and poverty. Lesotho is one of the few countries where girls' participation in school is higher than boys'. Moreover, secondary education presents a fourth challenge. Traditionally, participation in secondary education has been limited to a relatively small proportion of the population. Expansion of participation in primary education and the increasing demands of the labor market both provide pressures for the expansion of the secondary sub-sector (Country Status Report 2005).

### **1.7 The context of the school**

The research site for this study is situated a few meters from the capital town (Maseru), a high school surrounded by big, beautiful homes, with tall trees which offer security, relaxation and shade for the learners during break and lunch time. The school is right next to the very busy road, the main south 1 which is leading to the south of the country away from the capital town. The school provides lunch to all learners and has a tuck shop for the learners to buy inside the school premises for extra security and safety. The learners look forward to the lunch provided by the school as the majority of the learners in this school are orphans and depend on charity.

### **1.8 The research site**

The name of the school used as the research site is Mohlomi High School (pseudonym). It was founded in 1971 by the Lesotho Evangelical Church (L.E.C.). The school was established through the initiative of the L.E.C. congregation who sought concurrence of the community through the chief of Mohlomi village in order to acquire land for the school site. The school is currently operating as a day school and admits learners by merit at Form A and Form D (grade 8 and grade 11). Admission is based on availability of class space per recommendation of the Ministry of Education and Training. However, the Admissions Committee reserves the right to decide criterion to use for admission at any given point. Learners admitted at Form A follow a three year course (Junior Certificate J.C) of studies

graduating at Form C. Admission at Form D is not automatic; but all Form C learners apply for admission.

The school is managed by the School Board and operates in line with the laws and principles of the Lesotho Evangelical Church (L.E.C) and in consultation with the Ministry of Education and Training. The school's administration is led by the Principal whose mandate is to supervise the teachers in their day-to-day activities to improve performance of teachers and to ensure that they carry out their duties diligently and contribute towards the achievement of the schools' vision through good teaching and learning. The board's major role is to ensure that the school is well managed by developing good work practices, particularly in teaching and learning, and this is charged with the principal.

### **1.9 The learners**

The learners in this school come from different places. The majority of the learners come from the nearby communities, while the minority of the learners comes from other locations of the town. A very high population of the learners in this school is extremely poor and many of them reside with either single parents or extended families because of different reasons. To mention a few, some of them lost their parents through death, while others never had a father figure in their lives. Due to the poor socio economical background of the learners, many of the learners walk to school every day, no matter how far the home is from the school. There are some learners who travel via public transport to school. Some learners do not complete their high school education due to lack of family or financial support. It is not easy for many learners to afford school fees as a learner has to pay a maximum amount of R1500 per annum, depending on the grade he or she is doing.

### **1.10 Research design and methodology**

This study adopted the qualitative approach. According to Meyers (2002) qualitative research is a tool used to understand and describe the world of human experiences. Its strength is the richness and the depth to which explorations are conducted and how the descriptions are written in the research in order for the reader to grasp the ideas of situation.

### **1.10.1 Paradigm**

The study is positioned within the interpretive paradigm as it seeks to understand the in depth how people make sense of the context in which they live and work (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). It also focuses on people's subjective experiences on how people „construct' the social world by sharing meaning. The paradigm is appropriate for this study because it permits a deeper understanding of young high school boys' responses to risky sexual behaviour in their social context.

### **1.10.2 Methodology**

Within the qualitative research, the study has adopted a case study approach. The strength of a case study design is that it is very useful for learning about situations, which might be poorly understood or about which not much it known, as in the case of how young people understand and construct their sexuality (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). The case study design provides a large amount of information and detail about the research topic, and allows me to deal with a wide variety of raw data (Wimmer & Dominick, 2000).

### **1.10.3 Sampling**

Purposive selection of targets has been employed in this study. A qualitative case study particularly requires purposive sampling. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) posit that purposive sampling is used in order to access „knowledgeable people' who have in-depth knowledge about the particular issue. Young high school Lesotho boys between the ages 16 and 17 in Maseru Lesotho were chosen. The reason is that the participants will be easily accessible and because I also live in Maseru it is convenient. The study focused on six learners and these are boys from grade 12.

### **1.10.4 Data collection/ production techniques**

The research used focus group interviews with six participants and individual interviews with six participants to explore and understand high school boys' responses to their sexual risky behaviour. The interviews were based on open-ended questions as data collection instruments because such questions lend themselves to more probing in order to further clarify questions.

The interview will take 60 minutes. The interviews were tape-recorded to secure an accurate account of the conversations and avoid losing data since not everything can be written down during interview. The data was transcribed later.

#### **1.10.5 Data analysis**

The researcher listened to the tape, transcribed data verbatim and read the transcription a number of times in order to provide a context for the emergence of specific units of meaning and themes later on (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). This was done (inductively) working with data from the theory and through an (-iterative process-) of going forward and backward with the data. The transcribed interviews obtained from the selected young Basotho boys' responses to sexual behavior were coded and categorized. Then, the themes were developed. The relationships among the various themes and categories will be described in accordance with the patterns or structured that emerged from the data. Literature were used to support the findings.

#### **1.10.6 Measures to ensure credibility**

I established credibility by applying triangulation to the methods of data collection and data analysis in order to determine if there were any discrepancies in the findings. In addition, Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2000) posit that in an interview credibility can be done by triangulation. That is giving the participants the interview scripts to read. The purpose is to check whether what is written is an accurate reflection of what they said. The voice recorder was replayed for the participants to listen in order to verify and make some comments. Interview was repeated on one by one situation for the finishing touch wherever possible and needed.

#### **1.10.7 Ethical issues**

Consent letters were written to the District Education Officer (DEO) and the principals as to inform them about the study and to seek for permission of conducting the research. Parents and learners also had their own consent letters to sign if they agree. The participants were

informed about the purpose of the study and the use of the tape recorder during the interview process. Before the interview the researcher asked the permission from the participants to tape record the interview. The participants were also guaranteed confidentiality of information and anonymity.

## **1.11 Organisation of the study**

This dissertation contains 5 chapters. They are arranged as follows:

### **1.11.1 Chapter 1: Overview and rationale**

Chapter 1 is an introduction to the study. It outlined the background, focus and purpose of the study, as well as the research questions. The chapter also briefly described the research context.

### **1.11.2 Chapter 2: Literature review**

Chapter 2 reviews the local and international literature in the field of sexuality. The chapter also explains the theoretical framework used in the study.

### **1.11.3 Chapter 3: Research process**

Chapter 3 provides the reader with an outline of the research design, research methodology and the research process. Choices made with regard to methods of data collection, data analysis and interpretation are explained and justified. The chapter also looks at the ethical considerations and process of gaining data and limitations for the study.

### **1.11.4 Chapter 4: Analysis and discussion**

Chapter 4 presents and discusses the data generated during the field work.

### **1.11.5 Chapter: Summary, conclusion and recommendations**

Chapter 5 is a summary of the study and the main conclusions. It further presents recommendations based on the findings of the study.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Literature review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Drawing from the international and local literature, with particular attention paid to the Lesotho region, this chapter discusses young peoples' perceptions, attitudes and behaviours around their sexual practices. This review further discusses statistical data from several studies in order to reveal the extent of the challenges the Lesotho government faces when it comes to youth sexual practices. Global statistics, furthermore, will also be presented to reinforce our understanding and the extent of the challenge. Young people and condom usage, issues around the connection between gender-power and sexuality, the impact such connection has among young people, and the related concerns around risky sexual behaviour, are discussed in this chapter. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the connection between young men behaviour and women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

#### **2.2 Theoretical framework for the study**

In order to engage critically with the subject of this dissertation and to understand the dynamics involved in the phenomenon under study, it is important to explore the way in which gender power and sexuality intersect to impact on sexuality. It is this intersection that produces oppressive sexual behaviours and attitudes, assist in understanding how male power operates to subordinate, control, marginalize and objectify girls and women. To theorise this, the study draws on Connell's (1987) gender power theory. This theory is relevant to this study because it shows how gender power and sexuality are connected. According to Connell (1987), sexuality constructs gender attitudes and influence relationships between men and women in society. When theorizing gender, Connell (1987) argues that women as a social group are defined and oppressed by men. Within this perspective, sexuality is viewed as a foundation of male power. In this worldview, female sexuality is constructed in relation to male sexuality, but these relationships are founded on gender hierarchy in which men are dominant and women are subordinate socially, economically, politically and sexually. The strength in using this theory is that it illuminates the ways in which the sexual behaviours of

boys are largely the results of patriarchal societies that advantage men and boys over women and girls.

These attitudes produce masculinity that becomes a dominant worldview in societies. It is this worldview that justifies the nature of the asymmetrical relations between men and women and produces unequal gender power and sexuality, thereby putting both men and women in sexual risk (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Power is important to both sexuality and gender, but unequal power balance in gender relations that favours men and boys translates into unequal power balance in heterosexual interactions in which male pleasures supersede female pleasures and men have greater control than women over when, where, and how sex takes place (Gupta, 2000). In this study, however, it is acknowledged that this power is not static and immutable, but rather dynamic and fluid. To elaborate on this phenomenon, the study draws on MacPhail & Campbel (2001) work which shows how power can be challenged or shared, and how boys are not always in control. This work also reveals that some men and boys do actively challenge dominant norms and behave in counter-normative and health enhancing ways (ibid, 2001).

### **2.3 Statistics on young people and sexuality**

In 2009, 2.6 million people became infected with HIV (UNAIDS, 2010), and it is estimated that 45% of the infections were in young people aged 15-24 (UNAIDS, 2008). Moreover, according to UNAIDS statistics Sub-Saharan Africa, 12% of the world's population, accounts for approximately two-thirds of people living with HIV (UNAIDS, 2004). Out of this population, more than three-quarters of young people (15–24 years) living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa are females (Santosa, 2009). It has also been found that in parts of Africa and the Caribbean, young women (ages 15–24) are up to six times more likely to be infected than young men of similar ages (UNFPA, 2005).

According to Fatusi & Hindin (2010), HIV transmission in sub Saharan Africa is mainly through heterosexual sexual intercourse. The high prevalence of risky sexual behavior among young people contributes substantially to the epidemic (Fatusi & Hindin, 2010). Many recent studies have revealed that more than 40 % of sexually experienced adolescent males and up to 10% of adolescent females in some sub-Saharan African countries reported having had two or more sexual partners in the period of one year (Biddlecom, Hessburg, Singh, Bankole, &



Darobi, 2007). Furthermore, research has revealed that in sub-Saharan Africa, nearly 60% of females and 45% of males have had sex before the age of 18 and there was a widening gap between sexual initiation and marriage (Mensch, Grant, & Blanc, 2006).

In the context of Lesotho, the statistics on HIV are very high for this small (National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan (2006-2011)). In 2004, among its estimated population of 2.2 million people (Lesotho Bureau of statistics), the country had the adult prevalence of HIV/AIDS (15-49 years) 26.3/ 31.7% and estimated number of people living with HIV and AIDS (0-49 years) is 290 000-360 000 (WHO/UNAIDS, 2005). This statistics shows that Lesotho faces a serious and worsening HIV/AIDS problem. Practically, one quarter of the population of people between the ages 15-49 years in Lesotho are HIV positive (National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan (2006-2011)). This is found to be among the highest rates in the world. However, poverty and social dislocation because of migrant labour are found to be the two main factors driving the HIV epidemic in Lesotho (WHO/UNAIDS, 2005).

The above statistics include the young people of Lesotho who are expected to be getting all the information and knowledge on HIV/AIDS through the social networks, media and school learning areas. Despite the increasing awareness and knowledge available for young people through education, boys are still engaging in risky sexual behaviour (Groes-Green, 2009; Marston, & King, 2006). Having briefly highlighted the statistics with regard to young people, sexuality and risk-taking behaviour, the discussion moves to the problems facing young people from a comprehensive point of view of the literature.

#### **2.4 Young men's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS**

According to UNAIDS report (1999), men are expected to be more knowledgeable and experienced about sex, particularly young men. The norms surrounding values associated with masculine worldview and the associated sexual practices put young men at risk of infection. Due to this worldview, young men do not seek information or admit their ignorance about safe sex. Instead, these norms coerce them into experimenting with sex at a young age in unsafe ways to prove their manhood (UNAIDS, 1999).

Moreover, Gupta (2000) claimed that notions of masculinity that emphasize sexual domination over women as a defining characteristic of male hood contribute to homophobia and the stigmatization of men who have sex with men. As a result of fear and stigma, these

men keep their sexual risk. This in turn puts them and their sexual partners at risk, irrespective of their gender or sex. Men in many societies, furthermore, are found to be socialised to be self-reliant, not to show their emotions and not to seek assistance in times of need or stress (WHO, 1999). In relation to this, Gupta (2000) concludes that expectation of invulnerability associated with being a man runs counter to the expectation that men should protect themselves from potential infection. It also encourages the denial of risk. Moreover, the manifestations of traditional notions of masculinity are found to be strongly associated with a wide range of risk-taking behaviour (Gupta, 2000).

## **2.5 Young women's vulnerability to HIV and AIDS**

A discussion on young women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS cannot be ignored in this study. The reason is that, in researching young men's, it is also important to pay attention to the ways in their sexual behaviours, attitudes and practices impact on young women. Gupta (2000) indicates that in many societies there is a culture of silence that surrounds sex. This silence dictates that good women are expected to be ignorant about sex and passive in sexual interactions. Therefore, for women in such societies it is hard to proactively negotiate safer sex (Carovano, 1992 in Gupta 2000). According to Gupta, research has shown that the economic vulnerability of women makes it more likely that they will exchange sex for money or favours, less likely that they will succeed in negotiating protection, and almost impossible for them to leave a relationship that they perceive to be risky (Weiss & Rao Gupta, 1998).

In the study conducted by Underwood, Skinner, Osman & Schwandt (2011) on three African countries, namely; Botswana, Malawi and Mozambique using focus group on adolescent girls and boys from the ages 10-19, there are several factors that were found to be the root cause of girls' vulnerability to HIV infection. It is also through exposure to unprotected sexual relationships, and primarily relationships that are transactional and age disparate that HIV infections normally occur. It is for this reason that the purpose of this study is to identify factors that render girls vulnerable to HIV infection from the community members' perspective. Insufficient economic, educational, social, cultural and legal supports for adolescent girls are factors that have been found from the focus group interviews that they render girls vulnerable to HIV infection (Underwood et al., 2011).

Another study by Jewkes & Morrell (2011) on sexuality and the limits of agency among South African teenage women explored ways in which young women construct their femininities. It identified sexual practices of young women as a critical factor in terms of those women's exposure to the risk of HIV (Jewkes & Morrell, 2011). The sexual practices identified include having multiple and older partners. These practices were invariably engendered by their gender identities and were also found to be shaped by these women's inherent socio-economic vulnerability, the constraints of patriarchy and women's submissiveness to the controlling practices of men (Jewkes & Morrell, 2011).

The issue of women and their vulnerable position has been of major concern to many scholars (Maman, Mbwambo, Hogan, Kilonzo, Weiss, & Sweal, 2000; Weiss, Whelan, & Gupta, 2000; UNAIDS, 1999). Studies have observed that women are unable to negotiate safe sex because of the way gender inequality plays out in the realm of intimacy (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Furthermore, women are found to be on the receiving end of patriarchal power and almost defenceless when it comes to negotiating heterosexual relations (Campbell, Baty, Ghandour, Stockman, Francisco, & Wagman, 2008). Women and men are vulnerable to HIV/AIDS infection due to unequal power balance in gender relations.

## **2.6 Young people and condom usage.**

This section discusses condom usage among young people. From many studies (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001; Groes-Green, 2009; Winskell, Stephenson, & Obyerodhyamb, (2011) it is evident that young people view condoms from two different perspectives. While there are young people who use condoms and view them as important in terms of their protection from HIV infection, others still resist the use of condoms. There are several factors behind young people's risky sexual behavior. Issues such as culture, geographical context, socio-economic conditions, lack of education, poverty, and many more are found to have considerable contribution in young people's resistance to condom use (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001; Groes-Green, 2009).

Research has revealed that young people account for almost half of all new HIV infections. Reported condom use among them, remains low in many sub-Saharan African countries (Winskell, Stephenson, & Obyerodhyamb, 2011). However, MacPhail & Campbell (2001) point out that level of heterosexually transmitted HIV infection are high amongst South

African youth, with one recent survey reporting levels of 18.9% amongst 17-20 year olds and 43.1% amongst 21-25 year olds. The study further reveals that, in these groups, levels of knowledge about HIV are high, but perceived vulnerability and reported condom use are low (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001). Nevertheless, on the study conducted using focus group on condom use among adolescents and young people in a Southern African township, the researchers came up with several factors that contribute to the hindering of condom use amongst youth in that context despite high levels of knowledge about HIV infection (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001). These are community and social factors. They include peer and parental pressure, social construction of male and female sexuality, gendered power relations and economic strains. According to their findings, these factors are not only inhibiting condom use, but they are also placing youth at risk of HIV infection (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001).

The above discussion clearly reveals that many young people are not practising safe sex. In particular, they are not engaging in condom usage as condoms can save their lives and protect them from sexual diseases and early and unplanned pregnancies. This is illustrated in Boyce, Huang Soo Lee, Jenkins, Mohamed, Overs, Paiva, Reid, Tan & Aggleton (2007), who show that during the early days of the epidemic, it became evident that unprotected sexual intercourse was the most common route of HIV transmission globally. Similarly, Groes-Green (2009) argues that it is widely documented that the large majority of youth in sub-Saharan Africa practise unsafe sex despite high risk of HIV infection. These young people are fully accountable for their sexualities.

There are several campaigns worldwide that are targeting young people and encourage them to practice safe sex, either through condom use or avoiding penetration. Furthermore, prevention efforts have often involved giving out condoms free of charge and providing information through school talks and leaflets (Marston & King, 2006). However, this is not the case according to the study of MacPhail & Campbell (2001). They found that in the case of women, they often do not have condoms available and they also make insufficient effort to gain knowledge of their partners' sexual history. According to their study, women engage in unprotected sexual activities or do not negotiate safe sex and also do not discuss sexual issues with men due to the negative reputations and labels associated with women who actively seek sex (ibid, 2001). Moreover, the use of condoms is stigmatising and associated with lack of trust by intimate partners and also the society (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001).

In another study conducted by Groes- Green (2009) in Mozambique on (safe sex pioneers) examining how class, gender and peer education affect safe sex in male youth, dominance masculinity and class were found to be the contributing factors to risky sexual behaviour. The study found that learners from lower social classes showed less frequent use of condoms due to socioeconomic inequalities which is disempowering them when it comes to negotiating sexual activities (Groes-Green, 2009). Those boys and girls found it really difficult to negotiate the use of condoms with their richer partners as they were involved in relationships with people who were older than them (Groes-Green, 2009). There could be various reasons for this: fear that they may lose the relationships or they may not be done any favours, including receiving money (Groes-Green, 2009).

There are some very important factors to be taken into consideration in order to understand young people's sexuality. Furthermore, context also plays a vital role in influencing people's lives, behaviours and attitudes. It is very important that generalisations are not made when considering young people's sexualities. In the same study of Groes-Green (2009), boys from city schools responded better to sexual peer education compared to those from lower social classes. Boys from the city school seemed to understand their sexuality very well. Those boys (from city school), for example, gave out their reasons for condom usage (Groes-Green, 2009). The very same boys, however, contradicted themselves or their behaviour by practising unsafe sex after they had established enough trust with their partners (Groe-Green, 2009). The same study shows that several factors contributed to the boy's risky sexual behaviour and safer sexual practices (Groes-Green, 2009). The youth mentioned education opportunities, employment and good career prospects as their reasons for use of condoms. Religious and cultural beliefs also featured as their reasons for not using condoms (Groes-Green, 2009).

While young people and the use of condoms have been found to be negative by many researchers, Winskell, Stephenson, & Obyerodhyamb (2011) also did a study on making sense of condoms. The purpose of their study was to examine social representations of condoms in young people's HIV related narratives (aged 10-24 years) from six African countries: Swaziland, Namibia, Kenya, South-East Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Senegal. The use of both qualitative narrative analysis and thematic data analysis on young people in these six African countries yielded interesting findings. The cross-cultural analysis revealed how young Africans in six countries make sense of condoms in their narratives about HIV/AIDS (Winskell, Stephenson, & Obyerodhyamb, 2011). The researchers found differences across

settings in the prominence accorded to condoms in the narratives; the assessment of their effectiveness; misinformation regarding efficacy and relative effectiveness for HIV and contraception usage; factors that may be limiting condom acceptability, particularly moralization and related stigma; and strategies that might be useful in their promotion, including humor and interpersonal communication (ibid, 2011). However, gendered barriers to their use, notably normative barriers for males and structural barriers for females, are found to be more consistent across the settings (Winskell, Stephenson, & Obyerodhyamb, 2011).

It is suggested that when condoms are used consistently and correctly, they are highly effective in preventing the sexual transmission of HIV (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2007) and they have been found to be instrumental in reducing prevalence in certain high-risk communities around the world (Winskell, Stephenson, & Obyerodhyamb, 2011). According to these researchers, condom promotion among young people can help to address their elevated risk of HIV infection, other sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy, and to establish protective behavioural patterns that may last a life time (Winskell, Stephenson, & Obyerodhyamb, 2011).

## **2.7 Power, sexuality and risky behaviour**

This discusses young people's sexuality and risky behaviour. Drawing from the discussion of research findings so far, the way young people practise their sexuality influences them to be at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. The issues of boys having many girlfriends, men having multiple partners and women with transactional relationships exposes young people, especially young boys to risk taking sexual behaviours that would leave them with HIV infection that will be discussed in detail in the next section.

The imbalance of power relations amongst men and women results in privileging men and creating gender inequality (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). This has negative effects on both men and women as it puts them at a high risk of HIV infection. Jewkes & Morrell's (2010) study asserts that a man may expect to lead and control sexual relations and expect his partner to comply, and he may feel entitled to have sex with other women, but expect her to remain faithful. In addition, MacPhill & Chambell (2001) emphasised that masculine sexuality is manifesting in society's classification of normal men as being associated with multiple

partners and power over women. Therefore, from these findings, it is evident that the need for men to engage in multiple sexual relationships, combined with internalized negative attitude towards condoms, place men's sexual health at risk (ibid, 2006).

In another study by Selikow, Zulu & Cedras (2002), it was found that youth confirmed that not having any girlfriend or having one is viewed as abnormal, while having many enhances the status of males. Multiple partners are seen as the norm and women are seen as objects and, because of this, double standards for men and women exist (Selikow et al., 2002). This type of sexuality encourages unsafe sexual practices that increase youth risk of HIV infection. Even though there has been an existence of dominant social norms which place young people's sexual health at risk, there was also evidence that the minority of youth actively challenge dominant norms and behave in counter normative and health enhancing ways (ibid. 2002).

Using a discourse analysis and qualitative research techniques with the sample of 70 youth in a study conducted by Selikow (2004) in which an exploration of youth sexuality with specific focus on how language influences sexuality, youth were found to have certain beliefs that place them at sexual risk. However, issues relating to culture, race and class are found by many researchers who dealt with sexuality to be contributing to people's risky sexual behaviour. Nevertheless, in this study, another issue related to language has emerged. Indeed, the study found that youth have their way of using language that influences their sexuality (Selikow, 2004). The study findings revealed that youth have developed a special language to talk about sex and sexuality (Selikow, 2004). This language has become part of their daily discourse so that unsafe sexual practices become norms and are justified (Selokow, 2004). The manner in which people internalise cultural activities has an impact on young people as they learn from adults and peers. I believe there are many issues in cultures about people's sexualities that have to be reviewed and changed in order to minimise the risk of HIV/AIDS pandemic that is affecting both adult and young people.

Another study was also conducted by Tenkorang & Rajulton (2010). This study offered a multi-level analysis of risk perception, poverty and sexual risk taking among young people in Cape Town, South Africa. The purpose of the study was to examine the impact of risk perception, together with socio-economic and cultural variables on risky sexual behaviour measured as a multinomous ordered categorical variable (Tenkorang & Rajulton, 2010). The authors also made use of the community, and this allowed them to consider the impact of

poverty at community level on the sexual behaviours of young people in Cape Town aged from 14- 22 years (Tenkorang & Rajulton, 2010). From the findings of the study, male and female respondents perceived themselves to be at great risk of HIV infection and they were also found to be less likely to indulge in risky sexual behaviours (Tenkorang & Rajulton, 2010). In addition, race and community level poverty were also confounded, such that race mediated the effects of community-level poverty. Therefore, the study found that multiple rationalities influence and affect sexual behaviour in Cape Town, South Africa (Tenkorang & Rajulton, 2010).

## **2.8 Gender power and HIV/AIDS**

HIV/AIDS continue to ravage South Africa and other countries in Africa and the rest of the world (Tenkorang & Rajulton, 2010). This is due to several factors found in recent literature. For example, lack of knowledge, low risk perception and risky sexual behaviours, especially among young people, account for this higher level of infections (Butler, 2005). A recent survey in the South African township of Khutsong indicated that HIV infection was almost non-existent in the 13-16 years age group, followed by a sharp increase in the 16-18 years group 18.9% (Williams, Campbell & MacPhail, 1999). We live in societies where men still have power and control over women. In most African countries, with particular reference to my country (Lesotho), men are still considered to be real men if they are engaged in multiple sexual relations and marriages which give rise to the number of children they have. For instance, a real Mosotho man has to have as many children as he can and, more especially, boys. This will give him the status of being the „real man’. Therefore, in the process of trying to have a boy, he has to engage in another marriage or sexual activity with another woman if there is no boy in the current one. According to Selikow, Zulu, & Cedras (2002), male sexuality is defined by how many sexual partners men have and sexual assertive male behaviour is regarded as a prominent factor in being a real man. Social construction of masculinity on the one hand, gives men power, and on the other hand, places them at risk. Therefore, men improve their masculinity by being sexually assertive and this has encouraged aggressive sexuality and culture of multiple sexual partners (ibid, 2002).

Moreover, the imbalance in gender power that prevents young women from negotiating safe sexual encounters puts women at risk of HIV infection (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001). In some cultures, it is unacceptable for women to discuss sex with a man and they have to



accept whatever he says (ibid, 2001). For this reason, it is obvious that the risk of unsafe sex is high. This is further confirmed by Hollard et al., (1990) and Hollard, Ramazanoglu, Sharpe & Thomson (1992) when they concur that social constructions of masculinity that promote the idea of men needing sex further constrain women's negotiation potential by limiting opportunities for women to either refuse sex or negotiate safe sex. But it is not all women or men who conform to this norm, as some challenge it.

The imbalance of power between boys and girls leaves girls in a vulnerable position, whereby boys can have many girlfriends and expect their girls to be submissive and to stick to them only (Reddy and Dunne, 2007). Male dominance over females in sexual relationships is often seen as normal and expected (Reddy & Dunne, 2007). For instance, girls are seen as property to boys, to serve and obey them (Leach, Machakanja, & Madonga, 2000). They further revealed that boys are taught from an early age that male control and dominance over female is the norm (Leach, Machakanja, & Madonga, 2000). The power imbalance between men and women puts young people in sexually risky behaviour. Boys determine when and how sex occurs and girls commonly experience rape as a consequence (NPPHCN 1995 cited in Reddy 2003). That is the power of patriarchy – the power men and boys have over women and girls, and this is evident in the ways in which masculinity and femininity are played out (Reddy & Dunne, 2007). These issues are the main contributing factors to young people and their sexual risk behaviour. Young people are fully aware and knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS and STDs, but are still engaging in risky sexual behaviours.

The discussion so far reveals that the social construction of masculinity that gives men more power over women leaves men in a dominant position and women subordinated. Thus, more men than women get infected with HIV/AIDS, even though many do not disclose their status. Engaging with literature on sexuality and HIV/AIDS clarified that both young men and young women are vulnerable. Therefore, the last section discusses the issue of vulnerability and HIV/AIDS.

## **2.9 Race, class, gender and sexuality**

There is not much to draw on in the field of sexuality studies in Lesotho. I rely heavily on South African studies. Studies show that factors such as race and class are crucial in understanding the performances of male heterosexuality, since these factors present different

experiences for boys (Connell, 1995; Morrell, 2001; Bhana, 2002). Race and class are instrumental in the performance of sexuality in South Africa. Young African men living in townships largely construct their masculinity in terms of their sexual prowess. Scholars have noted how dominant masculinities in South Africa can shape men's, sometimes violent control over women, the demand for 'flesh to flesh' sex, and the celebration of multiple partners (Wood and Jewkes, 2001; Hunter, 2002). The literature describes the prevalence of a rampant and dominant sexuality amongst men, despite their knowledge of the seriousness of the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS, (Morrell, 2003; Hunter, 2004). Young Black African men in Southern Africa have been particularly problematised in the context of HIV/AIDS, with campaigns and literature addressing them as people with multiple partners and engaging in forms of sexual harassment and violence (Pattman, 2005).

## **2.10 Conclusion**

The chapter reviewed literature on young people's sexuality and HIV/AIDS. Statistics from Sub-Saharan Africa, the global world and Lesotho (the site of this study) have been outlined to show that there is a high rate of people infected by HIV, particularly young people between the ages of 15-24. The age groups covered in the literature (and in this study) included participants who were 16 turning 17 years old. The chapter discussed young people and condom use and mentioned that, while some of the young people resist the use of condoms, others do rather decide to use them to practise safe sexual activities. It also looked at power, sexuality and risky behaviour, whereby the way young people engage with their sexuality influences them to be at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.

Based on the literature, it is necessary to find out how gender power is intimately tied in with meanings these young people in Lesotho attach to their sexuality. The study will be of importance to reveal what the boys give as explanations for their sexuality. In the next chapter the discussion shifts to the research design and the research methodology used in this study. The chapter also explains the process employed in the collection of data. Ethical issues are also discussed, especially because the study deals with young people for the production of knowledge. Gaining access to the school, as well as, trustworthiness and limitations to the study are also discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 3

### Research design and Methodology

#### 3.1 Introduction

To explore the perceptions, attitudes and practices around the sexual identities of selected young male participants in this study, qualitative research methodology was adopted. This choice gives a 'voice' to young men who, in Lesotho, are discouraged from engaging in discussions around sexuality. This research methodology allows these boys to express themselves in a safe and non-judgemental environment. The chapter will show how a qualitative research design is appropriate for the type of data needed for this exploratory study. The relevance of this methodology lies in the fact that the study aims to understand how and why young boys' sexual behaviour puts them at risk and why they engage in risky sexual behaviour. Therefore, exploring the sexual lives of young people requires in-depth responses. This chapter also describes the data analysis techniques used and includes an explanation of the process of sampling, ethical procedures, validity, reliability and trustworthiness of the research methodological choices.

#### 3.2 A qualitative approach

The reason qualitative research approach selected in this study is the nature of the phenomenon under study. That is, the study explores how young men in this study talk about their sexual attitudes and practices and the meanings they attach to their sexual identities. According to Meyers (2002), qualitative research is a tool used to understand and describe the world of human experiences and its strength is that it offers the richness and the depth to which explorations are conducted and how the descriptions are written in the research in order for the reader to grasp the ideas of situation. Meyers (2002) further stipulates that the qualitative research approach focuses on people, how and why they interact with each other, and their motives and relationships.

Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2000) posit that the qualitative approach is used when in-depth research is required. In this research, I found the qualitative approach more appropriate because it revealed more in-depth and insightful evidence of these young people's responses to risky sexual behaviour. Thus, the appropriateness of qualitative approach to this study is

that it seeks to explore a particular group and not to generalize it over the whole population (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011). A qualitative approach also equipped me with the research tools to explore these boys' experiences and responses to mention the type of behaviour within their real life context as it is an attempt to see how others have constructed reality by asking about it (Maree, 2007).

### **3.3 Research design**

Within the qualitative approach, the study adopted a case study research design to explore the responses of the young people in a high school with regard to their sexuality. A case study is a systematic and in-depth investigation of a particular instance in its context in order to generate knowledge (Rule & John, 2011). The strength of a case study design is that it is very useful for learning about situations, which might be poorly understood or about which not much is known, as in this case of how young people in Lesotho understand and construct their sexuality (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). The case study design provided a large amount of information and detail about the research topic and allowed me to deal with a wide variety of raw data (Wimmer & Dominick, 2000). The case study design has been appropriate for my study as it "opened the possibility of giving a voice to the powerless and voiceless" (Maree, 2007:75), which in this study refers to young men voicing their responses about their sexual attitudes, practices and behaviours.

Moreover, the study is of a particular instance in this context therefore, it provided a unique example of real people in a real situation (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). The case study comprises the responses of a group of six young people about their sexual behaviour.

### **3.4 Interpretive paradigm**

The study is positioned within the interpretive paradigm which "serves as a lens through which reality is interpreted" (Nieuwenhuis, 2007, p.48). According to Nieuwenhuis (2007), interpretive research is concerned with human behaviour. It seeks to understand in depth how people make sense of the context in which they live and work. It also focuses on people's subjective experiences on how people „construct' the social world by sharing meaning (Maree, 2007). Six young men were involved in this research which considered their

interaction with the researcher and with each other. This means that, for the boys interacting with each other provided more of quality data as they built on one another's experiences.

### **3.5 Research site**

The study was conducted in Maseru, Lesotho. Maseru is the capital town of Lesotho. It is located in the west of Lesotho and is one of the biggest towns in the country. The study was conducted in one of the largest high schools, 15 kilometers away from the town. Mohlomi (a pseudonym) high school is located just outside Maseru. The school has a dedicated staff of administrators and teachers, some of whom have taught for more than 20 years at this location. The school serves one of the poorest communities near Maseru. Of the 742 students enrolled in the school, 193 students are double orphans (having lost both parents), and 104 are single orphans. For many students, the only meal they receive each day is the one provided by the school. Most students walk to school, many travelling 10km or more.

#### **3.5.1 The school context**

Mohlomi high school was established in 1972. It is the Lesotho Evangelical Church School. The school is governed by the School Governing Body (SGB) and the School Management Team (STM). The SMT comprises the principal (male), deputy principal (female) and four heads of department that are males and females. Mohlomi high school seeks to train and educate students by providing a practical curriculum, extra curricula activities, and environmental education and life support skills through short and long term strategic planning in conformity with their motto "Aluta Continua" ( the struggle continues) as its mission. The vision of the school is to provide academic excellence to students by providing holistic education to transform their youth into productive and responsible devout citizens endowed with "Botho" which is humaneness. The school consists of 742 learners with 528 girls and 241 boys. It has 31 teachers eighteen of whom are female and 13 are male. The school buildings are in a good condition and the school has a veranda and two guards to ensure security for the learners, the teachers and school property.

### **3.6 Sampling**

The study participants are all Basotho boys and they all speak English and Sesotho as English is the medium of instruction in Lesotho, while Sesotho is their first language. All participants reside in Maseru. The reason why I selected Maseru was motivated by the accessibility of participants for the interviews because I live in Maseru too. I selected that site because the participants could be found conveniently. The school principal requested two class teachers to help me select the boys. All six participants were willing to be part of the study. The criteria for selection were gender and age. The study needed boys between the ages of 16 and 17 and they were purposively selected. Six learners were chosen to participate and from grade 12.

Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) posit that purposive sampling is used in order to access „knowledgeable people’ who have in-depth knowledge about a particular issue. Denzin & Lincoln (2000) also state that, purposive sampling allows us to choose participants who illustrate some features in which we are interested. Purposeful sampling allowed the selection of available participants according to the purpose of the study (Cohen, Marion & Morrison, 2000).

#### **3.6.1 Participant’ biographical information**

1. Thabane is 17 years old. He is in form E. He has male friends and one girlfriend (lover). Thabane lives with both of his parents who are employed. Thabane does not enjoy being at home with his parents every day. He says that he likes to be at school with his friends. According to him, life is different at home from outside as his parents forced him to go to church, to study even at times when he does not feel like doing either of the two. He says that he can only socialize with people at school where he also makes new friends. Thabane realises that he gets his peace of mind and happiness at school.

2. Thabiso is 16 turning 17 years old. He is in form E. He lives with both his parents and they are both working. Thabiso has got friends and he loves to socialize with them as he gets more tips when with his peers. He has more than one girlfriend (lover) because he just loves being involved with different girls. Thabiso spoke of enjoying changing girls and how he cannot stay with one girl for long because he believes that commitment belongs only in marriage. He hates to share a girlfriend with other boys; He also mentioned that he does not

like to be in a relationship whereby they discuss things with a girlfriend. He like to dominate in a relationship, he enjoys giving orders and being respected by a girl.

3. Thabo is 17 years old and in form E. He lives with his mother and younger sister. His mother works in a supermarket. He has a girlfriend and loves her. He does not hang out with other boys that much because he avoids being badly influenced. Thabo says he would like to talk about sexuality issues with his mother but unfortunately they do not. He says that he is afraid to bring that discussion up with his mother.

4. Thato is 16 years old and is in form E. He lives with his parents. His mother is a nurse and his father is a school principal. Thato says he loves girls a lot and enjoys dating older girls. He explained that older girls are more experienced in love affairs. He said that he is not impressed with girls who make the first move and make themselves available for love making. He said he shuns them. He insists he has to be the one who tells the girls when and how they do things.

5. Thulo is 17 years old and in form E. He lives with both his parents and they are employed. He spends his time out with friends sometimes drinking. Even though he drinks, he says that his parents do not know that and he does not want them to discover because his father can chase him out of the house. His parents are committed Christians and do not believe in youngsters drinking or having relationships. According to him his father is a very strict parent. Thulo mentioned that he has girlfriends but his parents do not know about it.

6. Thulani is 17 years old and in form E. he lives with his mother and elder brother. His mother is a teacher and also runs a small clothes selling business which she does after school and during holidays. They live in a small two bedroom house in which he shares a bed with his brother. Thulani spoke of how the sharing of a bed room brought a negative impact in his life. He says that he had to learn about certain things long before he was even ready for them. His brother used to force him to have sex with girls. If he refused his brother would not let him sleep in the bed. He would sleep on the floor. He had to start engaging in sexual intercourse at an early age in order to be accepted and accommodated by his brother.

### **3.7 Interview**

The aim of the study is to understand the sexual behaviour of school boys and to explore the role of gender power within these boys construction of their sexualities. The research used focus group interviews of six participants and individual interviews of six participants to explore and understand high school boys' responses to their sexual risky behaviour. The interviews were based on open-ended questions as data collection instruments because such questions lend themselves to more probing in order to further clarify questions. I believe in depth, interviews are important for researching sensitive issues, around young people and sexuality. This type of interview helps to reflect on the interpretations participants attach to their responses through the words they chose to use, their silences, as well as the complexities of their behaviours, attitudes and perceptions. I chose to interview the boys in focus group first and then and individually. The aim was to collect in depth information about how the meanings these boys give to their sexuality.

#### **3.7.1 Focus group interview**

Once the necessary permission (as discussed in the section on ethical considerations) was obtained, the young boys were approached to participate in the study. All participants were assured of complete confidentiality and encouraged to disclose as much information as they possibly could. I started with the focus group in order to see how much data could be gathered from the group of boys. The focus group interviews took place at the school, in the science lab classroom. Focus group interviews are meant to direct discussion among a group of people, fewer than 12, with the purpose of collecting in-depth qualitative data about a group perception, attitudes and experiences on a defined topic (Maree, 2007). Furthermore, as Maree (2007) indicates, the goal was to encourage full participation and interaction among members and also to probe for clarity of aspects.

The focus group interview, lasting 60 minutes, was audio-taped and transcribed. According to Maree (2007), a focus group encourages debate and even conflict, and group dynamics assist in data generation. Participants engage in a discussion with each other rather than directing their comments solely to the researcher. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, & Delport (2005) also noted that in focus group, participants are able to build on each other's ideas and comments to provide in-depth information not attainable from an individual interview alone.



### **3.7.2 Individual interview**

During the focus group process, I realised that some of the participants were somehow shy to express their views while others felt free and dominated the discussion. This prompted me to also conduct individual interviews on an agreed day at the same school in order to add to the data that was already gathered. Studies also have shown that data obtained from individual interviews can be combined with focus group data for the purpose of data completeness and confirmation (Halcomb & Andrew, 2005). The two methods together contributed to the breadth and depth of the findings. Molzahn, Starzomski, McDonald & Loughlin (2005) further explain this by noting that the personal interview may be used to explore personal experiences, whereas focus group may be used to examine opinions and beliefs about the phenomenon.

The individual interview lasted for 30 minutes with each participant. All six boys were interviewed. The interview guide was followed. The interview was conducted in English. However, the boys used Sesotho where they needed to explain and could not express themselves in English. Those sections were translated and I tried as far as possible not to lose the essence of the boys' responses. In such a case those words had to be translated to English and slightly affect the quality of data as when some Sesotho words are translated they lose the quality of their meanings therefore, to overcome this, I did a lot of probing in order to get consensus agreement. I also had to do one by one discussion to verify certain issues.

With the permission of the participants, a voice recorder was used. Both the focus group and the individual interview were voice-recorded to secure an accurate account of the conversations and to avoid losing data since not everything can be written down during interview.

### **3.8 Data analysis**

I transcribed verbatim all the data from the focus group and individual interviews I held with these boys at school. I then read the transcript a number of times in order to become familiar with the data and to provide a context for the emergence of specific units of meaning and themes later on (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). This was done (inductively) working with data from the theory and through an (-iterative process-) of going forward and backward with the data. The transcribed interviews obtained from the selected young Basotho boys'

responses to their sexual behaviour was coded according to the themes I identified as I read and re-read the data in order for it to be meaningful. I then classified codes into categories so that I was able to compare similarities and difference in the participants' responses to questions about their sexualities. The data is analysed against the background and flexibility of how these boys construct and enact their sexualities in terms of gender power. Both the use of gender power theory and the discussed literature were helpful in the analysis.

### **3.9 Research bias**

Since I am a teacher, I had to remain mindful of the power relationship between myself and the participants. As a teacher I come into the research setting with my own preconceived ideas and experiences of boys. I tried my best to remain true to the data presented. The verbatim data that I present in the analysis helps to eliminate the biases. Again, as a researcher and a teacher as well; I was aware of the position of authority and power of a teacher over the learners. I was in control of the research process responses towards my research interest and learners might also not felt comfortable enough when discussing their sexuality with me. The study may have been limited to gender, being a female and the participants being male expected to talk about sex and sexuality- personal. Moreover, in Lesotho adults avoid talking about sex to children. However, most of the young men who participated in this study did not appear reluctant to talk to me although some were more comfortable talking to me one on one. Because talking about sex is taboo I thought I might have difficulty breaking through to the boys. I do feel that they withheld some thoughts, experiences and perceptions and believe that had I been a male interviewer, they might have been a lot more forthcoming in their responses.

### **3.10 Ensuring trustworthiness of the findings**

In qualitative research it is hard to achieve validity and reliability because it deals with human behaviour which changes under different circumstances. This makes it impossible to get similar results. "For that reason, it becomes crucial to ensure reliability and validity in a qualitative research by examining issues of trustworthiness. This means that, the idea of achieving reliability and validity is by trustworthiness

### **3.10.1 Trustworthiness**

In order to achieve the trustworthiness of the study I considered conformability which is a measure of how well the findings are supported by the data collected. I took back the transcripts to the participants to verify that the transcripts are an accurate reflection of what they said and also by interrogating the data when analysing. To address dependability and conformability I relied on the voice recorder and field notes.

### **3.11 Ethical considerations**

#### **3.11.1 Gaining access to the research site**

I requested and gained permission to all relevant parties (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007) which are the University of KwaZulu-Natal, principal secretary of Education, the principal of Mohlomi high school and the participants' parents/guardians. I was granted ethical clearance by the University of KwaZulu-Natal to be able to conduct this research. I followed all the procedures including getting access to the school, participants and their parents. I submitted a letter to the principal secretary of the ministry of Education in Lesotho to obtain permission to conduct research in the school. The letter explained my study and requested permission to conduct the study within the school. I found these to be ethically important, as my participants were located in school and schools are owned by the churches but the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) is responsible for the management and regulation of education in Lesotho. I was asked to produce my interview questions and was informed by the person who was in charge that I would not be allowed to ask the learners those types of question. I was also advised to change them as I was told that I was not going to get the responses from the learners because issues of sexuality are taboos and young people are viewed to be asexual. Therefore, my study would be affected. Later, I was granted permission but not in a written document or a letter. I was given telephone numbers and the name of the person to be contacted should the school want to confirm whether permission was granted to me.

I went to the school of my choice and I presented my study and all its aims, objectives, and key questions to the principal. The principal with his deputy told me that they would not allow their learners to discuss the topic that I was researching. In Lesotho issues relating sex are taboo. Young people are considered to be asexual and voiceless (Bhana, 2008). So I was

refused permission. I had to look for another school which I managed to find. Unfortunately, I experienced the same problem. I was denied the permission again for the same reasons. I did not give up; I looked again for the third school. This time, I finally secured it just before end of term. Without any problem the principal granted me permission and allowed me to select and interview these learners. The Life Orientation teacher offered to assist me.

### **3.11.2 Participants and parents' consent**

After being granted permission legally, I set a date to meet with my participants in order to get to know each other and to explain the purpose of the interview. We met at school; introduced ourselves and I explained my study. I had eight boys. After explaining the study, some of the boys changed their minds and withdrew their participation while others remained. Some of the reasons that they gave for their withdrawal were that they were not comfortable discussing their private affairs for other people to read, including their teachers and parents. They believed such information belongs with them and their trusted friends. Even though issues of confidentiality and anonymity were discussed and assured, those boys were still not convinced that they could trust me. For that reason, I was only able to secure six boys as participants. I went through the ethics and confidentiality issues again stressing the fact that the participants had the right to withdraw at any stage of the study should they want to. The use of voice recorder was also to be negotiated with each participant and they were reminded of their right to choose what to tell or what not to tell. Thereafter, learners were given the consent form to sign. I also had to ask for permission from the learners' parents/guardians by sending the letters of informed consent to sign to allow me to work with their children. They were also told that they could withdraw from the study if they chose to do so and that they were not compelled to answer questions if they were not comfortable. I must say that I began the interview with six boys and none of them withdrawn or complained of anything.

### **3.12 Confidentiality**

In research, confidentiality is about protecting participant's identity. Therefore, I assured the participants confidentiality of information and anonymity. That is, I guaranteed the participants that their names and the name of the school will not be mentioned in the

research. To ensure this ethical feature, participants real names were not used when reporting the interview (Willing, 2001). All my participants chose pseudonym to be used for the purpose of this study. It is obvious that a research of this type can violate the private lives of young people. Some of the allusion can be harmful and others can be beneficial. So in order to lessen the harmful effects of the violation of the participants' rights, research has to consider ethical issues. Participants have to be protected against their privacy. I believe that when these occur, people could open up and give honest answers. Should these not happen, the research can be affected in many ways like participants' withdrawal or lack of trust that can lead to dishonest information which will not serve the purpose of this study. As a researcher, I was therefore able to build a trusting relationship with my participant.

### **3.13 Data collected**

Before the interview I asked for the permission from the participants to voice record the interview. Recorded data was safely kept as is required by the ethical considerations of a study of this nature. I ensured that only I was privy to the data.

### **3.14 Difficulties encountered**

My study was going to be based in another high school in Maseru. However, due to the difficulties of gaining access to participants the study ended up being conducted in another high school outside town. One of the huge difficulties I came across was the time of conducting the study in that context. I went for the collection of data in July which was the time that officially government schools were closed for winter term. It was not all the government schools that were closed others were still in the process of exams, that is why I managed to get them school. Moreover, I also encountered the difficulty of noise during the process of the interview as it was held in one of the classroom (science lab) and other learners were out of classes after the exam paper. To overcome the noise problem, I used the field notes to back up the voice recorder. I also had to work around the participants' availability and time since they were writing exams at the time. I had to wait until they were done before I began the focus group discussion

### **3.15 Limitations of the study**

The study used a purposive sampling technique, which by itself is therefore a limitation in that it allowed a researcher to select participants and population sample. It is an in-depth study and I am not attempting to generalize. The focus was on one school. Secondly, the position of me as a researcher could have affected the responses. The power differences could have played a role in the ways in which the boys responded. Furthermore, the fact that I am an adult and a teacher researching a very sensitive topic of sexuality in that context obviously affected the results of the study in such a way that learners might not speak the truth, they may just tell me what I want to hear. Young people in Sesotho culture are not open to talk about their sexuality with teachers or parents. This is because of respect learners have to their parents or teachers. Therefore, to overcome this I tried as much as possible to be neutral as a researcher. Moreover, as I already mentioned that even though the participants used English, but for some expressions of issues they had to use Sesotho.

### **3.16 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have discussed the methodological approach to the study. I have presented how the selected methodology is related to the data that I obtain. The chapter again explained the process employed in acquiring the data which includes: the ethical procedures followed for the study. I have also illustrated my experience on getting permission and access to the school. The analysis of the data was also expounded and so were the issues of trustworthiness and the limitations. The chapter that follows present and analyse the data.

## CHAPTER 4

### Analysis and discussion

#### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present the analysis and discussion of the findings with regard to the sexual attitudes, practices and behaviours of a group of Basotho high school boys. These findings are based on the data gathered from six boys in a focus group and six boys in an individual interview with these participants. Audio-recorded interviews were transcribed into textual data. I read through the transcripts a few times, coded the data and arranged it into themes. Discussion is centred on the emergent themes and the gender power theoretical perspective is used as a lens with which to view, interpret and analyse data. Local and international literature is drawn upon to support the discussion on:

- Boys, parents and talking about girlfriends and sex;
- Multiple partners: Issues of gender power, patriarchy and culture;
- Faithful boys: loving one girl;
- Using girls for sex and not showing love;
- Peer pressure;
- Discussing condoms: Risky and safe sexual practices;
- Sex and power: I have to get what I want;
- One girl for sex: one for marriage and;
- Young boys' view on AIDS.

In this section, I argue that gender power influences young boy's risky sexual behaviour. This was manifested in different ways that emerged and are thematised for the study. Even though these boys have limited knowledge of HIV/AIDS, they feel more comfortable discussing their sexuality with their male friends rather than their parents or girlfriends. Lebesse et al (2011) has shown that media influence in their study was the main source of information on sexual health. None of the participants in this study reported parents as their sources of information. In fact it was evident that the participants heavily relied on the media for information. Although a majority of these boys experienced negative peer pressure, most of them were forced to have sex before they felt ready. It is important to disclose that in the data there are examples of positive norms that are expressed by other boys. The minority of boys

challenge dominant norms and do what they believe is right. They seemed not to comply with the notion of masculinity and some challenged it and practice safe sexual behavior. Data generated from interviews resonate strongly with much of the literature on young people and sexuality in sub-Saharan countries and elsewhere (Selikow, 2004; MacPhail & Campbell, 2001).

#### **4.2 Boys, parents and talking about girlfriends and sex**

Instead of discussing issues of sexuality with young people, parents prefer to encourage sexual abstinence for their young people before marriage (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001). Although one participant indicated that his parent knows about his girl-friend, the majority of the participants indicated that they would never let their parents know about their girlfriends or sexual behaviour. The inability of these young men to communicate with their parents is based on moral judgement by their parents. They believe that their parents will judge them if they are sexually active. These different perceptions of the boys about their parents contribute to the boys' reluctance to discuss their sexual behaviours with parents. Thus, when the boys were asked whether their parents knew about their girlfriends, they responded this way.

*All: No!*

*Thabiso; I will not tell them. Telling her about my girlfriend will be like I am taking her for granted. I haven't tried to, I am thinking. But I know her. Every time I arrive home late after school she suspects something and she asked me. Even when I am from my girlfriend's I will say I am from group discussion because I do not want her to suspect me for that.*

*Thulani; my father is very cruel and my mother too. They both do not know. They saw me one time with another girl at the Pioneer Mall and my father came to me. He stopped the car and opened the window. He said, ("O tlo mosenye") don't you ever, make her pregnant. I was shivering and because I am afraid of him I did not say anything.*

*Thabane; my parents do not know because my father does not like when I am going out. He thinks I am irresponsible. He will tell me that I do not respect him.*

*Thato; I think my parents do not know about my girlfriends because according to our culture, our elder brothers did not tell our parents about girlfriends so we also have to follow the same culture so that we will not be disrespectful.*



*Thulo; my father does not know about my girlfriend because I think they are too many for him to know them. He will think that I am not a faithful person. And, if I could ever make a girl pregnant, Joh! My father thinks that if you have a girlfriend the only thing that comes out is that the girl gets pregnant.*

According to the participants, their parents and other adults in Lesotho appear to be unable to view young boy's sexual behaviour as anything other than dangerous and irresponsible (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001). Participants suggested that their parents preferred warning them of sexuality through punishment rather than encouraging them to be safe and responsible when they are involved in heterosexual relationships. The boys' sexuality is policed and regulated by their parents whose fear around heterosexual relationships is pregnancy. Moreover, the data provides evidence that shows how parents view dating girlfriends as synonymous with sexual intercourse, and also how young people can be irresponsible with their actions that can put both boys and girls in a heterosexual relationship at risk of early and unwanted pregnancy. As much as parents do not discuss issues of sexuality with children, parents do expect young people to be asexual rather than being sexually active.

When asked why they would not let their parents know about their girlfriends, these boys responded this way:

*Thato: they know that we cannot use protection.*

*Thulo: they think that we have unprotected sex with them.*

*Thabiso: they know that to this generation, the relationship is all about sex.*

*Thato: I think they will think that we have unprotected sex because they were in our age and they know what they were doing.*

This data also revealed that parents are afraid that boys are having unprotected sex and to them, sex is an inevitable part of relationships, especially for the current generation. The boys maintain that their parents are aware of the cultural belief and generational practices that they too went through. Therefore they attempt to control their son's sexualities by teaching about abstinence.

*Thabiso; what makes me to think that is because when I am from school and pass by her place and arrive home late my mother becomes so angry. Then I assume that once I tell her.....*

The data shows that the manner in which parents react to these boys leaves them with no other options than to make assumptions on important issues in their lives. Parents sometimes feel insecure when the children arrive home late. Thus, instead of being open to discuss issues of sexuality with children, they rather act differently and become upset with them when they come home late. Their parents' annoyance and presumptuous attitudes derive from the assumption that if they (the boys) come home late they are with a girl or even having sex. The suspicion parents have on boys also contributed to boys' reluctance to discuss their sexualities with parents. However, not all of the participants hide their girlfriends from their parent. Some of them let their parents know about it.

*Thabo; my mother knows about my girlfriend. She is a very clever woman. The other day I received a call and the phone was on the table. She saw the picture of the girl on the screen. She asked me about the photo and the call. I said she is a friend. The next day the call came again with the same picture. She asked me again, who is this girl calling you more often? I said, aha! She is my girlfriend. She laughed and I could not believe it because I thought that she was going to punish me. I was also interested to talk to her about girlfriends but I was scared.*

The data implies that boys have the desire to talk about their sexual relationships, but are afraid to discuss these matters with their parents. They opt to lie instead. Even if the boys were not afraid to discuss such matters, as Thabo intimated, the parents do not seem willing to discuss these matters with young people. This happens despite the parents' awareness of a girlfriend or the relationship.

#### **4.3 Multiple partners: issues of gender power, patriarchy and culture**

Boys prefer to discuss certain issues they consider to be personal with their friends. The majority of the participants mentioned their health or sickness to be some of the issues that they do not want everyone to know about. They instead choose to discuss these matters with their trusted friends. Other issues like family problems and poverty also appeared to be considered as personal and they also keep them to themselves and share only with friends.

Below is how they responded to whether they discuss personal issues with friends and also what issues they consider as personal.

*Thulo; yes we do. I think I do. I do. Issues like, what is going on in our families, problems in our families. Also issues like what is going on in our lives. If you are sick and you do not want people to know, we talk with our friends things we do not want people to know.*

While the above mentioned issues were regarded as personal by the boys, the issue of girlfriends and how to treat them was also deemed secretive, and thus to be discussed with trusted friends.

*Thabiso; actually, we talk about secrets among us. Things we do not want other people know. Things like, how many girlfriends we have and why, and also how to treat our girlfriends.*

Participants considered the issue of their girlfriends as personal and secretive. They actually consider it as a very sensitive issue. They find it disrespectful to talk to their parents or adult people about girlfriend issues. Boys value friends who are good listeners and secretive.

*Thabiso; it is personal because I cannot discuss it with my parents as it is somehow disrespectful. It is a sensitive issue that needs to be discussed with friends.*

*Thulo; Issue of girlfriends is not something I can discuss with everybody or that one can just go out and talk about it to anybody. As I said I have two friends, I talk about personal things to another one who is more serious, and a good listener. While the other one who is not serious and likes to joke about things I talk about general things.*

*Thabane; I cannot talk about girlfriends to my parents or other people. My girlfriends are personal to me. For example, I talk about things like what I have done to my girlfriend with my friends.*

The above data reveals how boys in a heterosexual relationship are in a dominant position and how they have control over girls. Boys construct their masculinity in such a way that they subordinate girls. The data also shows the sexual objectification of girls by boys. Even in the interviews, the expression seems to be what I have done **`to`** my girlfriend instead of, what I have done **`with`** my girlfriend. This resonates with Anderson (2009) which found several instances which were indicative of a sense of control and domination of boys over girls. Thabane reproduced the ideal of hegemonic masculinity (Mudaly, 2012) where boys acquire social status by talking about their sexual escapades.

Masculinity is manifest in society's classification of „normal' men as being associated with multiple partners and power over women (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001). Furthermore, boys derive status from having multiple sexual partners (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). The boys in this study also appeared to be having multiple girlfriends. These boys offered reasons for having more than one girlfriend:

*Thato; I have two girlfriends. The first one is at school and the second one is at home. The reason why I have two girlfriends is that if one plays me around and does not want to have sex with me, I can be able to go to another one.*

*Thulani; I have three girlfriends. What is happening is that I am not sure if I can love one girl with all my heart so I share my love with all of them. I love all of them.*

The reason for boys getting into relationship with girls is to get sex. Sex is integral to a relationship and multiple partners are essential to ensure sex. Thus, as suggested by data, boys are treating their girlfriends as objects of sex in their relationships by referring to a sense of discarding one for another. These boys are into relationships to satisfy their sexual desires and for sexual gratification. They express their ability to love more than one girl at the same time. In addition, there is allusion to blackmail. They hold girls to ransom emotionally if they do not want to have sex by threatening to go to other girls.

Multiple girl friends are seen as an important safeguard for sexual satisfaction within the constructions of masculine sexualities as requiring frequent, varied sex (Selikow, Zulu, & Cedras, 2002). Lesotho operates under a patriarchal structure and this is observed and marked by a belief in the power, privileges and superiority enjoyed by men (Mapetla & Tuoana-Nkhasi, 2003). Young men are defending and supporting their choices of having many girlfriends. This means that they view it as normal. They take it as a norm in order for them to prove their sexual prowess, as well as sexual objectification of the girls. Patriarchy supports the subordination and inferior status of women, and this seems to be accepted and entrenched by traditional law which constructs women as minors (Mapetla & Tuoana-Nkhasi, 2003).

*Thabiso; I have two girlfriends so that when one is playing around, cheating on me with other guys, I can then have another girl friend just to make her feel jealous.*

*Thulo; I have four girlfriends because the only reason is I love girls a lot and I know that I may not be faithful to one girl. Again, if one cheats on me, Ahh! I do not need to hang around on her. I just leave her because I know like I already have spare wheels to go.*

*Thato; I have two. One hae! (Aka ntsoarisa stress. Oa utloa ke tla be ke shebane le ena a le mong so o tla bapala ka nna. Kea mmona).She will give me stress, you understand, I will be focusing on her alone so she will play around me. I will see because I love her.*

This data points to multiple partners and double standards where boys feel that they are entitled to have more than one sexual partner. Ironically, they don't expect girls to do the same. They believe that having many girlfriends bestows a sense of social status. They perceive faithfulness as a problem or some form of abnormality. As for these boys, infidelity has been normalised.

#### **4.4 Faithful boys: loving one girl**

While the majority of the participants have multiple partners, there is evidence of other boys who do not conform to the notion of hegemonic masculinity that prescribes having many girlfriends.

*Thulani; I have one girlfriend because I am unable to have more than one. I have only one love. I cannot share my love. If my girlfriend has another boyfriend she has to leave him immediately I found out. If I cannot find out she is cheating me. I will have to see her reaction.*

*Thabo; I have one girlfriend (others laugh) because if I love a girl I give her all my heart. So she also has to give me all her heart. The other reason is that, nowadays there are a lot of infectious diseases such as STDs sexually transmitted diseases so I am trying to be able to avoid such diseases.*

Thabo not only demonstrates his keen awareness of diseases spread through sexual intercourse and suggests that one way of not contracting any of these diseases is by being faithful to one partner. Also, Thabo openly believes in love and fidelity. Contrary to Thabo's beliefs, other boys laugh because they believe differently.

#### 4.5 Using girls for sex and not showing love

According to (Bhana, Morrell, Hearn, & Moletsane, 2007; Anderson, 2009), men are constructed as having large numbers of sexual partners, while women are viewed as passive recipients of sex and sexuality. All the participants had had sex before and some of them had had it with different girls that they have, while others had it with one particular girlfriend they had at that time.

*Thato; yes, I had sex. I had sex several times. It was enjoyable but I am not with that girl.*

*Thabane; I had it with my one girlfriend and several times.*

*Thabiso; I had it before with only one girlfriend even though I have two of them. Ai! This one Ai! No, the second one. She is ..... I do not know why.*

*Thabo; I had sex with my single girlfriend unfortunately her parents died and we had to separate. She had to go and live with family members in another district. But she loves me so much.*

The data shows that celebration of male sexual prowess through the engagement in sexual intercourse with multiple partners contributes to the hyper sexualized African masculinity (Hunter, 2004).

*Thulani; I also had it before with all my three girlfriends.*

*Thulo; I had sex before with all my girlfriends.*

This data serve as evidence that young men are engaged in sex in the heterosexual relationships. The discourse of love and sex is rampant amongst these boys. In this study, the boys sustain the notion of sexuality, which is what they do, with whom, when and where by engaging in many sexual partners. These boys reflect gender positioning of real men who are dominant, powerful, controlling in determining who to have sex with, when, how (Mudaly, 2012).

#### 4.6 Peer pressure

Sub-Saharan African literature on young people sexuality has pointed to the influential roles that the attitudes and beliefs of peers have on other members of the peer group (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001). It has been well documented that in the majority of cases peer norms encourage risk (ibid, 2001). Peer norms function to promote unsafe sexual behaviour and to encourage others to practice negative sexual health ( MacPhail & Campbell, 2001).

The boys reported that sex had been discussed and explained to them several times. This is the reason it was not something new to them. The only thing that was left for them was to experience it first-hand. From my discussion with the boys, it became quite apparent that these boys are actually being encouraged by peers to have sex. These boys have much pressure from their peers to conform to the norm of what constitutes and conforms to acceptable masculinity.

*Thabiso; I used to be with my friends who had had it before so they used to tell me how enjoyable it is. Tell me hey! If you haven't had it hey! hey! So I was ready and had that pressure as they told me everything about it.*

In the case of Thulani, things were different. Sex was discussed and explained to him by his brother. His brother was pushing and forcing him to go and have sex with some girl. This also seemed to be uncommon to other participants for one to get pressure from an adult family member as young people in Lesotho do not talk about sexuality at home.

*Thulani; I was not scared because I used to stay with my brother so every time he used to tell me about it, and used to say, hey! Man go and do it, you have to taste it.*

It is evident from the data that some boys are forced by their peers or family members (brother) to have sex before they are ready for it. Moreover, the fact that parents do not discuss or communicate with the boys about sexualities contributes to how easily they succumb to peer pressure. Studies reviewed in this dissertation have revealed and confirmed that peers are not only perceived to be deceptive, they are also seen as untrustworthy sources of information when it comes to sexuality (Selikow, Ahmed, Flisher, Mathews, & Mukoma, 2009). The boys from this study also proved this.

*Thato; I did not use condoms because my friends already told me that Ah! You cannot feel it if you used condoms.*

*Thabiso; they also told me that if you use condoms you can't feel it because you cannot eat sweets with plastic.*

The data support the findings of the study that was done by Selikow et al (2009). The study found that for young people, part of being accepted is to avoid being ridiculed and “eating sweets in plastic.”.....and other such pejorative condom related analogies are seen as reasons to mock peers who advocate condom use (Selikow et al., 2009).

*Thato; they told me that I must do it now because if I will do it when matured I will die. They said “you will finish”. So I had to start it and after having it I felt that hei! I am now grown up.*

The data implies that for these boys the fear of being “finished” as they were told, actually compel them to engage in risky sexual behaviour. For these boys, as they are struggling for a sense of belonging, there is fear of rejection. The sad thing about this is that they are actually unwittingly rendering themselves vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. This is also in line with the studies that reveal that masculinity is closely related to engaging in sex, and this is the reason males may unwillingly engage in sex only to have the title of being “a real man” and to be respected by girls (Selikow et al., 2009).

*Thulani; from my point of view, I can say that sex gives a man title. Like I overheard from girls that if... (They are the girls who say that) if you have a boyfriend who is not used to have sex he is stupid. So that is why I am saying it gives a title. I know that if you have sex with a girl she will respect you.*

On the other hand, some participants viewed sex to be addictive and therefore they opt to be responsible, faithful and safe whenever they have sex. Thabo advocates being faithful to one girl, but also demonstrates his awareness of the need to use protection if he engages in sex with other girls. He also alludes to how present behaviour is a predictor of future behaviour.

*Thabo; sex is very addictive. If you had it once you feel like you can do it again. So it is better to be responsible when doing sex. If you have many girlfriends one has to use condoms. But I do not prefer having sex with many girls like I have one. If she is one, I have to do it with only her and not always. Meaning if I do it with many, I am going to do that also in future because what I practice now is what I will do in future. There is a saying that one who rides a tiger will never be stopped.*



As evident above, this study participant does not accept the notion of multiple partners and sex with many girls. Instead, he is resisting the influence of peers and also rejecting the double standards of men by advocating safe sex or faithfulness.

Literature on young people and sexuality, more especially boy's sexuality, is further corroborated more especially by the young men sexuality in Lesotho. Peers do bring negative influence to these boys' construction of sexuality which put them at risk as they expose them to early sexual debut, unsafe sex and multiple girlfriends. Yet, despite the influence and pressure of their peers, other boys in the discussion chose not to adhere to peer norms by refusing early sexual debut, multiple girlfriends or practicing unsafe sex. Some of the study participants understand their sexuality very well and continue to embrace responsible sexual behaviour.

#### **4.7 Discussing condoms: risky and safe sexual practices**

*Thato; mine was not protected.*

*Thulani; mine was not protected.*

*Thabiso; mine was not protected.*

The data highlights the fact that the boys are not practicing safe sex and also they engage with risky sexual behaviour. This leaves them to be vulnerable to STDs and HIV and AIDS.

Young people in Lesotho have received much of their knowledge about sexuality and sexual risk through school subjects like life skills, biology and sex education. Therefore, young men are aware of risky sexual behaviour. The participants regard risky sexual behavior as mostly practicing unsafe/unprotected sex. By unprotected sex participants referred to several issues that can emerge as a result of risky sexual behaviour. Among others, issues of pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and STDs came out from the discussion to be the most serious ones.

*Thato; it is unprotected sex. Because you can be affected as you do not know her status. She can also fall pregnant.*

*Thabiso; unprotected sex is risky in the sense that it transmits STDs like syphilis and the other and one can also get HIV and AIDS. On the side of the girl she can get pregnant.*

*Thulo; unprotected sex and oral sex because you do not know if a person is sick or something then you put your tongue on her private part you might be infected.*

*Thato; I found unprotected sex risky too because the possibility of getting diseases like HIV and AIDS is too high.*

Data reveals that boys have an understanding of risky sexual practices. The boys relate risk behaviour with unprotected sexual activities that will result with the infection of HIV virus. They are also aware that girls are not exempt from transmitting HIV. Some boys and girls are aware of the danger and do take care of their lives by practicing healthy sexuality. This study also discovered that out of six boys who participated, three of them had protected sex while also three had unprotected sex the first time they has sexual intercourse.

*Thabo; mine was protected. We used a condom.*

*Thulo; and mine too.*

*Thabane; mine was protected.*

It is clear that some boys practiced safe sex by using protection. They provided their reasons behind that choice. This is evidence of the fact that young people are fully knowledgeable about their sexuality. This also resonates with other literature that among these groups levels of knowledge about HIV are high, but perceived vulnerability and reported condom use are low (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001).

*Thabo; I used it so that I cannot have a child.*

The data implies that the study participant is aware of the possibility of unplanned pregnancy and early parenting if he has sex without a condom and is not ready for either of these. Therefore the option is to use protection when in contact with sexual activity.

#### **4.8 Sex and power: “I have to get what I want”**

Studies documented that the construction of masculinity that exists within societies justifies the connection of gender power and sexuality that put both men and women at sexual risk (Weiss, Whelan, & Gupta, 2000). Moreover, it has also been found that unequal power balance in gender relations that favours men and boys translates into unequal power balance

in heterosexual interaction in which male pleasure supersedes female pleasure, and men have greater control than women over when, where, and how sex takes place (Gupta, 2000). This also substantiates the fact that gender power puts men and women, boys and girls at risk.

The imbalance in power between male and female partners in heterosexual relationships holds sway over the ability of young women to either refuse sex or negotiate the use of condoms (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001). This is true in Lesotho, where men or boys still believe that they are the ones who are supposed to initiate the deal and women and girls are only to accept without challenging or rejecting the proposition. This clearly indicates Lorber's (2003) assertion that gender inequality involves the devaluation of women and the social domination of men. When the boys were asked whether they believe or not when a girl says 'no', the boys responded this way:

*Thabiso; I do not believe it and I cannot believe it. She is just challenging me. Whether she says no or yes I have to get what I want.*

The data shows that the heterosexual boys have all the power and control over the girls in their relationships. The boys are the ones who have the final say and girls are rendered powerless in the ability to negotiate sex. These boys further perpetuate patriarchy. Male dominance over females in sexual relationships is often seen as normal and expected (Reddy & Dunne 2007). For instance, girls are seen as property to boys, to serve and obey them (Leach, Machakanja, & Madonga, 2000).

Despite the power imbalance that exist in heterosexual relationship, in the focus group discussion there was one exception, a participant who seemed to resist stereotypes of masculinity and power in relationships and appeared to defend the right of girls in sexual relationships. However, there are humiliating practices that boys engage in where girls are only allowed to refuse sex when they are menstruating and have to show evidence. The boys believe that they are allowing girls to decide, but their insistence to see evidence limits girls' dignity. Any form of agency in this instance is removed from girls in this context because boys view it as possibly trying to avoid sex. The onus is on girls to prove that they are not in a position to have sex.

*Thato; I believe her because sometimes she is on her periods. But she has to tell me and show me.*

*Thabo; I can believe only if she can give me a valid reason for example if she says she discovered that she has discharge or periods.*

Masculinity is no exception to the gender imbalance (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001) found in Lesotho. These boys spoke of tricking girls into having sex with them even if the girl says no. They talked of how they tell girls nice things they know will make the girls happy and relax so as to end up agreeing to have sex with them.

*Thulo; I will tell her things like, may be things that will make her happy, make her relax when with me.*

This response further substantiates what MacPhail & Campbell (2001) allude to when they state that boys engage in relationships to satisfy their sexual need and girls are powerless to demand relationships on other terms. Furthermore, these boys are associated with dominant patriarchal ideology which encourages men to believe that they are sexually entitled to be in charge of women (Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell, & Dunkle, 2009).

The focus group discussion documented a serious debate about sex and love, whereby the majority of boys were confusing love and sex. They considered sex to be part of love, thus sex has to be done for their (boys) gratification. This is evident in the fact that gender power puts both young boy's and girls' sexuality at risk.

*Thato; the girl cannot say she is not in the mood to me.*

*Thabo; if she is not in the mood, I am in the mood.*

*Thabiso; so if I am the man she has to satisfy me.*

*Thato; She must depend on me.*

These boys value sex more than love in heterosexual relationships. The boys even compare sex to love by percentages.

*Thabo; in my own understanding, love is not about sex only. Sex is part of love but not love.*

*Thato; sex takes 90% of love.*

*Yah! (Others) or 99% laugh.....*

The discussion on the issues of sex and love were lively with the boys interrupting one another and arguing over the issues they disagreed on. Some boys believed that they have all the power and they are in control in their relationships. One participant, on the contrary, has his own way of viewing love and sex.

*Thabo; sex I know is part of love but not 90% because if it was 90% boys would not have to leave their girls after sex but they do, meaning that their target was only sex not the love.*

One of the boys attempted to explain how he views relationships in relation to sex. He attributed the lack of love to the loss of interest after having sex. He admitted that he loses interest in the girl after having sex with her. The young men consider this as normal.

In the following transcript the boys confess that they are only interested in girls with good sexual experience since they (the boys) do sex only for pleasure and to get to know and understand girls better. It is thus easy to lose interest and leave the girl if she cannot provide the anticipated pleasure.

*Thabiso; this statement is somehow true because I have experienced that. It is natural. At our age there is no big deal about love. We are just using each other. I was not really interested. I know her that's all.*

The boys view girls with sexual experience to be the girls that they can interest them with sex and after that, they can leave as they do not do that with love, but only for their enjoyment of sex.

*Thato; if the girl is not the first time to do sex I will not lose interest but if she does it with other boys hae!*

*Thulo; may be, I did not get fun and after that I just lose interest.*

*Thato; may be, I did not have fun then I will lose interest.*

*Thabiso; at our age there is no big deal about love. I know her that's all.*

While the expectation of the young boys is to get fun in order to be interested, there was one exception. In the case of Thabo, this became quite clear as he seemed to understand the difference between sex and love. The participant knows what he wants from a girl and what his love is based on.

*Thabo; it is not true; once I had sex with the girl I become interested on her. If you have sex with one you really love you cannot lose interest on her after. You are going to see that this person is the one you really love. But the one you proposed only for sex you will leave her after getting what you wanted.*

This is in line with Anderson's (2009) observation that sex talk amongst male friends is restricted to other girls and does not include their girlfriends.

*Thulo; I think is the thing we grew up with, is not something we have control over, you just have sex and after that there is no interest.*

*Thabiso; yah! I can just have sex with a girl that I do not love. It is just to have sex and when I see her I could say yes! That one....*

*Thabo; is because I do not love her and I leave her after sex. Or maybe I suspected that she is having sex with other guys then I will leave her after it too.*

The data implies that these boys have sex with girls just to have fun and that they are callous in their view and treatment of girls. The double standards are evident in that their multiple partner escapades should be accepted, while they are ready to leave girls who have other partners.

*Thabo; sometimes it is okay because if I have girlfriends from two different places, one is there for only satisfying my needs while my loved one is not around. I am saving my loved girlfriend.*

Thabo perceived himself as an active sexual being and, as such, privileging his masculine desire by controlling and objectifying girls. The boys perceive good girls to be the girls that they are not close to them all the time as they are keeping/ saving them. While the girls that are available to them anytime they desire, they perceive them to be bad girls.

*Thabiso; I think is between both of us.*

This data demonstrates that in spite of these negative views of the boys on girls, there are boys in this study who express their commitment to respect members of the opposite sex. It was obvious from the discussion that some young boys really appreciate when their girlfriends express themselves in terms of what they want or their expectations in heterosexual relationships. Thulani, for example, indicated that if his girlfriend expresses her

love by asking for sex, he feels respected rather than embarrassed. This strongly resonates with Anderson (2009) that there are some boys who perform their heterosexuality differently. They also enjoy the relationship when girls have a voice as they also do have voice.

*Thulani; yah! I do that. „Na(me), I do not find it embarrassing because what is happening is that we both have needs. And also I think it shows how much the girl loves me. I think I like it that way.*

Other boys reported how embarrassing it feels when a girl asks for love or sex in the relationship. This kind of feeling the boys have symbolizes the fact that these boys feel emasculated and they are left with the insecurity in their relationships. Moreover, this goes against the societal norm that it is boys that determine when and how sex occurs (Reddy, 2003). Thus, any practice or habit contrary to this is bound to cast the boy in a bad light. He is not man enough.

*Thulo; no it is embarrassing because hae!, it is like I am awkward, I did not ask her, like I am blind, I did not see that she is.....*

*Thabiso; but sometimes these girls thought you have.....they say, that guy, it is me who asked him*

This goes further than the issue of being not a man enough as it brings homophobic language. Such a boy is associated with being homosexual. In Lesotho, if a man or a boy acts like that he is considered not to be a real man or real boy and his masculine identity is always questioned.

*Thato; they say (“ke setabane”motho e no, hae!”). They say he is gay.*

#### **4.9 One girlfriend for sex: one for “marriage”**

The participants think that married people should not have multiple partners. They believe that married couples need to be faithful and committed to each other in order to avoid dangers of HIV/AIDS. The participants also contradict themselves when it comes to unmarried couples. The boys reported that it is not right to be committed to one partner. They indicated that trust and good practice apply only to married couples. The boys express respect for the

institution of marriage because with marriage you do it with someone you are committed to forever and you will trust the person and be faithful to each other.

*Thulo; I do not think it is right when she is your wife but when she is not your wife just a girlfriend, I do not see it as a problem.*

*Thabiso; I can say that it is not right. We have to leave those cultures of our fore fathers. If a husband has his wife he has to be faithful to the wife only. A girlfriend is not my wife she is just a person that I meet only now. She is not my wife so I cannot put that trust on her.*

Marriage and trust seem to go hand in hand. Boys associate trust with marriage and that if one is not married then infidelity can be justified.

*Thabiso; it is my desire and I compete with other guys. Yes it is right because we are not married. But when one is married it is not right. For the girl we have not signed anything I can have another one when I like..... A girlfriend is not my wife she is just a person that I meet only now. She is not my wife so I cannot put that trust on her.*

A study done in Zimbabwe on abuse of schoolgirls found that females are seen as the property of males to serve and obey them. The study also revealed that boys are taught from an early age that male control and dominance over female is the norm (Leach & Machakanja, 2000). Honesty, faithfulness, love and trust are among the integral values of a traditional married man according to these boys. However, these boys do not subscribe to love, trust and faithfulness as they perceived themselves single men. This regulates male sexuality to be associated with multiple partners and objectifying girls as long as the man is unmarried.

*Thato; I can say that it is not right. We have to leave our fore fathers culture and do the right thing as we are doing this because it is culture.*

Young men blame their behaviour on their culture, but they seem not to be willing to change from culture, rather they choose to challenge culture. However, the boys acknowledge their culture as it privileges them and they also benefit from it. They acknowledge, furthermore, that culture is not only advantaging them, it is also putting their lives at risk, including women and girls as they are vulnerable, oppressed, subordinated and marginalised.

*Thabiso; no, I cannot have one girl friend. It is risky if I do unprotected sex with them. But having many there is no guarantee that I do not protect myself, so no risk.*



Thabiso is emphasizing the fact that unprotected sex is risky, more especially with many girls. But also he is contradicting himself when he seems to welcome the possibility of having multiple partners just because he can still protect himself.

*Thulo; I think culture does because we behave this way because of culture. If you have only one girlfriend and people know about it they say you are a loser or something. So you do not want people going around talking about you or laughing at you. You want to laugh with people. You want people to be free with you when you are with them. You want to laugh with them not them to laugh.*

Thulo implies that culture plays an influential role in their constructions of sexuality. According to him, they do not want to be ostracized or labeled. Rather, they want to belong to the society by doing what other people are doing. These boys are only following what has been done before and what is being done by other men and boys. Other men do things because it is their culture, not because they have to. Several factors sometimes influence men to challenge the status quo. These factors can be the context, time, or an individual's perspective (on issues) that may influence some boys or men to start challenging their long held beliefs. Thulo thinks that it is now time that people have to leave their cultural beliefs and face the reality of life.

What is emerging is the resistance of culture by some boys. These boys allude to modernity. They position culture in opposition to advancement. These boys are resisting harmful cultural practices and traditional norms and through their responses show some leaning towards more modern ways of doing things.

*Thulo; yes, we do not need to follow our culture, we are leaving in the world where most of the things are made by technology and we are civilized.....*

#### **4.10 Young boys view on AIDS**

All study participants concede that there is a very high link between HIV/AIDS and sex. The boys seemed to be knowledgeable of HIV/AIDS as they are taught at school. Among these young people, furthermore, there is still a view that HIV/AIDS are deadly diseases.

*It is sexually transmitted disease.*

*Thulo; if you get it you may die if you are not getting treatment.*

*Thabiso; it is only transmitted through sex.*

*Thato; through sex if we do not know our status.*

*Thulo; not only in sex there are many ways, if you do protected sex you may not get it.*

The data shows that the boys are aware of the factors contributing to HIV/AIDS infection, thus the issue of risky behaviour to them is clear. The boys do acknowledge that knowing your status and practicing safe sex is not risky. These boys further state that people's bad behavior and practices have contributed to HIV/AIDS as the data show. Boys allude to HIV not only being transmitted through sexual contact, but other transmission related factors.

*Thabo; our bad behavior. If one is infected and spread it he/she increases the disease.*

*Thulo; we have to tell each other if we have it.*

*Thabiso; we get it because of how we behave.*

*Thulo; if we protect us we will not get it.*

*Thabo; other thing is, if one has it and spread it, that increases risk of dying.*

These boys talk about the importance of revealing or disclosing ones HIV status as one way of breaking the silence and help curb the spread of the disease. They acknowledge that HIV is spread through unsafe sex.

When these boys were asked what they would do to keep themselves safe, they responded this way:

*Thulani; avoid unprotected sex.*

*Thato; do protected sex.*

*Thulo; go for testing if you are not sure.*

*Thabane; avoid multiple partners.*

*Thabiso; commit to one partner.*

*Thato; be disciplined, control your behaviour.*

*Thabo; stop other people to put pressure on us because at the end we are the ones in trouble. I think we must abstain.*

The debate became interesting and challenging when Thabo raised the issue of abstinence as the boys seemed to be really aware of how they can keep themselves safe from sexually related diseases. The awareness these boys have seems to be only theoretical as there are double standards among these boys when it come to the issue of “practising what you preach” and doing the right thing.

No! No! No! No! No! (*the rest of the boys*).

*Thabiso; it is nature we cannot avoid it. When nature calls we have to answer. Not, abstain but reduce the number, be faithful to one partner and have protected sex that's all.*

*Thabo; teach other people about HIV AIDS and control ourselves.*

*Thabiso; control our sexual desire not our desire control us. Give people condoms. Also have campaigns and workshops in the villages.*

One way to prevent HIV transmission, as the boys indicated during the interview, is that young men should have one sexual partner, remain faithful to their partners, practice safe sex and be able to control their sexual desire. However, this notion is contested and defended by some boys by drawing on the natural processes and urges of human beings to have sex.

#### **4.11 Conclusion**

This chapter highlighted the responses of young people in Lesotho to their engagement in risky sexual behaviour. It has now been established that gender power is associated with how these young men construct their sexuality. The manner in which these two variables are connected exposes the young people's perception of sexuality that puts them at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. Chapter five concludes the study, as well as provides the recommendation to remedy the crisis.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Summary, conclusions and recommendations**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

Chapter four dealt with data presentation, analysis and discussion. In this chapter I present the summary, main conclusions and recommendations. After careful considerations of the data, certain clear conclusions emerge in terms of critical questions developed in Chapter 1. Based on the emerging issues outlined in Chapter 4 and the conclusions of this study, relevant recommendations are made.

#### **5.2 Summary**

The study focused on what young men in Lesotho regard as risky sexual behaviour. It also examined the explanations young men offer for engaging in risky sexual behaviour. The study further tried to understand the relationship between young peoples' cultural beliefs and their beliefs around sexuality. Chapter 1 consisted of an introduction to the study. It outlined the background, focus and purpose of the study. The chapter also briefly described the research context. The chapter concluded by outline of how the entire research is organised.

Chapter 2 reviewed literature. Firstly, the chapter explained the theoretical framework for the study, exploring the concept of power and sexuality. Secondly, the chapter outlined the relevant global and Sub-Saharan African statistic on young people and sexuality and their risk in this era of HIV/AIDS. The chapter further explored relevant literature on young people and sexuality in Sub-Saharan Africa on related issues like: young men and women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, people and condom usage, power, sexuality and risky behaviour and gender power and HIV/AIDS.

Chapter 3 described the methodology of the study. The study adopted the qualitative research design approach and is located in the interpretivism paradigm. The research was a case study of one school, Mohlomi High School (pseudonym). The study used focus group and individual interviews, as data collection instruments. This chapter also looked at the challenges the researcher came across during data collection. The chapter concluded by

highlighting the limitation of the study, that the study focused in one school therefore the findings of the study cannot be generalisable to other schools.

Chapter 4 presented the analysis and discussion of the findings. Boys, parents and talking about girlfriends and sex, Multiple partners: Issues of gender power, patriarchy and culture, Faithful boys: loving one girl, Using girls for sex and not showing love, Peer pressure, Discussing condoms: risky and safe sexual practices, Sex without love, Playing it “safe”: if my girlfriend does not want to have sex I have another and HIV/AIDS. Moreover, the findings revealed that gender power is intimately related to sexuality of young people in Lesotho. This chapter also revealed that young men in Lesotho are engaging in risky sexual behaviour despite the available resources through education and media.

### **5.3 Conclusions and findings**

The conclusions and findings are obtained from the analysis of the data and will be discussed according to the research questions that guided the study.

#### **5.3.1 Risky sexual behaviour**

Young men in this study regard practices of unsafe sex as risky sexual behaviour. They spoke of their involvement of penetrative sex with girls without using condoms and without knowing their partners status. The use of condoms whenever couples in a heterosexual relationship have to engage in making love is advised to be among the safest measures for protection. However, young men in this study opted not to use condoms when engaging in sex. While young people in this study are aware of their behaviour to be risky, they provided other factors to be attached to their decisions not to use safety measures. They spoke of stigma attached to condoms and condoms usage as well as some cultural myths around sexual protection. Race and more specifically ethnicity have been implicated in the ways in which cultural practices come to bear on the ways in which these boys construct sexuality. Young men in this study also regard activities of engagement with multiple partners as risky sexual behaviour. This study revealed that majority of young people in Lesotho is engaged in multiple sexual partners. Therefore, it is evident that these young men in Lesotho as others in Sub-Saharan Africa as documented in literature know about risky sexual activities.

### **5.3.2 Engagement with risky sexual behavior**

Despite the increasing awareness and knowledge available for these young men through education, they are still engaging in risky sexual behaviour. These boys are influenced their peers, other adults media and culture. This study revealed that peer pressure has contributed much on the issues related to gender and sexualities to young men in Lesotho. Basotho people perceive young people as powerless and asexual. This study revealed that young men in Lesotho relied on adults and cultural beliefs for their engagement in risky sexual behaviour. As media influence can be positive or negative to the lives of young people, the study showed how media impacted negatively and positively on young men.

The ways in which gender power impacts upon these, also came up in this study as another reason for young men engagement in risky sexual behaviour. Power imbalance between men and women / boys and girls puts young people in sexual risk. Young men in this study appeared to be in control of their heterosexual relationships. The study revealed how gender power is tied up with sexuality and results in leaving young people at risk. What emerged in the study is that, power relation remains with boys whereby they perceived themselves to be in control and have more power over girls in the relationships. Thus, leaves both young people at risk as boys are in dominant position while girls are marginalised, submissive and complicity.

### **5.3.3 Relationship between boys' cultural beliefs and their beliefs around sexuality**

Culture is a very crucial part in many peoples' lives; it is part of peoples' identity. Many societies' beliefs are related or linked to their cultures. That is why a certain society can be identified by its own culture. This study reveals that while culture is very important to the boys, but it has to be reviewed or changed because of the different times of their lives. What emerged is that there is a resistance of culture among the boy's beliefs around sexuality issues. The boys allude to modernity. They believe: changes, development and transformation which is in contradiction with their cultural beliefs- one which resists patriarchy and the oppression and subordination of women. There is an indication that these boys can be worked with towards more gender equitable relationships.

#### **5.4 Suggestions for further research**

This study has implications for further research especially in the area of girls response to their sexualities as girls are now left with no power or say in the heterosexual relationships in Lesotho. More research is indeed needed in Lesotho on young people sexualities as so far it is limited due to the fact that issues of sexualities are taboos in Lesotho. And also, young people are not viewed to be sexually active but the reality is not, and as well young people are at risk of their sexual behaviour. Furthermore the study was conducted in one school context which is located at one district of the country, so to make it more interesting different schools and different district can be covered, as a result there is a limitation for this study to be generalized because of the small sample.

#### **5.5 Final conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to obtain insight into the responses of young people with regard to their risky sexual behaviour. The result of this study revealed that gender power has a great influence in young Basotho boys' lives and that leads to the way these boys respond to their sexual behaviour differently. Some of the boys in this study respond to their sexual behaviour in a risky way, while other boys are very conscious to their sexualities and thus, they respond to their sexual behaviour in a safe way.

The findings of this study revealed that young men in Lesotho perceive gender power differently with regard to their sexualities. The manner in which these young men respond to their sexual behaviour challenges the notion of gender power and proves that young men respond to their masculinity in different ways depending on factors such as context, education, peer influence and others. The findings show that, while some young men engage in risky sexual practice it is not all as some boys express determination to practice safe sex. The study also shows how young men are practising unsafe sexual practises and are involved in multiple sexual partners in heterosexual relationships to comply with the notion of masculinity and societal expectations of MANHOOD. I conclude that there is multiple and varied sexualities even among this small sample of boys. Some of the boys assert their male privileged positions in ways that suggest double standards and sexual prowess while others resist and challenge their advantaged positions.

The study significantly reveals how boys construct and give meanings to their sexuality. And this leaves us society with a task to nurture these future citizens of the world. I believe that out of these findings; proffer sufficient ground for a lot to be done by all stake holders from the state, parents, school and young people themselves. Young people's sexual behaviour puts them at risk.

## **5.6 Recommendations and suggestions**

The following recommendations related to young people and sexuality are suggested:

There is sparse research around young people and sexuality in Lesotho. Therefore, I recommend that further research which positions young people as sexually active or sexual beings and also as being able to construct knowledge be given priority. This is needed especially in Lesotho because in this context issues of sexuality are taboos and young people more especially girls and women as well are still oppresses, marginalised and subordinated by the patriarchal system that is in power.

Furthermore, issues of sexuality should be heard every day in schools from teachers not only Life Orientation teacher. Also parents or adult should start talking about sexuality with children as early as opportunity comes out. They should be open to children and tell them reality. People more especially young people, in heterosexual relationships should disclose their status as possible, up frond when dating. Society has to change the way of thinking and face the reality. As much as to some people culture and tradition are part of their identity but also they must not allow culture or tradition to destroy their lives.

Young people must take responsibility of their behaviour. HIV and sexuality should not be a fear. HIV positive people should be confident and face challenges. Organizations, clinics, campaigns should stop putting sickly, dying images of HIV positive people. We all know that it is not killing and it is not end of life. People are leaving; they are changing their life styles, eating habit and their behaviour. Schools should also invite the inspirational motivational people e.g. HIV positive people may be, to come and talk about their life to the young people.



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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Interview questions:

1. How old are you? Do you have friends?
2. What type of friendship?
3. Do you talk/discuss personal issues?
4. Do you have a girlfriend?
5. Why is that? Tell me more of them?
6. Do your parents know about her/them?
7. Have you had sex before?
8. Was it protected?
9. What are your views about having sex?
10. Do you discuss safe sex practices with your girlfriend/s?
11. Do you discuss safe sex with your friends?
12. What do you regard as risky sexual behavior?
13. Do you believe when a woman says no to sex she means it? If not, why? Tell me more about it?
14. Some people say once a boy has had sex with a girl he loses interest in her. What do you think of that? Is it true?
15. Some men think that women should be used for the satisfaction of male sexual desire at any given time. What do you think about that?
16. In some cultures it is generally accepted for a man to have multiple partners. Is that right?
17. How does it put people at risk?
18. Do you think culture and power have influence in risk taking behavior?
19. I am sure you have heard about HIV/AIDS. What do you know about it?
20. What would you do to safeguard yourself from the disease.

## Appendix B

University of KwaZulu-Natal  
Faculty of Education  
Private Bag X03  
Ashwood, 3605,  
Kwazulu-Natal

The Principal Secretary

Ministry of Education

Maseru

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT SEFIKA HIGH SCHOOL.

I am a Masters student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa.

My research topic is Gender power and sexuality: Basotho high school boys responses to risky sexual attitudes, behaviour and practices.

I humbly request your permission to conduct research within the school that I chose. The research will be carried by me, Miss M. Lebona. I will engage in semi-structured group interviews and individual interviews.

In this study I will seek to explore boys understanding of gender inequality and the meanings they attached to sexual risk.

Yours sincerely

---

MampoiLebona

## Appendix C

University of KwaZulu-Natal  
Faculty of Education  
Private Bag X03  
Ashwood, 3605,

Dear Principal

Re: Consent for learners to participate in research study

I am currently studying for a Master's degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. It is the requirement of the faculty of Education to undertake a research study. I wish to ask for permission to undertake research. This will entail interviewing six boys aged 16 to 17. The details of the research are outlined below:

Title: Gender power and sexuality: Basotho high school-boys responses to risky sexual attitudes, behaviour and practices.

In this study I will seek to explore boys understanding of gender inequality and the meanings they attached to sexual risk.

Universal principles such as honesty, justice and respect will direct my research. I hope that this research will make a positive contribution to our youth regarding sexual risk and gender inequality. Participants will be treated with fairness and honesty and I will ensure confidentiality and anonymity. Participants are free to withdraw from the research at any stage without negative or undesirable consequences to themselves.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully

-----

Student

## Informed Consent

### Declaration

I \_\_\_\_\_ (full name of principal) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this research and I consent to my school participating in the research.

I understand that I am liberty to withdraw to withdraw from the research at any time should I desire.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF Principal

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

## Appendix D

University of KwaZulu-Natal  
Faculty of Education  
Private Bag X03  
Ashwood, 3605,

Dear Parent/Guardian

Re: Consent for learners to participate in Research study.

My name is Miss M. Lebona. I am currently studying for a Master's degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. It is the requirement of the faculty of Education to undertake a research study. I wish to ask for permission to undertake research. This will entail interviewing high school boys aged 16 to 17. The details of the research are outlined below:

Title: Gender power and sexuality: Basotho high school-boys responses to risky sexual attitudes, behaviour and practices.

In this study I will seek to explore boys understanding of gender inequality and the meanings they attached to sexual risk.

Universal principles such as honesty, justice and respect will direct my research. I hope that this research will make a positive contribution to our youth regarding sexual risk and gender inequality. Participants will be treated with fairness and honesty and I will ensure confidentiality and anonymity. Participants are free to withdraw from the research at any stage without negative or undesirable consequences to themselves.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully

-----

Student

Informed Consent

Declaration

I \_\_\_\_\_ (full name of parent/guardian) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this research and I consent to my school participating in the research.

I understand that I am liberty to withdraw to withdraw from the research at any time should I desire.

\_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE OF Parent/guardian

\_\_\_\_\_

DATE

## Appendix E

University of Kwazulu-Natal  
Private Bag X03  
Ashwood, 3605,

Dear participants

I am currently studying for a Master's degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. It is the requirement of the faculty of Education to undertake a research study. I would like to invite you to participate in this study that I am undertaking as part of my degree.

A brief description of the study follows:

Title: Gender power and sexuality: Basotho high school-boys responses to risky sexual attitudes, behaviour and practices.

In this study I will seek to explore your understanding of gender inequality and the meanings you attached to sexual risk.

The interview will be audio-taped. I will be careful to use the information that you supply in a manner that will ensure your anonymity. In order to protect your identity I will use a pseudonym in my transcripts and my research. If you are uncomfortable at any time you are at liberty to stop the interview and withdraw from the study.

Universal principles such as honesty, justice and respect will direct my research. I hope that this research will make a positive contribution to our youth regarding sexual risk and gender inequality.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully

-----

Student

Informed Consent

Declaration

I \_\_\_\_\_ ( full name of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this research and I consent to my participating in the research.

I understand that I am liberty to withdraw to withdraw from the research at any time should I desire.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE



