EXPERIENCES OF, AND SUPPORT GUIDELINES FOR, MALE VICTIMS OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE PERPETRATED BY THEIR FEMALE PARTNERS IN GAUTENG, SOUTH AFRICA.

By

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Experiences of and Support Guidelines for Male Victims of Intimate Partner Violence Perpetrated by their Female Partners in Gauteng, South Africa.

I declare that the above thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

_____ __26/02/2021_____

Vhuhwavho Nekhavhambe Date

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my mother, Professor Mashudu Davhana-Maselesele. You taught us the value of hard work; you did not preach it; you lived it. If it was not for you, I would not be celebrating this achievement. You believed in me when I found it difficult to believe in myself, my rock, my prayer warrior, my teacher. I love you, mom.

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In loving memory of my sister-in-law and her family

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SUMMARY

Intimate partner violence against women is well documented, while there is a silence on research on intimate partner violence against men. Violence towards men is a problem that society cannot solve, mainly because of the patriarchal society on which this nation is founded. This study aimed at studying men's experiences of this phenomenon and developing guidelines for support to male victims of intimate partner violence perpetrated by their female partners in Gauteng.

A qualitative, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) research design was used to explore men's experiences of intimate partner violence, their views on how service providers support them, and the coping strategies that they employ to address their lived experiences. Fourteen men were recruited from Moshate (an NGO) and a church in Gauteng province using purposive sampling. Data were collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews and fieldnotes and analysed using Smith's (2014) IPA approach. The findings revealed the following themes: male victims of IPV experienced the abuse as denial of conjugal rights, false accusations, physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse and controlling behaviour. The male victims of IPV attributed their abuse to various factors, such as cultural, psycho-social, and socioeconomic factors, and exploitation. The consequences of IPV as experienced by the men were psychological, separation from the abusive partner, fear of disintegration of families, inability to be intimate with the abusive partner, suicide attempts, socioeconomic effects and incarceration.

It was found that trauma bonding issues such as their belief system, child maintenance, fear of losing their children, and avoiding economic loss were the reasons why these men remained in abusive relationships. The strategies adopted to cope with their abusive partners included seeking help and maladaptive coping strategies. Finally, the abused victims expressed several empowerment needs, such as appropriate socialisation and psycho-social support.

Consequently, the study suggests the following support guidelines for male victims of IPV perpetrated by their female partners: appropriate socialisation; psycho-social support, which includes multi-pronged abuse acknowledgement, public awareness, counselling, support groups, practical support, and fair implementation of the law and legal support; stakeholder training; and a VEP (victim empowerment programme) that is specific to male victims of IPV perpetrated by their female partners.

Keywords:

Domestic violence; female perpetrators; Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis; intimate partner violence; male victims; parental alienation; psycho-social support; support guidelines; trauma bonding; victim empowerment.

MANWELEDZO

Khakhathi dza vhushaka ha vhuṋe dzine dza itelwa vhafumakadzi dzi ḓivhea nga maanḓa, ngeno kha sia ḽa ṱhoḓisiso ho fhumulwa tshoṱhe nga ha khakhathi dza vhushaka ha vhuṋe dzine dza itelwa vhanna. Khakhathi dzine dza itelwa vhanna ndi thaidzo ine tshitshavha tsha si kone u i tandulula, zwihulwane nga nṱhani ha tshitshavha tshine vhanna vha vha vhone vhalanguli hune ha vha vhubvo ha lushaka ulu. Ṱhoḓisiso heyi yo livhiswa kha u guda tshenzhelo dza vhanna nga ha tshibveleli itshi na u bveledza nyendedzi dza u tikedza vhanna vha vhapondwa vha khakhathi dza vhushaka ha vhuṋe hune ha itwa nga vhafarisi vhavho vha tshifumakadzini Gauteng.

Kuitele kwa ṱhoḓisiso ya musaukanyo wa khwaḽithethivi, wa u ṱalutshedza zwibveleli (IPA) kwo shumiswa u wanulusa tshenzhelo ya vhanna ya khakhathi dza vhushaka ha vhuṋe, mihumbulo yavho nga ha nḓila ine vhaṋetshedzatshumelo vha vha tikedza, na nḓila dza u kona u tshila dzine vha dzi shumisa u amba nga ha tshenzhelo dza matshilo avho. Vhanna vha 14 vho dzhenelela u bva Moshate (ndi NGO) na kerekeni kha vundu ḽa Gauteng hu tshi khou shumiswa tsumbonanguludzwa dzo sedzaho kha zwiṅwe zwithu. Data yo kuvhanganywa nga kha inthaviwu dzo dzudzanywaho dza u livhana zwifhaṱuwo na u rekhoda zwo waniwaho na u saukanya hu tshi khou shumiswa kuitele kwa (2014) IPA. Mawanwa o dzumbulula thero dzitevhelaho: vhapondwa vha vhanna vha IPV vha tshenzhela u tambudzwa sa u hanela pfanelo dza zwa vhudzekani, u pomokelwa zwithu zwi si zwa vhukuma, u tambudzwa muvhili, vhudzekani, muhumbulo na masheleni na vhuḓifari ha u langula. Vhapondwa vha vhanna vha IPV vho sumbedza u tambudzwa havho kha zwiṱaluli zwo fhambanaho, zwi ngaho sa mvelele, muhumbulo na matshilisano, na zwiṱaluli zwa ikonomi ya matshilisano, na u tambudzwa. Mvelele dza IPV sa dzo tshenzhelwaho nga vhanna ho vha muhumbulo, u fhambanywa na mufarisi ane a u tambudza, nyofho ya u khwashea ha miṱa, u sa kona u vha na vhushaka na mufarisi ane a u tambudza, ndingedzo dza u ḓivhulaha, masiandaitwa a ikonomi dza matshilisano na u valelwa dzhele.

Ho wanululwa uri mafhungo a vhuṱungu ha vhuṱumani sa sisiṱeme ya zwine vha tenda khazwo, u unḓa ṅwana, nyofho ya u xelelwa nga vhana vhana vhavho, u tinya ndozwo ya ikonomi zwo vha zwiṅwe zwa zwiitisi zwine zwa ita uri vhanna avha vha dzule kha vhushaka ha u tambudzwa. Nḓila dzo shumiswaho u kona u tshila na vhafarisi vhavho vhane vha vha tambudza hu katelwa u ṱoḓa thuso na nḓila dza u sa kona u ḓiḓowedza u tshila. Tsha u fhedzisela, vhapondwa vho tambudzwaho vha bvisela khagala ṱhoḓea dzo fhambanaho dza u maanḓafhadza, u fana na matshilisano o teaho na thikhedzo ya muhumbulo na matshilisano.

Nga yeneyo nḓila, ṱhoḓisiso yo dzinginya nyendedzi dza thikhedzo dzi tevhelaho kha vhapondwa vha vhanna vha IPV vhane vha itelwa khakhathi nga vhafarisi vhavho vha tshifumakadzini: matshilisano o teaho; na thikhedzo ya muhumbulo na matshilisano , ine ya katela u shumiswa ha maitele o fhambanaho a u tenda u tambudza, mafulo a tshitshavha, ngeletshedzo, zwigwada zwa thikhedzo, thikhedzo ire khagala, na u shumiswa lwo teaho ha mulayo na thikhedzo ya mulayo; vhugudisi ha vhadzhiamukovhe; na VEP (Mbekanyamushumo ya u maanḓafhadza mupondwa) yo itelwaho vhapondwa vha vhanna vha IPV vhane vha tambudzwa nga vhafarisi vhavho vha tshifumakadzini.

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Khakhathi dza muṱani; vhatshinyi vha vhafumakadzi; Musaukanyo wa u Ṱalutshedza Zwibveleli; khakhathi dza vhushaka ha vhuṋe, vhapondwa vha vhanna, vengo ḽine ḽa itelwa vhabebi; thikhedzo ya muhumbulo na matshilisano; nyendedzi dza thikhedzo; vhuṱungu ha vhuṱumani, u maanḓafhadza mupondwa.

NKOMISO

Madzolonga ya varhandzani ku tsariwe ngopfu hi wona mayelana na vavasati, kambe a ku vuriwi nchumu hi madzolonga lama ya endliwaka eka vavanuna. Madzolonga lama ya endliwaka eka vavanuna i xirhalanganyi lexi sosayati yi nga kotiku ku xi ntlhantlha, ngopfu ngopfu hikokwalaho ka sosayati ya hina leyi yi nga voyamela etlhelo ra vavanuna ntsena ku nga *patriarchal* laha sosayati yi dzimekeke kona. Ndzavisiso lowu wu na xikongomelo xa ku endla ndzavisiso hi ntokoto wa mhaka leyi, na ku endla makombandlela ya ku seketela vavanuna lava xanisiweke eka madzolonga ya varhandzani lama ya endliwaka hi tiphatnara ta vavasati eka vavanuna eGauteng.

Ku tirhisiwe nxopanxopo wa dizayini ya rhiseche ku nga qualitative, *interpretative phenomenological analysis* (IPA) ku xopaxopa hi ntokoto wa vavanuna eka madzolonga ya varhandzani, mianakanyo ya vona hi ndlela leyi vapfuneti hi vuphakeri bya swipfuneto va va seketelaka hi kona, na maqhinga ya vona yo langutana na xiyimo lama va ma tirhisaka ku langutana na mintokoto leyi va kongomaneke na yona eka mintokoto ya vutomi bya vona lebyi va byi hanyaka. Vavanuna va khume mune va hlanganisiwe ku suka eMoshate (ku nga NGO) na le kerekeni eka xifundzhankulu xa Gauteng hi ku tirhisa *purposive sampling* ku nga ku tivonela ka vaendli va ndzavisiso. Vutivi byi hlengeletiwe hi ku langutana xikandza-na-xikandza hi ti-semi-strucured interview na nxopanxopo wo tirhisa Smith's IPA approach (2014). Leswi kumekeke swi kombise tinhlokomhaka ta mune: ku xanisiwa ka vavanuna hi IPV lava va nga xanisiwa hi ku tsoniwa timfanelo ta swa masangu, ku hehliwa hi vunwa, ku biwa, ku xanisiwa hi swa masangu na ku xanisiwa hi swa ikhonomi na matikhomelo yo va lawula. Vaxanisiwa va vavanuna hi IPV va vule leswo ku xanisiwa loku ku vangeriwa hi swilo swinyingi, swo fana na swa mfuwo, vuxakelani bya vanhu na swa ngqondo, swa vuxakelani bya vanhu na ikhonomi, na ku cangayisiwa. Switandzhaku swa IPV leswi vavanuna va nga na ntokoto hi swona a swi ri swa

ngqondo, ku hambanisiwa na tiphatnara ra vona, ku chava ku nhlanhleka ka mindyangu, ku tsandzeka ku endla swa masangu na tiphatnara leti ti va xanisaka; ku ringeta ku tidlaya, switandzhaku swa vuxakeleni bya vanhu na ikhonomi na ku khotsiwa emajele.

Ku kumeke leswo ntshuko wa ku xakelana wo fana na ku kholelwa, ku wundla n'wana, nchavo wo lahlekeirwa hi vana na ku papalata ku lahlekeriwa hi swa ikhonomi hi swona leswi ku nga swivangelo swa leswo vavanuna lava va tshama eka vuxaka na vaxanisiwa wa vona. Maqhinga lama va ma tirhisaka ku langutana na xiyimo xa ku xanisiwa hi tiphatnara ta vona ya katsa ku lava ku pfuniwa na maqhinga yo langutana na xiyimo lama ma nga ri ku kahle. Xo hetelela, vaxanisiwa va kombisa ku lava swinyingi swo va timbahata no va pfuneta, swo fana na nseketelo hi vuxakelani na vanhu na nseketelo wa swa vuxakelani hi swa ngqondo na vanhu.

Hikokwalaho, ndzavisiso wu ringanyeta leswo ku va na makombandlela ya minseketelo leyi landzaka eka vavanuna lava xanisiwaka hi swa IPV, leswi swi endliwaka hi tiphatnara ta vona ta vavasati: ku pfunetiwa hi swa vuxakelani na vanhu, nseketelo hi swa ngqondo na vuxakelani na vanhu, leswi swi katsaku ku amukeriwa ka leswo va xaniseka hi tindlela tinyingi, ku lemuka ka vanhu hi nxaniseko lowu, ku kuma switsundzuxo (counselling), mintlawa yo seketela, nseketelo wo khomeka, na ku tirhisiwa hi ndlela leyinene ka nawu na ku kuma nseketelo hi swa nawu; ku leteriwa ka vakhomaxiave; na minongonoko yo timbahatiwa leyi vuriwaka VEP (victim empowerment programme); leyi yi kongomisiweke eka vavanuna lava va xanisiweke hi IPV, leswi swi endliwaka hi tiphatnara ta vavasati.

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ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CSVR	Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
CAPRD	Child Affected Parental Relationship Distress
DJCD	Department of Justice and Constitutional Development
DoE	Department of Education
DoH	Department of Health
DSD	Department of Social Development
DSM-5	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5th Edition
DV	Domestic Violence
eNCA	eNews Channel Africa
FAMSA	Families South Africa
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HPCSA	Health Professions Council of South Africa
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
NFVS	National Family Violence Surveys
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation

NPA	National Prosecuting Authority
NVWS	National Violence Against Women Survey
POWA	People Opposing Women Abuse
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
RC	Registered Counsellor
SA	South Africa
SAMRC	South African Medical Research Council
SAPS	South African Police Service
SES	Socio-economic Status
STATSSA	Statistics South Africa
STI	Sexually Transmitted Illnesses
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNISA	University of South Africa
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
VE	Victim Empowerment
VEP	Victim Empowerment Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

CURRICULUM VITAE OF VHUHWAVHO MUFANADZO NEKHAVHAMBE

Vhuhwavho M. Nekhavhambe obtained a BA degree in Psychology and Criminology, at Monash South Africa in 2009, followed by a BA (Honours) in Psychology at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in 2010. In 2012, she obtained a certificate as a Registered Counselling with the HPCSA, and a Master of Social Science in Psychology degree at North-West University. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Philosophy at the University of South Africa, where she provides recommendations for support for male IPV victims committed in Gauteng by their female partners.

Upon completing the Master's degree, Vhuhwavho joined the academic fraternity at the University of South Africa as a lecturer in July 2013. At the time of her appointment, she had a publication in a peer-reviewed journal. In these years, she has seven years of teaching experience, amongst the other tuition duties she has managed to supervise to completion two master students. She was awarded a pre-doctoral scholarship (Tirisano scholarship), a two-year scholarship. She completed three months of research training at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), she collaborated with Professors and other academics at UCLA and published a paper in 2017.

Her research interest areas are: Trauma, intimate partner violence, substance abuse, studies on culture, victim empowerment and interventions.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

> While married, R was kicked in the groin, punched, stabbed and strangled. R states that he just took it for several years because we were supposed to do it. Although separation has stopped the physical abuse, R's estranged wife continues the abuse through the only means available: preventing visitation, alienating the children and filing false allegations with Child Protective Services. (Hines, Brown & Dunning, 2007, p.69)

"I was getting struck by this woman while I was holding my daughter. The funny thing is that I could not even call the police. I could not even speak to any of my friends about it" (Mvulane, 2008, para. 1).

Introduction

This chapter introduces the study and provides a background to intimate partner violence against men perpetrated by their female partners in South Africa. An introduction to the context in which IPV takes place globally and in South Africa is also presented. The research questions resulting from the identified research problem are presented with the study's aims and objectives. The key concepts and the outline of the study are offered at the end of the chapter.

The Context in which IPV Occurs

The Historical Global Milieu of IPV

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a serious and worldwide problem (Katerndahl, Burge, Ferrer, Becho & Wood, 2012); it violates human rights and harms individuals and their families' physical, sexual, cognitive, mental and social well-being (WHO, 2010). Furthermore, it is a social and health problem that affects hundreds of thousands of people and families annually (Douglas & Hines, 2011). IPV occurs across race, in all countries, irrespective of

culture, class or religion (Katerndahl, Burge, Ferrer, Becho & Wood, 2012). Gelles (1980) conducted a review of research on family violence in the USA and found that researchers were more interested in child abuse in the sixties, mainly because they are considered the most vulnerable group. He postulates that the fact that there was no research done on domestic violence against women at that time did not mean that it was not happening. There has since been an enormous flow of research on abused women; granted, the majority of known victims of domestic violence are women and children (Jewkes et al., 2002).

Steinmetz (1978a as cited in Gelles, 1980) found that 4.6% of wives in the USA admitted, or were reported by their husbands, to have been abusive. Since the 1970s, IPV perpetrated by women has been a controversial subject; feminists suggested that women only retaliate as a way of self-defence; another issue was who hits first and who causes more harm (Dutton, Nicholls & Spidel, 2005). There has been very little scientific data documented on this phenomenon; some of the reasons for this were political correctness and fear that funding for abused women would stop (Dutton, Nicholls & Spidel, 2005).

When we hear about domestic violence, be it emotional, physical, financial, and sexual, we immediately think of women being abused by their male partners. Men who experience abuse are not recognised, mainly because they take the abuse in silence due to societal and cultural expectations (Agbulos, 2017). Is it not abuse when women refuse the father of their children's visits or when they threaten them by saying "I will make sure you never see your children again."?

Dutton et al. (2005) reviewed literature in the USA and found that women also initiate abuse, that women are capable of being abusive towards a non-violent partner and that in most abusive relationships, both men and women are equally violent. Douglas and Hines (2011) found that the females' minor physical assaults toward their male partner were at a rate of 75 per 1000 men in 1975 and 1985 after controlling age and socio-economic status in a study on men's help-

seeking experiences who sustained IPV conducted in the US. Furthermore, there was an increase in 1992 from 75 to 95 per 1000 men. Approximately 2.6 million men per year suffered from severe physical injury.

The National Family Violence Surveys (NFVS) led by Murray Straus and Richard Gelles in 1975, started an academic debate regarding family violence. The findings also indicated the depth of violence by women against their male partners, but this was ignored; conversely, the survey was used extensively to raise official estimates of the degree of domestic violence against women in the USA. Based on the survey, Suzanne Steinmetz co-authored a book titled: *"Behind closed doors: Violence in the American Family"*; this book was widely accepted, and it was used to support women's groups and ignored abused men (Cook, 2009).

In 1977, Steinmetz submitted an article based on the same survey entitled: *"The battered husband syndrome"*; again, the article was initially ignored, and when it was eventually published, it was highly criticised. The fact that the article was publicly denounced is what gave this article attention. Straus (1999) and Dutton (2006) have published examples of research in the US, that discovered male abuse by their intimate female partners. However, the researchers decided to practice selective citation, and some denied funding to research that might contradict patriarchy-oriented gender-feminist theory (Cook, 2009).

A survey conducted in Kentucky (USA) in 1979 by the Kentucky Commission on Women (this commission works to improve women's status and educate society about challenges women face in Kentucky) regarding spousal violence failed to report the male victimisation rates uncovered by the survey. It was found that among violent couples, 38% were attacked by women on men. The women themselves reported these violent incidences and that their male partners were never violent towards them (Cook, 2009).

In 1982, Erin Pizzey, a feminist based in Britain, who was instrumental in opening a battered women's shelter, wrote a book titled "*Prone to violence*" and had a police escort because of her life was threatened. There was a shooting at one of her homes because she noted that in the 1975 study of 100 women who visited the shelter, 62 women participated in a mutually violent relationship. She indicated that the women in the study were both victims and perpetrators. Furthermore, she found that some women were found to have been more violent than the men they were seeking shelter from (Cook, 2009).

The above indicates that men have also been IPV victims for a long time, and IPV against men is not a new phenomenon. Just because people have ignored it and stigmatised it, does not mean that it is not happening. These attempts to minimise female violence and downplay male victimisation have been happening for a very long time and this disadvantages the female perpetrators from getting the help they need; and the abused men, and their children who are witnessing their fathers being abused. Maybe if it were not for the suppression of abused men, perhaps IPV against men and women would have been eradicated, or effective interventions would be in place to help the family.

The South African Situation

The researcher observed that in South Africa (SA), violence against men continues to be an issue that the government and society are not able to deal with or come to terms with, mainly because of the nature of the patriarchal society that this country is based on; for instance, there are only two shelters in the whole of SA that cater for abused men despite the extent of the abuse. In SA, patriarchy is a system of domination of men over women which supersedes different economic systems, eras, regions and classes (Coetzee, 2001). According to Coetzee (2001), patriarchy in SA can be seen in the elevation of fathers as leaders in how language is used: a father is the head of the family, the provider and men are not supposed to cry.

Statistics on IPV against men in SA are minimal, but according to the former MEC of Gauteng Social Development, Nandi Mayathula-Khoza, 3 out of 10 victims of gender-based violence are men. This is not a negligible number to be ignored. Nevertheless, men do not report this to the police because they are afraid of being stigmatised (Cherney, 2013). Recent national statistics from the SAPS (April to June 2020) on domestic violence crimes indicate that 47 men have been murdered; 31 of the 47 men were murdered by their girlfriends. Ten men were raped (perpetrator not reported), 67 attempted murder (female partner), 951 assault with grievous bodily harm (131 committed by girlfriends and 61 by wives), common assault (116 by girlfriends and 95 by wives), and contempt of court (58 counts committed by wives and 45 by ex-girlfriends).

Unfortunately, the underreporting of the men's abuse experiences in their female partners' hands contributes to this problem not being addressed. Men's silence contributes to lack of support, shelters, and education on men's abuse (Thobejane & Luthada, 2019).

A study conducted by Thobejane, Luthada and Mogorosi (2018) on gender-based violence against men in Vuwani (Limpopo Province) South Africa found that abused men are reluctant to report the abuse out of fear of being ridiculed.

Research organisations in South Africa like the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC); Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) and the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), their research focus is on all sorts of violence where men are perpetrators, hegemonic masculinity, and interpersonal violence. The research shows that men can be IPV victims; however, no study focuses on men as IPV victims perpetrated by their female partners.

The global and South African legal framework on IPV

World Health Organization's (WHO) perspective to IPV

Krug, Dahlberg, Zwi and Lozano (2002), reporting on the WHO's World Report on Violence and Health, indicated that women are more likely to be attacked by their intimate partners than men when it comes to violence. A stranger generally attacks men than their female partners. In this report, Krug et al. (2002) admitted that women could be violent in their intimate relationships with men. However, women are the ones who bear the overwhelming burden of IPV perpetrated by their male partners. This explains why WHO's primary focus on IPV is on women who are victims and men as perpetrators (WHO, 2010). The WHO does not say much about IPV against men.

The Domestic Violence Act (116 of 1998)

Artz and Smythe (2013) argued that domestic violence (DV) in SA was initially treated as a private issue to be dealt with behind closed doors. The Domestic Violence Act (116 of 1998) was drafted to address the high IPV levels in South Africa. The Act recognised that DV takes many forms and may be committed by people in different intimate relationships like cohabiting and married couples. This definition of domestic violence is broad enough to accommodate abuse against men; it defines a domestic relationship which implies that either gender can be a victim of domestic violence. It enables anyone in an intimate relationship who has experienced IPV to apply for a protection order. According to the Act, male IPV victims perpetrated by their female partners have a right to apply for a protection order.

In the Domestic Violence Act (116 of 1998, p. 2), domestic violence includes acts of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional, verbal and psychological abuse, intimidation, and economic abuse.

Sections 2,3 and 8 of the Domestic Violence Act (No. 116 of 1998) clearly defines the duties of the members of the South African Police Service (SAPS) when handling IPV cases; this provision is to ensure fair implementation of the law to all IPV victims including abused men.

Section 3 states that if the police officer believes that an act of violence has been committed, they must make an immediate arrest without a warrant.

The South African Constitution

The Bill of Rights is found in Chapter 2 of the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996); it contains information regarding human rights. According to the Bill of Rights, everyone (including male IPV victims) has a right to freedom and security. They have a right to be free from all forms of violence, including secondary victimisation (a process or actions that further victimise a person who experiences IPV). Everyone has a right to bodily and psychological integrity; the right to security, and control over their body (The South African Constitution, Act 108 of 1996). This means that when a female partner abuses her male partner, they infringe their fundamental human rights of freedom and security.

This Bill of Rights also contains recourse information when one has become a victim of IPV, like the right to access information. This means that when an abused man reports the abuse at a police station, the police officer is obligated not only to open a case but to also provide the male victim with information regarding the investigation process and protection order. Victim of abuse has a right to just administrative action and access to the courts (The South African Constitution, Act 108 of 1996). Male IPV victims have a right to be heard by the courts, fathers trying to have a relationship with their children have a right to be heard and fair processes of evaluating their capabilities as a father should be observed. A critical right contained in the Constitution is equality, meaning that "everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law" (Section 9(1) of the Constitution). This means that failure on the part of the police to provide a male victim of IPV with a protection order would have gone against the Constitution. In a nutshell, victimisation constitutes a human rights violation.

The Service Charter for Victims of Crime

The Service Charter for Victims of Crime in South Africa, also known as the Victims' Charter, contains information regarding the rights and services provided to crime victims. The Victims' Charter provides a framework for services provided under the Victim Empowerment Programme. The Minimum Standards accompany it on Services for Victims of Crime. The Minimum Standards on Services for Victims of Crime, also known as minimum standards, was developed to explain the service charter's rights further and make these rights a reality. The minimum standards on services for victims of crime are used to implement the service charter for South African victims. The minimum standards set out the responsibilities of each government department, like the following (Department of Justice and Constitutional Development [DJCD], 2004 a & b):

i. SAPS, responsible for investigating crimes and charging offenders, provides IPV victims with a protection order and refers IPV victims for medical, counselling services and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The SAPS's commitment to domestic violence victims is to treat the victims with respect and protect their dignity, not to ridicule abused men. They must listen to the victim and not laugh at an abused man, not insult or blame the victim. Furthermore, they will assist the victim with empathy and care and inform the victims of their rights and options, like obtaining a protection order against their abusive female partner. (http://www.saps.gov.za/resource_centre/women_children/domestic_violence.php). At the scene of the incident, police are to locate the complainant and protect them; and create a conducive environment to make a statement;

ii. National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) decides whether a prosecution should proceed and how it should proceed;

iii. Department of Health provides medical reports in case of injuries and damages sustained by the victim;

iv. Department of Justice and Constitutional Development are responsible for ensuring that the victims are treated professionally and with dignity and respect during the proceeding, as stated in the Victim's Charter and the Minimum Standards documents. For instance, treating a father with respect seeking help from the courts to see his children and to support him instead of just ignoring him or laughing at him;

v. Department of Social Development (DSD) coordinates diverse skills and approaches to various stakeholders. This department leads the multidisciplinary, intersectoral programme known as the Victim Empowerment Programme (VEP). They are in charge of capacity building to equip DSD staff with specific skills to deal with all IPV victims. They also provide psycho-social services; and

vi. Department of Education, in the context of this study, would assist with gender-neutral socialisation of children. They would develop programmes that promote gender equality and neutrality as gender roles are evolving. They would also employ registered counsellors (RCs) in schools to psycho-educate young learners about IPV and provide counselling to children who have been alienated from their fathers.

These departments thus provide various support to IPV victims.

The Victims Charter and Minimum Service Standards are meant to be used by IPV victims to claim their rights and with the responsibility to ensure the realisation of justice. This provides victims of crime with information to hold the government accountable for service delivery to crime victims (DJCD, 2004b).

The rights of a victim of crime when accessing assistance and services from service providers should not be violated. When a victim of a crime reports a crime, it is the criminal justice system's responsibility to act promptly and courteously and treat the victim with respect for their dignity and privacy. These minimum standards apply to every victim of any crime regardless of gender (DJCD, 2004a). Therefore, male IPV victims cannot be prejudiced against the following:

i. The right to be treated with fairness and respect for the victim's dignity and privacy;
ii. The right to offer information;
iii. The right to receive information;
iv. The right to protection;
v. The right to assistance;
vi. The right to compensation; and
vii. The right to restitution.

The Minimum Standards on Services for Victims of Crime empowers victims with the necessary information to enforce their rights. The minimum standards are divided into four parts (DJCD, 2004a):

i. Part 1 provides background information on the rights of a victim of crime and outlines who can access those rights;
ii. Part 2 explains the process in the criminal justice system and what will happen if a person becomes a victim of a crime and reports such a crime to the police;
iii. Part 3 contains minimum standards on services that a victim of crime can expect from the various role-players in the criminal justice system about the rights explained in the Victims' Charter; and

iv. Part 4 outlines the complaints procedure about things that may go wrong during service provision by the various role-players and service providers.

Victim Empowerment Programme in South Africa

Victim empowerment (VE) is an approach that enables victims of crime, trauma, violence, human accident, natural disaster or socio-economic conditions to gain access to a wide range of services. By providing access to these services, VE promotes the resourcefulness of the victims of crime/violence. It enables them to build and use their own capacity, links the victims with support networks, and then makes an informed decision regarding the type of service they need. This means that VE assists the victim with a wide range of services and connects the victim with the relevant people, but ultimately, the victim makes an informed and empowered decision (DSD, 2009).

VE empowers the victim to take control, feel listened to, and be respected and their choices, too, enabling them to move from victims to survivors. It aims to restore the loss or damage caused by the crime or violence to a state or close to a state the victim was in before the crime or violence. The idea is to get the victim functioning at a level before the event and hopefully learn and grow. VE is grounded on that every individual has the right to privacy, safety and human dignity and that victims should be part of the criminal process (DSD, 2009).

According to the Department of Social Development (DSD, 2009), victims differ regarding empowerment needs; hence VE is a well-managed, integrated and multidisciplinary team approach. This multidisciplinary team involves SAPS, National Prosecuting Authority (NPA); Department of Health (DoH); Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DJCD); Department of Social Development (DSD); and Department of Education (DoE). It aims to reduce secondary victimisation and encourages cooperation with the criminal justice process.

The criminal justice process entails reporting the IPV, investigating IPV, medical or counselling referral, going to court and prosecution (DJCD, 2006).

Problem statement

IPV occurs in many ways and at various levels, where it affects human beings differently. Abusers use different strategies such as domination, humiliation, isolation, threats, coercion, denial, and blame to assert influence and power over their partners, whether males or females. Attention has always been given to women as victims of IPV, and Agbulos (2017), suggests that victimhood is feminised, and violent perpetration is masculinised. Black (2011), on the other hand, found that 1 in 7 men will be a victim of IPV in their lifetime. What exacerbates the problem is that the police seem to be reluctant to arrest female perpetrators (Black, 2011). The abused men are further victimised when they endeavour to seek help from public officials like police, health workers, court officials and any other authority offering a public service. Furthermore, women's reports of IPV are taken at face value, while men's reports are scrutinised (Agbulos, 2017). As a result of all this, very little research has been conducted to address men as victims of IPV.

Goldenson et al. (2009) suggested that the justification for why there are fewer studies on female perpetrators of IPV against their male partners was because the police have indicated that they seldom received reports of female perpetrated abuse. They further indicated that male victims of IPV are underserved by society. This is because societal expectations and cultural standards deem women as weaker vessels, and these standards never consider the shift in power dynamics.

Most South African studies focus on males as perpetrators of IPV against women (for example: Najavits, Sonn, Walsh & Weiss, 2004; Jones, Hughes & Unterstaller, 2001). However, the few studies conducted on men as victims of IPV focused on the following areas:

In a national study on IPV and gender disparities in South Africa, Gass et al. (2011, p. 2765) discovered that "the rates of committing violence are similar for women and males (25.2 percent and 26.5 percent, respectively)." They also discovered that men are more likely to report perpetration predictors, whereas women are more likely to report victimisation predictors. This confirms the fact that South African men can be victims of IPV, which is perpetrated by their female partners.

Wong et al. (2008), on the other hand, found that exposure to IPV among men was associated with all forms of drug use in a study of gender differences in intimate partner violence on substance abuse, sexual risks, and depression among a sample of South Africans in Cape Town.

Barkhuizen (2010), from the criminology perspective, explored the physical and emotional victimisation of the male partner within a heterosexual marriage or cohabitating relationship. Whilst Msomi (2011) explored the effect of gender-based violence on men in Clermont township, Maubane (2016) studied men's narratives about their experience of being victims of domestic violence (DV) in Gauteng. Thobejane and Luthada (2019) further investigated the trend of DV perpetration on men in the Vhembe District in the Limpopo Province, and Thobejane et al. (2018) explored gender-based violence against men in the Vhembe District in the Limpopo Province with a special focus on their muted reality.

All these studies did not examine IPV victimisation by female partners among men in Gauteng, except for Maubane's (2016) study on DV, as well as their experiences with the helping systems. There still is a lack of knowledge on the impact that IPV has on men. This can further be proven because only two shelters house abused men in South Africa, both found in the City of Johannesburg. The paucity of literature on male IPV victims' experiences is a problem that this interpretative phenomenological analysis study sought to address. There is a dearth of research on the experiences of male victims of IPV in South Africa and the impact

that this abuse has on male victims and their empowerment needs. Therefore, there is a need to conduct this study in order to capture the IPV male victims' experiences and sense-making of being victims of IPV in the hands of their female partners and to develop specific guidelines for support for male victims.

The more I immerse myself in this topic, the more I learn and hear about abused men. There has been an increased awareness on the radio about domestic violence against men. Some incidences were widely publicised where men were killed by their intimate partners. Few examples of these are, Nkululeko 'Flabba' Habedi who was one of the South African rappers stabbed to death by his girlfriend at his home. The reason is still unknown (News24, 2015). An even older case reported was a woman who hired people to kill her husband; the husband was found burnt in his car's boot. Before he died, he called his wife to tell her that he thinks someone is following him, not knowing he was talking to his killer (https://murderpedia.org/female.S/s/sivhidzho-mulalo.htm)**.** An article on Times Live by Njilo (2020) reported that a 26-year-old woman confessed to stabbing her boyfriend to death during an argument (https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2020-09-29-joburg-woman-confesses-to-stabbing-boyfriend-to-death-during-argument/)**.** This further calls for a study to explore and describe the lived experiences of male victims of IPV perpetrated by their female partners to develop support guidelines.

Relevance of the Study

This research has no intention to downplay women's struggles and their rights, but it aims to give men a voice that men too experience IPV. According to Hamby (2009), there are two schools of thought regarding gender-based violence. The asymmetrical school believes that IPV is a problem caused by men. Therefore, men are perpetrators of violence, and women are victims. For instance, the feminist framework is documented by Hines et al. (2007) as suggesting that women

do not initiate violence but only perpetuate it in self-defence. This suggests that they only react to violence that has been initiated by men.

However, several studies did not report women acting in self-defence as a motive for being violent (Hines et al., 2007; Tilbrook et al., 2010) but anger, jealousy, and retaliation for emotional hurt, and efforts to gain control and dominance (Dhaka, 2015). These reasons imply the possibility of initiating violence. Furthermore, half of the violent arguments were initiated by women (Hines et al., 2007).

Contrary to this, the symmetrical school of thought believes that women and men are equally violent within an intimate relationship (Archer, 2000; Hines & Saudino, 2003; Straus & Gelles, 1986). Bates (2016) found that the gender-inclusive approach of studying IPV reported that IPV perpetration was more symmetrical. Men and women were physically aggressive in perpetration towards their partners at similar rates. Maubane (2016) reported that from her talk with men who were victims of DV that engaged in bi-directional physical violence, even when the wife started the violence, they are more vulnerable to being arrested.

Despite the two opposing schools of thought, Randle and Graham's (2011) study emphasised that female intimate partners psychologically abuse men. There is no thorough and well-grounded conceptual understanding of this issue. This study contributes to this conceptual understanding by confirming that men experience IPV in their female partners' hands.

The study looked at any acts defined as domestic violence according to the Domestic Violence Act No 116 of 1998 concerning the participants' personal experiences. Based on the participants' narratives, guidelines for support for male IPV victims were developed.

Research Questions

For this study, the following main research question was set to guide the process:

What are the experiences of men who are abused by their female partners?

The following were the sub-questions that the study sought to answer:

i. How do abused men understand intimate partner violence?

ii. How do men experience intimate partner violence perpetrated by their female partners?

iii. How do the men cope with the experience of abuse by their female partners?

iv. What are the men's experiences with the helping systems?

v. What is the empowerment needs of abused men?

Aim of the Study

This study aimed to describe and interpret men's experiences of being abused, with implications for the development of support guidelines.

Objectives of the Study

The following research objectives were proposed to achieve the aim of this study:

i. To explore men's definition of IPV;

ii. To describe experiences of abused men by their female partners;

iii. To explore the men's coping mechanisms when faced with IPV;

iv. To describe the nature and interaction of abused men with the helping systems from the men's perspective, that is: shelters, police, health care workers, and others; and

v. To develop guidelines for support of abused men from their socially constructed perspective.

Scope of the Study

This study was conducted among male victims of IPV perpetrated by their intimate female partners in Gauteng province in South Africa. The study explored abused men's lived experiences, understanding of IPV, how they experienced IPV, and its impact.

Furthermore, the study explored the availability and accessibility of social support services and the abused men's experiences with the helping systems and their empowerment needs. The aim was to develop support guidelines for male victims of IPV; this would inform the kind of psychosocial support provided to these men by the helping systems such as counsellors, government departments, police and healthcare workers.

Description of the Study Topic

This study focused on exploring the experiences of men who were abused by their female partners to understand and interpret how these men make sense of their abuse. This study interpreted the problems and concerns expressed from the participants' perspectives. Furthermore, it analysed how these concerns relate to service providers' support in handling intimate partner violence.

Motivation for the Study

The researcher was interested in Victim Empowerment (VE) because it is essential to this study. After all, men also need to be empowered, and that currently, the priority target groups for victim empowerment are:

i. women;
ii. in the National Policy Guidelines for Victim Empowerment document, domestic violence victims stated that "women are more likely to be victims of domestic violence

than men" (DSD, 2009, p.10). Meaning that men are also victims of domestic violence to some degree and that they should not be overlooked;

iii. victims of sexual assault and rape;
iv. abused children;
v. abused older persons;
vi. abused people with disabilities;
vii. victims of human trafficking;
viii. victims of hate victimisation;
ix. farmworkers and dwellers; and
x. ex-combatants (DSD, 2009).

Men are not included in this list; hence, this study focuses on recognising men in abusive relationships as victims that the VEP should prioritise as much as women.

Firstly, this study intends to develop guidelines for support of abused men, and these guidelines will be best implemented within the VEP. Secondly, this study will indicate to policymakers and the helping services that men are being abused and there are detrimental consequences on these men. Services for abused men are inadequate; male abuse victims do not have access to the same services across the country, seeing only two shelters for abused men based in Gauteng. The Victim's Charter governs VE and Minimum Standards outlined in the Victim's Charter. The key objectives are to:

i. Eradicate secondary victimisation in the Criminal Justice process;
ii. Make sure that the victim is central to the Criminal Justice process;
iii. Clarify the service standard to be expected by the victim seeking help; and

iv. When the standard is not met, the victim has other reporting avenues (DJCD, 2004a). With all this information, men still do not report being victims of abuse because of fear of secondary victimisation by the helping services.

My interest in Victim Empowerment started when I was reading towards my BA degree with majors in Psychology and Criminology. I wanted to conduct a relevant study on VE that would make a difference in South Africa. I contacted the Department of Social Development in 2015 and asked them for areas that lack research. They gave me two topics – one of them the prevalence of domestic violence against men. They already had one shelter for abused men and knew that domestic violence against men occurred, but they did not know the prevalence.

This study did not answer the question of prevalence but explored the experiences of abused men. I started the research by watching documentaries on abused men. The more I researched, I discovered research describing men as perpetrators of violence, but also found many newspaper articles on abused men and their experiences. Most of the research was conducted in the USA, Australia, and the UK. They indicated that these men experienced physical assault, psychological, sexual, emotional, and economic abuse. The abuser threatened them that if they left, the female abuser would call the police and claim that the victim was the one who abused them. These women would inflict injuries on themselves to get the abused men wrongfully arrested (Hoff, 1999).

I contacted Moshate, an NGO founded in 2011 in Johannesburg, Gauteng Province dealing with men issues. The NGO was established to address the ill-treatment of men by the helping services in South Africa. The NGO's founder told many stories about what is happening, and the different types of abuse men are subjected to. For example, if there is a domestic violence report, the police immediately arrest the men for assuming that they are the perpetrators,

without asking any questions. A participant from Hines et al.'s (2007) study reported his IPV victim experience as follows:

> She stabbed me with a knife, I did not even defend myself, and after I got out of the hospital two weeks later, the court told me to go to a group they said it is for victims. It turned out to be for batterers, and I am expected to admit to being an abuser and talk about what I did to deserve getting stabbed. (p.68)

Anticipated Value of the Study

The study gained an understanding of men's experiences of IPV perpetrated by their female partners to achieve the following:

i. To help policymakers to come up with policies that will not ignore men as IPV victims. This study is relevant because it will assist in developing minimum standards for shelters to support men who have been abused physically, psychologically and sexually by their female partners, and to contribute towards the possible amendment of the Domestic Violence Act Number 116 of 1998 by adding prescriptions on IPV that will include a specific focus on men;
ii. In South Africa, there has been minimal research conducted on IPV against men, the results of the study will contribute to the body of knowledge on IPV against men, perpetrated by their female partners;
iii. It was envisaged that the study would raise awareness on the seriousness of IPV against men by their female partners; and
iv. It was also envisaged that the study would contribute positively towards empowering service providers (for example, shelters, the police, health care workers, and others) with providing appropriate support for abused men through the provided guidelines for support.

Clarification of Key Concepts

Intimate partner violence: The words domestic violence, IPV and husband/spousal abuse are often used interchangeably in most research (Daire et al. 2013; Kumar, 2012; Perryman & Appleton, 2016). According to WHO (2002), IPV is defined as any act that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm, and occurs within an intimate relationship. This definition is also broad, but it does not directly speak to economic abuse. These acts are varied as follows:

i. Physical aggression, like slapping or hitting. One can say that these are acts shown on television as acceptable when women commit these acts against their male intimate partners;
ii. Psychological abuse includes acts like intimidation, constant belittling and humiliating the partner, like when a woman threatens to call the police and get the man arrested for not doing anything wrong;
iii. Sexual harm occurs when there is forced intercourse; and
iv. This definition includes behaviour like isolating someone from their family and friends and monitoring their movements (Krug et al., 2002).

Domestic violence: The South African Domestic Violence Act (No. 116 of 1998) defines domestic violence as:

> physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional, verbal and psychological abuse, intimidation, economic abuse, harassment, stalking, damage to property, entry into the complainant's residence without consent, where the parties do not share the same residence, or any controlling or abusive behaviour toward a complainant where such conduct harms or may cause imminent harm to the safety, health or wellbeing of the complainant. (1998, p. 2)

The definition of domestic violence is broad enough to accommodate abuse against men; it defines a domestic relationship which implies that either gender can be a victim of domestic violence.

> Domestic relationship means a relationship between a complainant and a respondent in any of the following ways they are or were (a) married to each other, including marriage by law, custom or religion, (b) cohabiting, (c) engaged to be married (d) dating, (e) sharing the same residence. (1998, p. 2)

The study adopted the Domestic Violence Act definition of domestic violence to guide my interview with the men who have experienced IPV perpetrated by their female partners. This definition includes all various types of abuse in diverse relationships, and it is gender-neutral.

Victim: According to the United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice (UN, 1985), a victim is a person who suffered harm, including physical and mental injury, emotional suffering, economic loss and substantial impairment of their human rights through acts or omissions that are violations of national criminal laws or internationally recognised norms relating to human rights. According to DSD (2009), a victim is a person who has suffered damage individually or collectively, including physical and mental injury, emotional distress, economic loss, and severe deprivation of their rights by actions or omissions that violate national criminal law (DSD, 2009). For this study, a victim refers to any action carried out by a female with the intention or perceived intention of causing physical injury, intimidation, financial or emotional pain to her intimate male partner, and the manipulation of the legal system for her gain, for example, allowing her innocent partner to be arrested or laying false charges.

Perpetrator: A person who intentionally inflicts physical, sexual, mental, psychological harm, alienates a child from its parent, controls and financially abuses their partner (Allen-

Collinson, 2009). In this study, a perpetrator is a woman who intentionally inflicts violence against a man.

Guidelines: These are rules or instructions that show how something should be done (Merriam Webster Dictionary). For this study's purpose, guidelines are recommendations that emanated from the study findings to support men who experience IPV perpetrated by their female partners.

Empowerment: This is a process that provides the resources, tools, and environment to develop, build and increase ability and effectiveness of others to set and reach individual and social needs (Wittmann-Price, 2004). For this study's purpose, empowerment is when the abused men are provided with resources, tools, and an environment that leads to self-efficacy about their ability to move past the abuse and knowing that help is available to them and can access help.

Helping systems: A network of individuals who provide practical or emotional support to an individual, also known as a support system (Flink & Paavilainen, 2008). In this study, the helping systems refer to shelters, the police, the courts, health care professionals, including registered counsellors who are available to offer psycho-social support. These will collectively be referred to as service providers or helping services in this study.

Assumptions

When I grew up, I heard of IPV against women**.** The first time I heard of IPV against men was in 2005 when I listened to a song by Khakhathi. Khakhathi is a Muvenda male musician who sings about social issues that are experienced in Venda. The name of the song is *"Mapholisa vho sea"* (the police laughed). Khakhathi sang a song about his cousin who was being abused by his wife. The lyrics are as follows (please see Appendix G for the translated version of the song below):

Na nn̓e vho ndo lenga u zwi vhona

U ri vhazwala vha na mathada

U swika a tshi rembuluwa u shingizhela,

Muzwala wanga a shingizhela mi̓todzi.

Nn̓e nda ri munna ha lili, litshani u n̓tulela.

A ri d̓ivhani uri a thi lali,

Ndi hafha a thi dzi bonyi musadzi u kho nthwa.

Zwi na nn̓e a zwi na mu̓nwe.

Lu̓tanu lwo̓the ndo vhidza vho makhadzi a zwi shumi na tshithu.

Hafha ndo d̓imala.

Ndi hafha ni d̓ivhe uri ndo ya mapholisani luraru lwo̓the,

Thuso na n̓amusi a thi a thu u i wana.

Mapholisa vha khou sea,

Vha ri a dzhie marukhu a fhe musadzi ene a ambare zwikete ngauri ndi gweregwere.

Ari zwino ndi shavhela ngafhi.

Muzwala ndi tea u ita mini?"

Na nn̓e vho ndo lenga u zwi vhona uri vhazwala vhana mathada u swika a tshi rembuluwa u shingizhela milodzi.

Ndi ri muzwala wanga munna ha lili,

Litshani uri t̓ulela.

Mathina zwi kho kon̓da,

U sina u guma nga rambo ari ḓivhani thi lali,

Ndi hafha a thi dzi bonyi musadzi u kho nthwa.

Zwi na nṋe a zwi na muṅwe.

Uri luṱanu lwoḓhe ndo vhidza vhomakhadzi a zwi shumi na tshithu.

Hafha ndo to ḓimala.

A ri hezwi ndi hafha zwi ḓivheni vhathu mapholisani ndo no ya luraru lwoḓhe,

Uri u ya hone thuso na ṋamusi a thi athu u i wana.

Uri zwe vha muvhudza zwone mapholisa vhe dzhiani marukhu ni fhe musadzi inwi ni ambare zwikete uri ni to vha gwerekwere;

Ha munna wa tshithu a ri heyi ndi hafha ndi shavhela fhi hawe mmbudzeni.

Muzwala ndi iteni, mapholisa vha kho sea,

Vho sea vha fhedza vha vhandana;

Vho mu sea a fhedza a bva nga muṋango a ṱuwa.

Ari muzwala ndi iteni, ndi shavhela fhi.

Na nṋe vho ndo to lenga u zwi vhona uri vhazwala vha na mathada,

Nda ndi tshi ḓo vha ndo thusa badi ngauri naho ri sosani u nwa nyana ari du a fhedza a si ambe tshithu ,

U tshi mu vhudzisa a sokou ri a hu na naho ro takala u tshina nyana ari hwi a fhedza a sokou fhumula.

Ari muzwala vhutshilo thi tsha vhu nyaga o tswimila o tswimila,

Nda ri muzwala litshani uri ṱulela munna u lilela thumbuni;

Ndi kho ḓi sola mbulungo ndi vhege i ḓaho.

Thambo mukuloni yo mbo ḓi vha yone thandululo vha hashu ndi iteni.

A thi lali u nnḓela miloroni thi ḓivhi ndo mu laṱedza fhi.

This song is about the singer's cousin who committed suicide after seeking help from the aunts and the police. In the Tshivenda culture, if there are domestic issues, we call our elders to try and resolve the problems before we go outside for help. So, this man called the aunts five times and went to the police three times, but no help was offered to him. Instead, the police laughed at him, and he was told to give his wife his pants and must wear her skirt because he is such a coward. The cousin then asked where he was supposed to get help from. In a sense, this song captures men's embarrassment when seeking help and how culture and socialisation further victimise the abused men. Since these men refuse to conform to hegemonic masculinity, they are further victimised.

Initially, I could not believe that IPV does happen to men. However, my perspective changed when I started researching the topic. Through this, I learned that IPV against men is happening in South Africa, and I think that because our society is patriarchal, it hinders the victims from coming forth. Men are ridiculed if they report abuse. I believe that high rates of substance abuse and suicide among men could result from an abusive relationship.

Personal Reflection

This study was emotionally challenging, as it made me question my role as a wife and a mother to girls and a boy. It made me ask myself how do I contribute to fostering patriarchy within my own family to the detriment of my husband and children? I realised that men too are under a lot of pressure from society and at home. When my first daughter was born (9 years ago), I was weary of having males around her. When her male cousins were around or a boy from school or in the neighbourhood, I would watch them like a hawk. She was not allowed to

go to any of her friends' homes when the mothers were not there; that is how protective I was of her. Three years ago, I gave birth to twins (a boy and a girl). I am still overprotective of my girls, but since I started this study, I am overly protective of my son too. I watch how the girls play with him, my older daughter (9-year-old) is not allowed to walk to my son's room without clothes on and my son is not allowed to enter the bathroom if my eldest daughter is in there. When I was writing the discussion section, I read a lot. I learned how many boys are molested and sexually abused, and this goes unnoticed. This was not an easy subject to undertake. I have observed in my community that boy children are not given the same restrictions as girl children. Boys can have more extended curfews; they can go wherever they want to go without any supervision. After completing this study, I realised the importance of socialising my children in gender equality and not reinforce toxic masculinity. There is a need for an intervention in schools, to demystify toxic masculinity beliefs.

Research Design and Methods

The chosen research approach for this study was qualitative. An overview of the research design and methods is summarised in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1

Summary of the Research Design and Methods

Research design and methods	Brief description
Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA)	• IPA is theoretically orientated from the principles of phenomenology, hermeneutics and ideography. • The primary goal for researchers is to investigate how people make sense of their experience. • Interpretive research is concerned with meaning and seeks to understand the participants' lived experiences, how they define their situations or experience and the meaning they assign to their situations.

Setting	• The city of Johannesburg in Gauteng • Moshate, a Non-Government Organisation • Church
Study population	• Men who were victims of all types of IPV being victimised by their intimate female partners, either in dating, married or cohabiting relationships. • Living in the City of Johannesburg
Sampling methods	• Purposive sampling technique
Sample size	• Fourteen participants
Data collection	• Biographical questionnaire • Audio-recorded semi-structured interviews • Fieldnotes
Data analysis	• Smith's IPA steps of data analysis • Co-coding to reduce bias • Extraction of 7 themes and 33 sub-themes
Method of data verification	• Sensitivity to context; credibility, commitment and rigour; transferability and coherence; dependability; confirmability.
Ethical consideration	• Permission to conduct research, informed consent, privacy, anonymity and confidentiality, benefits and freedom from harm, debriefing of participants, the researcher's competence, and practicalities of conducting the study.

A detailed discussion of the research design and methods is presented in Chapter 3.

Structure of The Thesis

This thesis comprises five chapters structured as follows:

i. **Chapter 1: Introduction and background to the study**

The chapter provides the introduction, the global and South African context in which IPV occurs; global and South African legal frameworks on IPV are also discussed in this chapter. The chapter also presents the problem statement, the relevance of the study research questions, aims and objectives, scope, description, motivation and the anticipated value of the study. The chapter also clarifies the key concepts, assumptions and personal reflection. Finally, a schematic presentation of the research design and methods, the thesis structure, and the chapter's summary.

ii. **Chapter 2: Literature review and theoretical framework**

This chapter provides a preliminary literature review and the theoretical framework related to the study. The Chapter includes the discussion around men's IPV encounters, including the type of violence they experience, reasons they stay in abusive relationships, their coping mechanisms, and the consequences of IPV. The chapter further discusses a theoretical framework, namely the ecological model, control theory and social learning theory. This chapter concludes with a chapter summary.

iii. **Chapter 3: Research design and methods**

This chapter firstly reiterates the study's research questions. It includes discussing the application of the qualitative research methodology and design, namely Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. The chapter also presents the setting, sampling strategies and criteria employed to sample the study participants. Furthermore, it discusses data collection, analysis, methods of data verification, and ethical considerations. This chapter concludes with a chapter summary.

iv. **Chapter 4: Study findings and interpretations**

In this chapter, the study's research questions are answered, and it is shown how the study objectives were met. A presentation of the participants' demographic information and a table of themes and sub-themes are first introduced. It is then followed by a

detailed interpretation of the themes and sub-themes. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary.

v. **Chapter 5: Discussion of findings and literature control**

The chapter focuses on the detailed discussion of the findings presented in Chapter 4 through literature control. The theory is woven with the discussion of the findings. This chapter concludes with a summary.

vi. **Chapter 6: Summary of the study**

This chapter focuses on presenting the conclusions and recommendations drawn from the study's findings. The study limitations and guidelines for support of male IPV victims are also presented. This chapter concludes with a summary.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the study's foundation by introducing the reader to the context in which IPV occurs. The study traced the history of IPV against men to early 1977; as I explored, I discovered that men being victims was against the norm. Documented history regarding IPV against men is limited, but the study has indicated a rise in the number of victims who have been abused by their female partners. I also explored potentially available services to assist abused men and the victims' charter and the minimum standards at which these men must receive assistance. Lastly, the research design and methods were introduced as a schematic presentation, the thesis's structure, and the chapter's conclusion is discussed.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

This chapter will present an overview of men's encounters with IPV, reasons for staying in an abusive relationship, coping mechanisms, consequences of IPV against men, and the theoretical framework underpinning the study.

This chapter will present a preliminary literature review in keeping with the chosen research design's assumption that a comprehensive literature review should not be conducted as it influences engagement with data and analysis. The analysed data will be compared and contrasted with existing literature to perform the literature control in the discussion chapter.

Men's Encounters with IPV

Types of Violence Experienced by Male Victims

Douglas and Hines (2011) found that 96% of the USA study participants sustained severe psychological aggression in the past year. Approximately 93.4% reported controlling behaviours like being monitored (his time and whereabouts), refusing the family money and isolating him from his friends and family. Approximately 98.7% reported being pushed or kicked (minor violence), and 54% reported severe violence like using a gun or a knife and being beaten up by their female partner. Hoff (2012) suggested that men are more often victims of psychological abuse and control over sexual or reproductive health.

A study conducted by Tjaden and Thoennes (2000, as cited in Dienye & Gbeneol, 2008) in the USA, found that 3.2% of the men reported being raped or physically assaulted by their female

partners. Men reported a range of physical abuse, including direct assaults, spat at, scratched, hair pulled, pots thrown at them, rushed at, kicked, choked, and threatened with a knife. Men have experienced emotional taunts that affected their sexual performance. Some have experienced verbal and emotional abuse, including putdowns, accusations of infidelity, "bitchy" comments and name-calling.

South African men reported that they are denied access to financial resources. Some of these men were denied access to their homes and could not see their children (Msomi, 2011).

Why Do Men Not Report IPV?

According to Watts and Zimmerman (2002), underreporting of domestic violence is a universal problem; firstly, men do not report being abused by their female partners because it is considered "normal" or not recognised as violence per se (Dutton et al., 2005). Television makes it look acceptable and warranted to slap a husband, or if he has done something wrong, he is punished by being kicked in the groin (Gelles, 1974). Secondly, because of gender role socialisation**,** men have pressure placed on them to maintain a high level of invulnerability. Historically, men have been taught that being a man means being strong and not discussing their feelings or seeking help for individual problems (Mulroney & Chan, 2005). Based on this, it is clear that the primary reason men underreport IPV is embarrassment.

For instance, Cook (2009) conducted 30 in-depth interviews with men from the western USA who suffered abuse at the hands of their female partners and found that those men who sought help were often met with barriers. When calling a domestic violence hotline, the hotline workers told men who had experienced all sorts of abuse that they only helped abused women. The hotline workers either told these men that the men were the instigators of the violence or ridiculed them. Some of these men reported that when they called the police on their violent partner, the police did not respond; others indicated that they ridiculed them. Some men

reported being wrongfully arrested as the aggressors. When it came to the judicial system, men who were not abusive but were abused by their female partners lost custody of their children. Some were blocked from seeing their children and were falsely accused by their partners of abusing them and their children.

Reasons Why Abused Men stay in Abusive Relationships

According to Fisher (2008 as cited in Msomi, 2011), male victims of domestic violence must prove to society that they are victims of abuse and need to ensure that their children are protected from their female partners. Therefore, these men stay in abusive relationships in fear that their children would be the next victim. They worry about who will protect their children and believe that if they separate with their female partners, mothers are given priority over children's custody (Mqakelana, 2012).

Furthermore, men stay in abusive relationships due to social and economic factors. Most studies conducted on domestic violence against women indicate that women stay in abusive relationships because of being financially dependent on the perpetrator. Findings from a study conducted in South Africa by Mqakelana (2012), found that men stay in abusive relationships hoping that their partners will change. Evidence was given when the researcher interviewed a participant who had been in an abusive relationship for 16 years, and he still hoped that his wife would change.

Msomi (2011) found that men stay in abusive relationships in fear of being a failure. Some of his participants stayed because they felt ashamed about what their families and friends would think of them. Mqakelana (2012) found that the stress and expense of finding a new partner are not worth it. The expense associated with finding a new partner is an economic factor that causes men to stay in abusive relationships. Some participants indicated that all women are the same. Therefore, it is better to stay with the one you know.

Coping Mechanisms against IPV

It has been suggested that men do everything in their power to stop the abuse, and if that fails, they stay silent about being abused. When they land up in the hospital, these men will make excuses regarding what happened to them. On YouTube, a man was abused by his wife and landed up in the hospital with injuries on his jaw and ribs. At the hospital, he said he fell and hit the television. He said who would believe that a 180-pound tattooed guy was abused by his wife (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhXfeBFATHw). According to Corry et al. (2002), various strategies are used by male victims of domestic violence to cope, like:

i. Leaving the house or locking themselves up in a separate room; this tactic was used to diffuse IPV in the home. This is done to avoid interacting with their abusive partner (Hogan, 2016);
ii. Covering up for their violent partner by making excuses; is because they love their partner and do not want to portray the partner as a bad person (Lien & Lorentzen, 2019). Covering up for their abusive partner is also to present an image of being in control of their lives;
iii. Accepting responsibility for all accusations – Younger (2011) argued that male IPV victims often assume blame for acts of violence perpetrated by their female partners. They make sense of the abuse by convincing themselves that they have done something wrong;
iv. Promising to do whatever their partner wants so that they can keep the peace;
v. Becoming passive, in the hopes that the abuse will not occur; and
vi. Abusing alcohol and other substances to numb the pain.

The Consequences of IPV against Men by their Female Partners

IPV against men affects their everyday lives and relationships, subsequently affecting their physical and mental health (Lien & Lorentzen, 2019). Hines and Douglas (2011) indicated that men who have experienced IPV perpetrated by their female partners are at greater risk of developing PTSD.

IPV against men also affects the children, not only through witnessing the violence. This invokes fear, guilt and feeling of helplessness among child witnesses of IPV. When the parents separate, the abuse continues by one parent alienating the children from the other parent (Lien & Lorentzen, 2019; Walker et al.,2019).

Younger (2011) reported that some IPV victims lost their jobs because of their lack of concentration, some because their partners control their movement to the point that it inhibits them from doing their jobs efficiently. Job absenteeism is another issue; they might miss work because of physical injuries to consult a doctor.

Theoretical Framework on IPV

Creswell (2014) suggested that the literature review provides a framework for establishing the importance of a study and benchmarking for comparing results with other studies. Several theoretical perspectives can guide this research and help with the explanation of IPV. Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework theory is relevant as it explains how IPV experienced by male victims perpetrated by the female partners comes about. The ecological model was used to rationalise and integrate the study's findings and theories into a comprehensive framework that improves understanding of the context, causes and impact of IPV in the lives of the abused men and the environment they are responding to. Alongside the control theory, this theory further explains the implementation of IPV as a means of control between men

and women in relationships. Social learning theory was used for grounding for the development of support guidelines for male victims of IPV.

The Ecological Model on Understanding IPV

The ecological model offers a heuristic tool for exploring the complexity of IPV. This is in line with interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), the chosen research design for this study; it sought to understand the abused men's experiences at a point in history; a particular time in their lives, in their social, cultural, political and economic contexts (Shaw, 2019). Thus, the ecological model was used in this study to guide the research question; it was not used to try and fit the data into it as the focus was to explore and interpret the lived experiences of the abused men.

The ecological model, coined by Urie Bronfenbrenner, an American psychologist in 1977 (Krug et al. 2002), specifically seeks to understand human experiences and behaviour within the individual's interaction with the environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Bronfenbrenner (1979 as cited in Duncan, Bowman, Naidoo, Pillay & Roos, 2007) identified four environmental subsystems, also referred to as the ecological system levels, that are important in understanding people's behaviour. These subsystems are the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem, which intersect to influence individuals' behaviour. Therefore, this model highlights multiple causes of violence and the interaction of risk factors within the individual, within the family, community and societal levels. It explores the relationship between the individual and contextual factors and considers violence as the product of multiple levels of influence on behaviour (Heise, 1998). These multiple levels are explained below with the findings of the World Report on Violence and Health (2002), which used the following four ecological subsystems to explain IPV:

i. **A microsystem** is an immediate system which the individual is part of. It contains everything that has direct contact with the individual. In men's case, these systems include their wives, work and community (Duncan et al., 2007). According to Krug et al. (2002), the microsystem identifies biological and personal history factors like a history of family violence that influence how individuals behave and increase their likelihood of becoming victims or perpetrators of violence. For instance, some studies have indicated that demographics like age and low income increase the likelihood of men abusing their female partners (Krug et al., 2002).

ii. **The mesosystem** is the interaction of the microsystems in which the individual is located, for example, the interaction between the individual's home and work systems (Duncan et al., 2007). As the second level, this looks at close relationships. This level explores how these relationships increase the risk of IPV. Therefore, daily interaction with the abuser may increase the opportunity for abuse; marital conflict is related to IPV (Krug et al., 2002). Most studies have indicated that those prone to being violent, use violence to resolve marital conflict (Krug et al., 2002).

iii. **The exosystem** is an environment in which the individual is not directly involved but influences the microsystem's behaviour; a spouse's workplace is an appropriate example. For instance, the events that occur at work will affect the other spouse (Duncan et al., 2007). According to Krug et al., (2002), the third level focuses on the community contexts. It seeks to identify the characteristics of these settings that increase the risk of violence. Issues like high levels of unemployment and easily accessible alcohol, women's financial empowerment, and education are some of the factors that could increase the risk of IPV (Kumar, 2012). Historically because of power imbalances, women suffered at the hands of their partners and now because of the shift in power dynamics, women become excited by their empowered position. Kumar

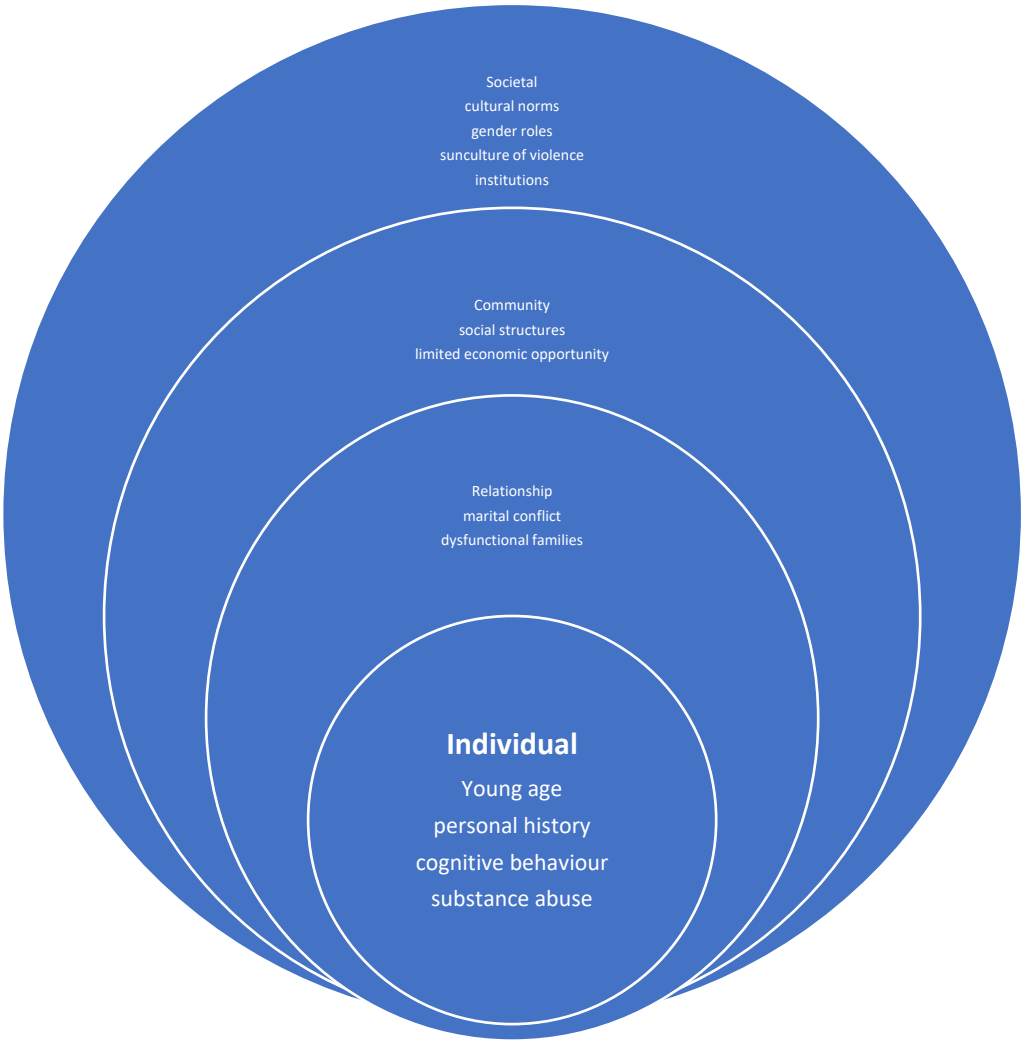
(2012) suggests that in women being empowered, they realise that they are not inferior to men.

iv. **The macrosystem** refers to the broader influences like, the larger cultural context and societal factors that impact people's lives (Duncan et al., 2007). The final level of the ecological model examines larger cultural and societal factors that influence rates of violence. This includes factors that create an acceptable environment for violence, like norms that women are always vulnerable to domestic violence; socialisation that women are inferior to men, therefore men are powerful, aggressive and the oppressor. These factors make it difficult for men to seek help when they are put in a position of being a victim. Patriarchy and masculinity create an environment conducive to abuse to continue as it exacerbates silence among abused men. So even if the woman is physically abusing her husband, she gets away with it because the society's attitude is that women retaliate to protect themselves from aggressive men (Krug et al., 2002).

Figure 1 shows the different levels of the ecological model. Factors at the model's inner level are those with the most immediate and direct influence on behaviour. This model explains the inter-relatedness of IPV at the individual, relationships, community and societal levels where violence is prevalent.

Figure 1.1

Ecological model for understanding violence adopted from the World Report on Violence and Health (2002)



Application of the Ecological Model. For this study, the ecological model serves as a foundation upon which other theoretical perspectives can be grounded. This model indicates how IPV could be caused by different factors and the interactions of risk factors operating at different society levels. Furthermore, the model addresses the consequences of IPV and explains possible interventions for abused men (Little & Kantor, 2010). The model was thus, used to assist in developing the research questions for this study. The ecological model is interested in understanding men who experience IPV perpetrated by their female partners in their lived environment. As mentioned above, the interaction between the abused men, their families, friends/social network, and the society in which they live explains how these men make sense of their lived experiences.

The model explains that a change in one part of the system has a replica effect on other parts of the system. This means that the environment affects the individual, and the individual affects the environment. There is an assumption that people and the environment continuously evolve, hence developing guidelines to support men who experienced IPV perpetrated by their female partners. However, the model still has some weaknesses. For instance, Jewkes, Levin and Penn-Kekana (2002) described the ecological model as:

> problematic in scientifically conceptualising its different levels, particularly defining and distinguishing between 'community' and 'society'. Both of these notions are highly contested in the social scientific literature. The factors influencing IPV are found to operate at several or all of them. The process of allocation to any one level is essentially arbitrary (p.1614).

Also, to guide the development of this research, the research philosophy of interpretivism was used as it allows the participants to give an account of their lived experiences in their language, and it does not exclude any explanation, be it rooted in the ecological framework or not (Creswell, 2014).

Control theory

Control theory is one of the social theories used to explain family violence. Control theory argues that family conflict results from an individual's need to obtain and maintain power and control within a relationship (Hyde-Nolan & Juliao, 2012). The abuser's motive is power and control, the ability to exert power and control over their partner. According to this theory, the more powerful family member uses threat, force or violence to comply with a less powerful family member (Fife & Schrager, 2012). This helps to understand the motives and means by which females may exercise control over and subject their male partners to IPV.

While the theory manages to explain power dynamics in an intimate relationship, it was developed from a feminist perspective and, thus, more likely to portray men as perpetrators.

This is one of the shortcomings that the present study seeks to address; women can also be the perpetrators of violence against their male partners.

Social learning theory

The theory states that people learn social behaviour by observing and imitating other people. This means that aggression is a learnt behaviour learned through the observation of significant others, including parents. This is known as modelling, where a child learns behaviour directly or indirectly (Gelles, 1997; Vaughan & Hogg, 2005). Research on domestic violence has indicated that many abusers have witnessed domestic violence from their biological families (Powers et al., 2020). This theory attempts to explain the intergenerational transmission of violence. If a child grows up witnessing domestic violence, they may learn abusive behaviour and imitate those behaviours in their future relationships. When some values and norms support, accept or reward violent behaviour as an acceptable way of resolving conflict, it will reinforce such behaviour. In other words, violent behaviour persists when it is supported.

According to Powers et al. (2020), this theory also articulates the importance of transmissions of beliefs, values and norms conducive to IPV. The approach also accommodates other explanations of IPV such as extrafamilial socialisation, gender roles, violent masculinity and the role of differential reinforcement.

Exploring the role of attitudes and beliefs surrounding violence is important when supporting male victims of IPV. Akers' (1998) four social learning concepts based on the social learning theory were applied in this study. These are as follows: differential association (knowing those who have been victimised, parents' attitudes against IPV), imitation (engaging in a behaviour one observed another doing), definitions (person's own evaluative judgments, attitudes, or meanings attached to a particular behaviour), and differential reinforcement (perceptions of others' reactions to IPV, cost-benefit analysis of IPV). The social learning

theory proposes a processual model in which differential association has both a direct and a partially mediated or indirect impact on criminal behaviour through its influence on differential reinforcement, imitation, and definitions, all of which directly impact criminal behaviour (Akers, 1998).

The theory acknowledges that socialisation can take place outside of the home, such as societal acceptance of violence as a form of dispute resolution and the impact of conventional gender roles and aggressive masculinity.

This theory is important for guidelines for support as both victims and perpetrators can change their behaviour via learning new ways of dealing with trauma. In addition, further training of the helping systems would put helping practitioners like the police, counsellor, health workers to be in a better position to assist victims of IPV because they will at this point be aware of the subpopulations that are victimised through IPV, including men, and know that several factors play a role in victims deciding to stay in an abusive relationship. Miller et al. (2012) investigated stay–leave decisions among women in violent relationships using operant learning principles. They found that when the benefits (finances) of IPV victimisation are weighed against the costs (e.g., physical injuries, emotional trauma, and the presence of children), the balance of reinforcements (financial support) of IPV victimisation may tip toward repeated victimisation. As a result, Miller et al. (2012) argued that victimisation becomes more frequent. When it comes to intervention strategies, this theory suggests that differential association predicts differential reinforcement.

Uneven reinforcement influences the chance of victimization. This demonstrates that the experiences and emotions of close family members and friends have an impact on the likelihood of entering and remaining in a violent relationship. Although the focus has been mostly on violence against women, research has long recognized the significance of significant others' attitudes in determining the risk of perpetration and the micro- (e.g., peer groups) and

macro- (e.g., societal norms) impacts on those views (Flood & Pease, 2009). Furthermore, research has shown that positive social support from family and friends plays an important role in victims' rehabilitation (e.g., Coker et al., 2002) and in the decision-making process to leave a violent relationship (Miller et al., 2012).

This suggests that prevention efforts focusing on changing societal norms around IPV and emphasizing how informal social networks may promote healthy relationships and remove barriers to quitting violent relationships might be effective. Similarly, by boosting victim help and offender punishments, the response cost of staying in abusive situations may be directly addressed (Powers, 2020). It is deemed that the theory has made valuable contributions on how to treat IPV. There is psychological diversity in IPV victims' experiences, which has implications for intervention strategies. Coping, trauma, and self-efficacy all have a role in the decision-making processes of female IPV victims, according to Lerner and Kennedy (2000). These are likely to interact with learning processes, particularly in terms of perceptions of response costs.

This shows that practitioners should take into account the diversity of men's experiences when designing intervention strategies. Intervention programmes should emphasise removing physical impediments to leaving an abusive relationship and developing coping skills and self-efficacy (Powers et al., 2020). This study aimed to develop support guidelines for male victims of IPV, which adds to the treatment of this phenomenon. This theory was thus included to add value to the theoretical framework of the study.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a preliminary literature review and the theoretical framework of this study. An overview of men’s encounters focusing on the type of violence the men experienced;

reasons why abused men do not report the abuse and why these abused men stay in abusive relationships; coping mechanisms used by men, and the consequences of IPV.

The chapter also presented a theoretical framework underlying the study. These theories sought to explain IPV, the ecological theory and the control theory. At the same time, the social learning theory and the ecological model explained IPV but was also used to develop support guidelines for male victims of IPV.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion around the research methodology that was applied in this study. The research questions that guided this study are presented. An outline of the research methodology emphasises the rationale of the chosen methods, sampling strategies used, data collection and analysis. I also discuss how my assumptions, values, beliefs and opinions were reflected upon; according to Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009), one cannot fully bracket their preconceptions. Therefore, I engaged in reflexivity. The chapter will then conclude by a demonstration of how trustworthiness and ethical principles were upheld.

Research Questions

For this study, the following main research question was set to guide the process:

What are the experiences of men who are abused by their female partners?

The following were the sub-questions that the study sought to answer:

i. How do abused men understand intimate partner violence?
ii. How do men experience intimate partner violence perpetrated by their female partners?
iii. How do the men cope with the experience of abuse by their female partners?
iv. What are the men's experiences with the helping systems?
v. What is the empowerment needs of abused men?

Research Methodology

According to Keenan (2015), research methodology refers to how the research will be conducted; it is a plan of the methods and procedures that will be used, including the principles and assumptions of the chosen techniques. It specifically pertains to the researcher's choices

about the appropriate models, target population to study, data collection and analysis planning and conducting the research study (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2010; Silverman, 2010). For this study's purpose, a qualitative paradigm was chosen, and the following section justifies the choice of qualitative research.

Research Paradigm

The research paradigm is defined by Pring (2015) as viewing the world as consisting of ideas, the researcher is part of the world which they are researching, meanings are negotiated between the researcher and the researched, and the world does not exist independently of those who hold the ideas. This paradigm believes that multiple realities exist and that what is being researched is context specific. The following section presents how the chosen paradigm was applied.

The Ontological, Epistemological and Methodological Assumptions

The Ontological Stance of the Researcher. Before clarifying the chosen ontology for this study, it is essential to define the term ontology. Bryman (2012) defines ontology as basic questions about the nature of reality and the nature of the human being in the world. Nieuwenhuis (2016) suggests that ontological assumptions are those assumptions that give answers to the question "what truth/reality is". Being a trauma counsellor and having been trained on Carl Roger's person-centred approach, I believe that two or three people can experience the same event differently. The same event has different meanings and interpretations for everyone. Every experience is unique to that person. In this study, the ontological assumption that was subscribed to is relativism. I assumed that the world that I am investigating is populated by human beings who have their thoughts, interpretations and meanings. Therefore, the assumptions were as follows:

i. Human beings are social and unique in nature. Participants would be able to narrate their experiences as lived by them and these would be distinctive;
ii. Reality/meanings are socially constructed during social interactions. When participants share their unique experiences that I must also be cognisant of their social context; and
iii. Multiple realities exist regarding IPV experiences; therefore, these were explored individually using a qualitative approach (Nieuwenhuis, 2016).

This is also seen in the chosen research methods and techniques of an emergent design like semi-structured face-to-face interviews to understand the lived experiences of men who have been abused by their female partners. Furthermore, employing interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) as a research design focused on these men's lived experiences and how they make sense of the abuse.

The Epistemological Stance of The Researcher. According to Crotty (2003), epistemology is a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know. It is concerned with ways of knowing and learning about the world and focuses on issues like how we can learn about reality and what forms the basis of our knowledge (Ritchie et al., 2014). I believe that knowledge is personal, subjective and unique to everyone. I also concur with the idea that the researcher also informs or has some effect on the research process, hence the researcher cannot be objective, nor can they be removed from the research completely (Moriah, 2018).

The epistemological stance used in this study was interpretive. Interpretivist viewpoint as defined by Blumer (1969 as cited in Cohen et al., 2017), in their acts, people are intentional and imaginative, they act consciously and make sense through their activities. This means that people are active in creating their social world. Therefore, they are not passive recipients. This viewpoint also suggests that the social world should be studied in its natural state without manipulating the participants (Cohen et al., 2017). This study was conducted in the men's natural environment, meeting the men where they frequented and comfortable at their social

contexts. This created an opportunity to understand the perceptions they had of their activities. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007 as cited in Nieuwenhuis, 2016, p. 61), the interpretivist paradigm's focus is to "understand, explain and demystify social reality through the eyes of different participants." The findings of the study explained and demystified IPV against men as these men narrated their lived experiences. Interpretive studies attempt to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them. The assumptions were as follows:

i. Researchers and participants interact closely;
ii. Knowledge is co-created by the researcher and participants; and
iii. Participants' stories need to be interpreted.

Interpretivism guides the researcher to analyse why people behave the way they do and why and how they make their decisions (Yegidis et al., 2017). What is central to this paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience. Efforts were made to get inside the person and to understand from within to maintain integrity. These can be seen in the results section, where I included the participants' extracts verbatim. This worldview uses approaches like "verstehen", which means understanding; and hermeneutic, which refers to uncovering and interpreting meanings (Yegidis et al., 2017). This is to try to see the social world through the eyes of the participants.

Interpretivists believe that reality is not objectively determined but socially constructed. People make sense of the world in their own terms, and such interpretation takes place in socio-cultural, socio-temporal and socio-spatial contexts (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). As a researcher, I have forgone my own assumptions about people, cultures, and contexts favouring looking at a situation and its context in its own terms.

As researchers, we try to understand through the eyes of others, but we describe through the filters of our own knowledge and experience as meaning making is a personal enactment. This means that the social world depends on our human knowledge (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). Bearing this in mind, I believe that my interpretations of the narratives informed by my Psychology discipline training could be interpreted differently by someone else. However, I employed an independent coder to ensure my findings' trustworthiness, which will be discussed in a later section of this chapter.

Methodological Assumptions. In this study's context, the methodological assumptions, which will be discussed in the next section, under the characteristics of qualitative research, emphasise the need for an approach that promotes participants telling their stories in great detail without limitations (Creswell, 2014).

Therefore, the chosen research approach was qualitative research. Qualitative research investigates a phenomenon in an in-depth and holistic manner by collecting rich narrative materials using a flexible research design (Keenan, 2015). According to Liamputtong (2013), qualitative research aims at understanding some aspect of social life and its methods generate narratives. This paradigm answers questions like the ‘what,’ ‘how’, or the ‘why’ phenomenon. Babbie and Mouton (2001) suggest that qualitative research aims to describe and understand rather than explain or predict human behaviour. Therefore, it was anticipated that the qualitative paradigm in this study would help collect in-depth, rich information about the lived experiences of abused men.

Characteristics of Qualitative Research

The importance of discussing qualitative research characteristics is to justify why I chose to use this approach. Qualitative research is very distinct from other forms of research; specific characteristics differentiate it from quantitative and mixed methods.

Qualitative Research is Conducted in a Natural Setting. Qualitative researchers conduct their studies in a natural setting where the participant experiences the problem instead of a laboratory or simulated environment (Creswell, 2014). This setting is familiar to the participants as supported by Yin (2011), who suggested that this kind of social interaction occurs with minimal intrusion by a researcher's simulated procedures. The participants are not limited to the researcher's questionnaire as they are free to narrate their stories. Furthermore, these settings can be people's homes, companies, workplaces, streets and other public places (Yin, 2011). Qualitative researchers are interested in how "humans arrange themselves and their settings and how inhabitants of these settings make sense of their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures, and social roles" (Nieuwenhuis, 2016, p.53). The researcher can have a face-to-face interaction with the participants through an interview (Creswell, 2014).

In the context of this study, the natural setting was where the participants were comfortable to meet us (either meeting with me, the researcher, or Mr Mnisi, the fieldworker). Some of the interviews took place at a restaurant, while others took place at the participants' homes.

The Researcher is a Key Instrument of Data Collection. In qualitative research, the researcher is a key instrument, meaning that the researcher is the one who collects data through, for example, in-depth interviews as opposed to giving out questionnaires (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, the researcher has an active role in the research process, from preparing interview schedules; entering the participants' natural setting; recruiting participants, making appointments for interviews, analysing the data, and reporting the findings. Additionally, the researcher must sensitively observe the participants in their context and faithfully document the participants' stories while raising additional questions, following hunches (Maree, 2016).

As the researcher, my role in this study involved writing a proposal and getting ethical clearance for the study; preparing the interview schedules; conducting some interviews; analysing the data; and interacting with the findings based on my discipline, which is

Psychology, the readers are informed how that orientation was used to generate conclusion (Firmin, 2008). This means that my psychological background informed the participants' interpretation, as I mentioned earlier in this chapter. Prior knowledge of the study area was used to write a well-crafted and coherent thesis and to engage in self-reflexivity, as discussed later in this chapter.

To ensure that the research process is central in qualitative research, the researcher also pays attention to how their beliefs, values and assumptions may affect the study (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). These beliefs, values and assumptions are discussed later on in this chapter under the heading self-reflexivity.

Inductive data analysis. Qualitative studies are inductive, working mainly with an emerging theoretical framework rather than having a hypothesis (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). When using inductive data analysis methods, from the raw data (participants' narratives), the researcher starts to build themes from the "bottom-up", by combing the relevant data into increasingly more meaningful units of information (Creswell, 2014). This approach allows the researcher to explore data to identify recurring themes, patterns or concepts and then describe and interpret those categories (Nassaji, 2015).

Therefore, in this study, the participants' interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed verbatim subsequently. I implemented Smith's (2014) eleven strategies to data analysis, which required me to work back and forth between themes based on the data collected until the themes made sense. The focus was on the participants' lived experiences of IPV perpetrated by their female partners and meanings they ascribed to such experiences**.**

Qualitative researchers focus on learning the meaning that the participants have about the phenomenon and not what the researcher knows from literature (Creswell, 2014). Nieuwenhuis (2016, p. 53) concurs as he suggested that "at the heart of qualitative research lies the extraction

of meaning from data, like the meanings people attribute to their experiences or circumstances." This means that participants are knowledge bearers, and they are the ones who can impart that knowledge. Furthermore, qualitative research focuses on the lived experience of a specific phenomenon experienced by these particular participants and how they make sense of the phenomenon.

Research has been conducted internationally regarding male victims of abuse. However, I am interested in understanding how African Black men experience and make sense of this abuse.

Emergent design. The qualitative research process is emergent. Therefore, the research's initial plan can change after entering the field and beginning to collect data (Creswell, 2014). An emergent design allows for an ongoing reassessment of conducting the research based on the researcher's knowledge on the field (Morgan, 2008).

The initial plan that I proposed for this study was that, as the researcher, I would conduct the interviews myself. What I had planned for before entering the field was to have an interpreter. However, when I entered the field, I was greeted with resistance from some men, and therefore, I had to train a male fieldworker, Mr Mnisi who was already working in a men's organisation (Moshate) to conduct the interviews. My approach to recruitment changed as the participants had to be recruited by Mr Mnisi. This is because Mr Mnisi is known to these men, and they already had a rapport with him. The full process of recruitment and sampling is explained later in the chapter. The other thing that did not go as planned was the idea that interviews would only be conducted with men who approached Moshate for help. However, there were men from churches that approached me and were willing to narrate their stories. These men got to know about my study because there was a couple's lunch at a church where the pastor knew about my study; she asked me to come and talk briefly about IPV.

In the context of this study, I trained Mr Mnisi on how to conduct an in-depth face-to-face interview based on interpretative phenomenology analysis principles, and he also underwent training in ethics on how to handle informed consent; how to ensure confidentiality; and making sure that the participants are not harmed. Mr Mnisi was necessary for this study because he was the founder of an NGO (Moshate) that assisted men abused by their female partners. He had experience in data collection because there were several studies that he assisted in collecting data for. He also has a qualification in Journalism. This study aimed to get African men to narrate their lived experiences of abuse in their female partners' hands, either wives or girlfriends. This was a very sensitive subject matter as some men who spoke to me as the researcher indicated that they were more comfortable speaking to Mr Mnisi because they had developed a rapport with him, and they trusted him.

Some participants wanted to use their mother tongues, resulting in a language barrier between myself and them. A person is at a better position of expressing themselves well when they use their mother tongue, but also what I discovered after data were translated was that there was much meaning lost in translation, this could be because particular meanings could be unique to a specific culture. To remedy the situation, I asked Mr Mnisi to send me field notes to read, note patterns, and indicate or highlight questions to be followed through as he progressed with data collection.

Interpretive inquiry. At the end of the study, the researcher interprets what they see, hear, and understand the phenomenon they were studying. Therefore, qualitative research is an interpretive inquiry based on which the readers and the participants can interpret the study (Creswell, 2014). This involves helping the readers to make sense of the findings produced in the study. According to Sandelowski (2010), every research has some form of interpretation; it does not matter if it is qualitative or quantitative research. Furthermore, interpretations of findings should remain close to the participants' narratives (Sandelowski, 2000, 2010).

According to Sandelowski (2004), a participant's narrative without the researcher's interpretation is not considered research findings but as mere stories by the storyteller. In agreement, Lawless (1992 as cited in Sandelowski, 2004, p. 1378) suggested that "voicing the voiceless does not mean that the researcher loses their voice or abdicate their responsibility to interpret." Therefore, my role as a scholar, a thinker and observer is also to interpret research data.

In this study, my role as an interpreter involved interpreting the participants' narratives to make sense of their world. This began with the reflection of my own beliefs and assumptions about the world, life, and people. Thus, interpretation of the generated data was informed by my training as a trauma counsellor and a researcher in Psychology. This was also evident when I listened to the audio recordings, as I realised that I was more interested in the types of abuse that my participants experienced and how they were coping more so than how they experienced the helping systems. As I listened to Mr Mnisi's interviews, I could hear him probing more on how the justice system responded to these abused men. Due to his journalism background, he leaned more to the injustice that these men had experienced at the hands of their abusers and being further victimised by the system that is supposed to serve and protect them. We had meetings to discuss the initial interviews, and we became aware of our preferences, so when we continued with the interviews, we were more cognisant and made an effort to try and balance our questioning and probing.

Holistic account. Qualitative research has a holistic view of the social phenomenon; "researchers are bound by identifying the complex interactions of factors in any situation" (Creswell, 2007, p. 39). Qualitative research places great emphasis on understanding a phenomenon on their own right, taking an emic view, which is an insider perspective instead of an outsider one. The research process takes centre stage, from the conceptualisation of the research project, the interconnections between each phase of the research process and the effect

the researcher has on the process (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). The researcher was interested in the unique experiences of men who were abused by their female partners. Therefore, the researcher was able to provide a detailed account of the men's experiences. The next section elaborates on how this was achieved.

A holistic account also involves reporting multiple perspectives (Astin & Long, 2014), identifying many factors involved in a situation, and sketching the larger picture that emerges (Creswell, 2014). The researcher strives for an understanding of the whole (Polit & Beck, 2018). According to Nassaji (2015), a holistic account involves a rich collection of data from various sources to understand individual participants, opinions, perspectives and attitudes. This is possible by gaining intricate knowledge directly from people with the lived experiences; qualitative research is reflexive and purpose-driven, ultimately producing culturally situated and theory-enmeshed knowledge through an ongoing interplay between theory and methods; researcher and researched (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011) suggests that researchers need to be continuously aware of the relationship between epistemology, theory, and techniques, and look at a study as a process.

I recruited participants who had knowledge and experience in the study area to gain a holistic understanding of abused men's lived experiences. I had planned to conduct semi-structured face-to-face interviews for data collection because this method allows the participants to share their lived experiences with the researcher. Also, interviewers can observe what the participants are communicating non-verbally. Field notes taken during data collection included the participants' non-verbal communication, tone, and the interviewer's mood on that day.

All the interviews conducted were transcribed in English. The interviews conducted in Setswana and isiZulu were transcribed and translated by a professional. The data I transcribed was time-consuming, but the transcription process helped to immerse myself in each interview

all over again. To gain a deeper meaning of what was said, I went through all the transcripts several times. The recordings contained more than words; they contained the participants' feelings, emphasis and non-verbal communication. The recordings also allowed me to go through a secondary encounter of the participants' experiences and thus became familiar with their narratives.

Reflexivity. Creswell (2014) proposed that as a researcher, I needed to reflect on how my role in the study and my personal background, culture, and experiences potentially shaped the interpretation and the meaning they ascribed to the data. For this study, reflexivity is defined as the responsibility of researchers to examine their influence in all aspects of qualitative inquiry, which is also known as self-reflection (Streubert et al., 2011).

The question I asked myself here was how does my background shape the direction of my study. Smith et al. (2009) alluded to when trying to make sense of what the participants have said; it involves close interpretative engagement. This engagement includes the researcher being aware of their preconceptions; therefore, the researcher needs to engage in reflective practise before reading the transcripts.

As Behar (1996, as cited in Sandelowski, 2004) puts it, the heart of reflexivity in qualitative research acknowledges the researcher's role and vulnerability in the study. This included acknowledging the challenge of representing other people's voices and meaning constructions. In the present study, I kept a journal exploring my personal feelings and experiences that might have influenced the study. Throughout the study, I documented my personal feelings and experiences, which helped me analyse the data because I could check my interpretations against any biases or emotions.

Based on the abovementioned characteristics, qualitative research was the most suitable method to obtain in-depth information in the current study. It aimed at exploring the lived

experiences of men who were abused by their female partners. The following section will discuss the practical application of the study's epistemological, ontological and methodological assumptions .

Research Design

A research design is a map that the researcher will take to conduct a research study and how the researcher will engage with the research participants to answer the research questions (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). Qualitative researchers develop their designs as they go along, using available tools as guidelines, unlike quantitative researchers, who consult a list of possible designs (Fouche, 2005). There is no step-by-step plan in qualitative research because researchers are expected to be flexible in their research to respond to new developments as the research process unfolds (Creswell, 2014). The research design adopted in this study was interpretative phenomenological analysis with explorative, descriptive and contextual inquiries. An exploratory, descriptive and contextual type of inquiry aims at achieving contextually rich and informed results (Astin & Long, 2014; Creswell, 2014; Nieuwenhuis, 2016).

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Interpretive research is concerned with understanding the participants' lived experiences, how they define their situations or experiences, and the meaning they assign to their situations (Shinebourne, 2011; Smith et al, 2009). Thus, men who are abused by their female partners were central in giving the meaning to their experiences. The study aimed to explore and describe the experiences of abused men by their female partners.

Interpretive research assumes that people's subjective experiences can be understood by interacting with the participants (Ormston et al., 2014). In this case, interaction with men who were abused by their female partners was crucial. As a result, face-to-face interviews were

conducted to facilitate a context whereby a relatively free expression of emotions, feelings and meaning was allowed.

IPA is an approach to research whose primary goal is to investigate how people make sense of their experience. IPA as a research method in Psychology was first used in the mid-1990s by Jonathan Smith. It is theoretically oriented from the principles of phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography (Smith et al., 2009).

The first principle that is discussed is phenomenology. Edmund Husserl (1970 as cited in Laverty, 2003) is referred to as the forefather of phenomenology; this principle aims to identify the essential components of an experience, making it different from others. This can be achieved using eidetic reduction, which involves various techniques like ‘free imaginative variation', where a researcher carefully considers different possible instances of a phenomenon (Smith et al., 2009). Therefore, phenomenological research focuses on how individuals perceive and talk about events (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

The second principle is hermeneutics, developed by Martin Heidegger (1962), Husserl's student. Hermeneutics suggests that to translate a person's message, the researcher needs to understand the person's attitude and their language, which mediates one's experiences of the world (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). This inquiry believes that people are self-interpreting and sense-making individuals. IPA research is a dynamic process with the researcher having an active role. The researcher influences how much access they can gain from the participant’s experience and how they make sense of the participant’s experience, which is achieved through interpretative activity (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). This interpretative activity simply means that the researcher also has to reflect on their interpretation of participants making sense of their lived experiences. This analytical process is referred to as double hermeneutics because firstly, the participants are trying to make sense of their experience, and secondly, the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants' sense-making. This means that IPA

researchers try to adopt insider and outsider positions (Smith & Osborn, 2008, as cited in Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

The last principle is idiography, which focuses on the individual rather than a generalisation of the phenomenon. It examines individual cases in their unique context. The principle behind idiography is that the researcher must focus on a single case before making any general statements, and comparisons can only be made at the end of analysing each case individually (Smith et al., 2009). The current study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of men's subjective experiences who are abused by their female partners in Gauteng. I have identified the essential components of an experience unique to each participant, which is in line with phenomenology and idiographic theories. During analysis, each case was given full attention before moving to the next one. This means that, as I will discuss below, I finished one participant's transcript before moving on to the next. Each transcript had its own master table with super-ordinate themes.

With IPA, the existential philosophers suggested that one cannot completely 'bracket' their preconceptions. Therefore, I have discussed my assumptions throughout the study, not for bracketing but for reflecting my presuppositions and interpretation. I have also adopted the insider and outsider positions as much as possible. This was achieved by trying to step into the participants' "shoes" but at the same time asking critical questions (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

IPA is the most suitable qualitative methodology for this study because it explores individuals' lived experiences and the meaning of the phenomenon like IPV. Morgan and Wells (2016) conducted a study on men's IPV experiences perpetrated by their female partners in the UK, and the study used IPA. Serame (2015) also conducted a study on IPV in S.A. and used IPA as their research design. However, Serame was investigating abused women. Smith and Osborn (2003) indicate that this methodology is good for complex problems; its focus is on

understanding the participant's sense-making; it is flexible and can be used with small sample sizes. This methodology allows the researcher to interpret an individual's interpretation of a phenomenon.

The challenge with IPA is said to be the reliance on language (Willig, 2008). I guess this is true for all qualitative research because they all rely on participants to relay their personal stories. Willig, further suggests that language may be biased as a phenomenon can be described differently by participants. I do not think of this as a challenge because phenomenology believes in unique experiences. IPA looks at case by case experiences and then compares different cases looking for similarity and differences. The second challenge is the accuracy of the narratives. The participants may not be able to provide an accurate narrative because participants need to be emotionally descriptive. Smith et al. (2009) provide guidelines for writing questions that elicit detailed responses from the participants. This helped to counteract the effects of possible inaccurate narratives.

Based on the mentioned characteristics of qualitative research and the chosen research design – IPA; this study was first, exploratory in nature as an explorative study is used when there is a lack of or little information about a specific phenomenon (Fouche & de Vos, 2011; Polit & Beck, 2018). In this study, exploration was conducted to gain insight into abused men's experiences perpetrated by their female partners. Chapter 1 discussed the scarcity of research on the experiences of abused men, especially in South Africa. According to Fouche and de Vos (2011, p. 96) with this approach, the researcher aims “to become conversant with basic facts and to create a general picture of conditions.” Employing this design helped me to gain new insight into the experience of abuse as experienced by men. Those experiences included the nature and interaction of abused men with the helping systems; what the helping systems need to improve the assistance offered to the abused men. In-depth interviews were conducted to

explore their views, perceptions and experiences about the abuse. I remained open to new ideas and explored the best solutions to achieve the men's experiences' best report.

Secondly, the study was descriptive. A descriptive study provides a picture of specific details about a phenomenon. This type of inquiry's main objective is to accurately portray people's characteristics or circumstances within which certain phenomena occur (Polit & Beck, 2018). In other words, descriptive design contextualises the phenomenon; it is useful for observing, describing and documenting aspects like values, beliefs, and behaviours within a specific context (Babbie, 2017). This enabled me to describe the essence of the lived experiences of men who were abused by their female partners, which facilitated a deeper understanding of their experiences.

Finally, the study was contextual. A phenomenon has meaning only in a given situation, place and time. People are generally more honest and provide information freely if the discussion is conducted in their natural environment (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). The context in any situation or study is crucial. I believe that the same behaviour can have different meanings in different contexts. The population where the study was conducted had received very little attention. Research on abused men by their female partners has been conducted overseas, extensively in Australia. Only a handful of studies have been conducted in South Africa, on white men (Barkhuizen, 2010) or men as IPV perpetrators. This research was bound to the lived experiences of black men experiencing IPV in Johannesburg's unique context in Gauteng Province, and it is not a representative of the total population.

Study setting

Johannesburg is a city in South Africa, located in Gauteng Province. The plan was that this study would be conducted at an NGO called Moshate. This organisation helped boys and men who are ill-treated by society and authorities in South Africa. The NGO was based in

downtown Johannesburg, which enabled abused men to have easy access to help. During a meeting with Mashilo Mnisi, the founder of Moshate, he pointed out that the City of Johannesburg had plenty of abuse and destitution cases due to IPV. He further indicated that they received at least 24 abuse cases per month from men complaining about being abused by their wives or female partners. The prominent abuse pattern the men seek help with is women using and manipulating the justice system (police and courts) against them (the men). Some men are refused access to their children. Such experiences result in emotional, physical, financial and legal problems among the men.

There has not been a study in South Africa regarding the prevalence of IPV against men, but the focus on other factors such as the effects, trends and experiences of IPV on men (Barkhuizen 2010; Maubane 2016; Thobejane & Luthada, 2019).

Figure 2.1

Map of Johannesburg

(Source Johannesburg map Accessed: 18 July 2018)

When I was ready to collect data, the NGO had been going through some financial difficulties and had to close down their offices due to a lack of funding temporarily. However, Mr Mnisi continued helping men who were ill-treated outside the offices. Hence, this study was conducted around Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, and the participants were selected among the men that Mr Mnisi helped outside the office. We met the participants in different areas around Johannesburg, where participants were comfortable. Some of the interviewed men were already in Moshate's system, but they were interviewed outside the system and were known to Mr Mnisi. The main reason why I chose to conduct this study in Johannesburg was that it is easily accessible to the participants. People commute through Johannesburg to go to different areas within the Gauteng Province for work daily and because Moshate was based in Johannesburg.

In 2016, Gauteng was rated as the country's wealthiest Province; Johannesburg is found in Gauteng, see Figure 2.1. Johannesburg's estimated population was 4.9 million (StatsSA, 2016). The most common racial group are Black African people, who make up 80.5%. About 7% of the population is illiterate, and 6.3% have primary education. A single person heads 66% of households, and 29% of Johannesburg residents live in informal dwellings (StatsSA, 2016).

Population

According to Polit and Beck (2018), a population comprises people with some common characteristics that the researcher wants to study. This study's population were men residing in Gauteng, who were victims of all IPV types (as evident in the results chapter) being victimised by their intimate female partners, either in dating, married or cohabiting relationships.

Sampling

Sampling Method. Participants were recruited through Moshate, an NGO specialising in men's issues, and other participants approached me, as they met the inclusion criteria they were

included in this study. Those participants who approached me heard me speaking about abused men at church. As this study aimed to explore the lived experiences of men who were abused by their female partners in Gauteng, the participants of the study were South African men aged 25 years and above, whom by their definition, have been abused by their female partners. I chose this age group because they are the ones who contacted or who were prominent at Moshate.

A purposive sampling technique was used in this study. Purposive sampling is a method in which the researcher has created criteria for selecting participants who will provide rich information for the study (Neuman, 2000). The danger with purposive sampling is that the sample might not be a good representation of the population. Qualitative research, however, does not concern itself with generalisation, but it aims to obtain an in-depth description of participants' lived experiences in a specific setting. The advantage of purposive sampling is that it is cost-effective and saves time (Strydom & Delport, 2011).

I had planned to use the following criteria of inclusion to assist me in purposively selecting research participants:

i. Men who went to Moshate for help;
ii. Men who had experienced IPV perpetrated by their female partners for at least six months;
iii. Men who were residents of Gauteng;
iv. They were supposed to be able to express themselves in English and Setswana;
v. They were supposed to be able to express their inner feelings and emotions; and
vi. They were supposed to be from different racial/cultural groups.

Inclusion criteria are defined as rules set before entering the field to collect data that determine who is eligible to form part of the study (Liamputtong, 2010; Polit & Beck, 2018).

Upon entering the field to collect data, the inclusion criteria were slightly adjusted, bearing in mind the study's purpose. Participants who were eventually included in the study were:

i. Men who had contacted Moshate for help and men who contacted me directly to be part of the study who had no affiliation with Moshate;
ii. These men had, by their own definitions, experienced IPV perpetrated by their female partners, regardless of the period of abuse;
iii. They resided in Gauteng;
iv. They were able to express themselves in English, Setswana, Sepedi and IsiZulu;
v. They were able to express their inner feelings and emotions; and
vi. They came from different cultural groups (Pedi, Venda, Zulu, Moroccan and Tswana).

Having employed these inclusion criteria, I managed to recruit 14 participants. Participants who were excluded in the study were:

i. Men who experienced IPV but were in same-gender relationships;
ii. Men who could not express their feelings and emotions; and
iii. Men who did not reside in Gauteng.

Sample Size. In qualitative research, the sample size depends on data saturation. Data saturation is described as a repetition of data or no new information obtained during a qualitative study sparks new insight (Creswell, 2014). However, Polkinghorne (as cited in Creswell, 2007) suggests that a researcher in a phenomenological study should conduct interviews with five to 25 participants. In my study, the sample size was 14 participants, mainly because the central issue for IPA is a detailed narrative of an individual's experience (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). According to Polit and Beck (2018), qualitative research studies using the IPA design usually involve smaller samples, often with 10 participants or fewer sizes, than quantitative

research studies. This is because IPA studies aim to discover "meaning" and uncover multiple realities, not to generalise the findings to a target population (Polit & Beck 2018).

Nevertheless, I was willing to settle with at least five participants if I could not obtain more. When I wrote the proposal for the study, I honestly thought it would be a miracle to get five men to narrate their lived experiences due to the study's sensitive nature. However, as mentioned above, the final sample size was 14 men. The demographic data of participants are discussed in Chapter 4.

Collecting Data

Data collection is the method of collecting information that is needed in the study. There are several methods through which data can be collected in qualitative research. The original plan for this study was that data would be collected using semi-structured interviews recorded using a digital voice recorder and the use of field notes and diaries. Based on the pretest study findings (which will be discussed shortly), I decided that keeping diaries for these men would not work. Therefore, in this study, data were collected using semi-structured interviews, and field notes were kept. Before discussing data collection methods, I will first describe the apparatus used in the study to aid data collection.

Biographical Questionnaire

A biographical questionnaire was utilised in this study to obtain personal data from the participants. This questionnaire did not violate the ethical principle of anonymity as the names of the participants were never asked or any information that would make the participant easily identifiable. This questionnaire aimed to make sure that all participants included in this study met the inclusion criteria, as mentioned under the sampling heading. This ensured that I had

interviewed the participants that I intended to interview. The questionnaire is attached (See Appendix E).

Interview Schedule

An interview schedule is a guide used by researchers when conducting semi-structured interviews. It does not dictate; this means that the interview schedule is flexible. According to Smith et al. (2009), the aim of using an interview schedule is to facilitate an interaction with the participants, which enables them to provide a detailed narrative of their experience. Interview schedules focus the interview within the specific topic for the study. For instance, the interview schedule helped me stay on male victims of abuse perpetrated by their female partners. This was particularly useful in this study because there was a Fieldworker, and it was important for both of us to ask the same questions and cover the same topics. Therefore, this helped with consistency in the study.

According to Greeff (2011), the interview schedule forces the researcher to think explicitly about what they would like to cover during an interview. As I was conducting a very sensitive study, *Experiences of, and support guidelines to male IPV victims perpetrated by their female partners in Gauteng, South Africa*, I had to think carefully about how I phrased the questions. It also allowed me to anticipate any difficulties that I might encounter.

When constructing the interview schedule (See Appendix F), I conducted a preliminary literature review to understand the concepts at hand and what questions to ask to cover the concepts. Questions that were asked were neutral, open and expansive; and the participant was encouraged to talk for a lengthy time, as expected in IPA research (Smith et al., 2009). This was the main interview question that stimulated the conversation with the participants:

Could you please share with me your experience of being in an abusive relationship?

There were follow-up questions that were included for probing purposes. These follow-up questions helped to fill in gaps where there were gaps in the participants' narratives.

Digital Voice Recorder

A digital voice recorder was used to record the interviews with the participants' consent. The recording assisted with analysing the data as I could immerse myself in the interviews. This also helped in the initial stages of interviewing participants because the fieldworker I trained had to go and interview one participant and he brought the recording for me to listen and further guide him.

Methods of Data Collection

Semi-Structured Interviews. A phenomenological interview is an informal, interactive process that uses open-ended comments and questions (Moustakas, 1994). Questions that the researcher might have prepared in advance to evoke a comprehensive account of the abused men's experience may be altered or not used when the research participant starts sharing about his experience. During the interview, semi-structured, open-ended questions were asked based on emerging information to clarify and for participants to elaborate. Each participant was interviewed, and the interview was audio recorded with the permission of the participants. The interviews were conducted separately to avoid participants influencing each other but also it enabled the fieldworker and I to make essential observations aside from the interview responses (Greeff, 2011).

The participants that gave their informed consent to participate in the study were asked to fill in the demographic questionnaire. The interviews were conducted around Johannesburg, where participants were comfortable (their homes, restaurants) to meet with us. The original plan was to interview in English and Setswana languages. However, when I entered the field, I realised that I needed to expand the inclusion criteria, as mentioned above. Therefore, the

interviews were conducted in English, Sepedi, Setswana and IsiZulu. As mentioned above, I had a fieldworker assisting me in data collection, and he was fluent in all the languages listed above.

There is a lot that one can appreciate when it comes to using language, the participants needed to narrate their story in Vernacular to express themselves without having to search for a word in a language that is not their own. This way, they can truly express themselves; older African people use many idioms to communicate, and there is a culturally specific meaning. The interviews lasted at least an hour per participant, but some were two hours long.

Field Notes. Initially, the plan was to take field notes as a backup if the participant did not want to be recorded. However, all the participants gave permission to being recorded. Field notes captured non-verbal information. I documented what I observed during the interview process, interactions with the participants, and context (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey, 2005). I wrote brief notes, keywords, and phrases that helped me remember what the participant said to ask follow-up questions and avoid distracting the participant from his narrative. The fieldworker also kept field notes as I had trained him to.

Pre-testing of data collection techniques

Pretesting of interview questions was conducted on a small scale to test whether the questions were adequate to be conducted on a bigger scale (Strydom, 2011). In a qualitative study, a pre-test of data collection techniques is informal and is conducted with very few participants who possess similar characteristics to those who will take part in the main study. The purpose is to determine if relevant data can be obtained from the participants. Doing this enabled me as a researcher to make modifications with the view to quality interviewing during the main study (Strydom & Delpoort, 2011). To test the credibility of this study, I used two

participants. Various themes of the interview schedule were discussed, and problems identified were resolved before the primary investigations.

The following were addressed after conducting the pre-test of the data collection techniques:

Initially, I had planned to include diaries as a method of data collection. After the pre-testing of of the data collection techniques, I realised that diaries for men who have been abused were not a feasible way of collecting data; when I suggested to some men about keeping a diary and noting their experiences, they laughed; they thought I was joking. The men were very blunt to me and told me that they would not be writing anything in a diary.

Secondly, my concern of men being completely comfortable to speak to me as a female researcher was realised. Instead of expressing his rage towards women for the abuse that he experienced, one of the participants kept thinking or looking for politically correct words. *Bokang* (pseudonym) said the following:

"*The characteristics or the behaviour are likely the same, are more or less the same, in the way they would behave or do things in those respective families. In most cases. They don't want to listen to a father figure or a…a male partner uhh…which I would like to differ with them because in any relationship there has to be some sort of compromise which they are not willing to let go or uhh…let it happens (pause) uhh…can we pause a bit?"*

I interpreted the statement above to mean that he did not want to offend me, the researcher, but also, he tried too hard to be politically correct. This strengthened my case of hiring a fieldworker who works with these men.

I had allocated a minimum of 6 months to complete data collection and analysis. However, this process took me eight months. This time frame included conducting the pretest study.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using Smith's (2014) IPA approach, as this method provided me with a deeper understanding of abused men's experience and how they made sense of the abuse. The aim of choosing IPA was to give evidence of the men making sense of the abuse in their female partners' hands while documenting the researcher's sense-making (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). At the beginning of this study, I conducted a preliminary literature review to identify knowledge gaps and shape the research questions. During the writing up of the abused men's narratives, an extensive literature review was conducted to contextualise the findings, forming part of the orienting framework (Smith et al., 2009). According to Smith, (2007 as cited in Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p.79) analysis is "an iterative and inductive cycle". It is a reflexive process that sparks insight and develops meaning and goes back and forth, enabling the researcher to establish patterns or themes. This is since qualitative research is flexible and additional questions may emerge, leading to refined focus and understanding. Data analysis followed the following strategies:

Organised Raw Data for Analysis

As mentioned above, in this study data were collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews that were audio recorded. Interviews were conducted in different languages (English, Setswana, Sepedi and IsZulu), this meant that transcribing all the interviews verbatim then translate the Setswana, Sepedi and IsZulu interviews into English. After organising the interviews, I transcribed verbatim the English interviews and sent the Setswana, Sepedi and IsZulu interviews to professionals in those languages. This process prepared me for the following steps:

Step 1: Reading and Re-Reading

I started with the interview that I found was most detailed, complex and engaging. I read the transcript and listened to the audio recording several times. As I listened to the audio recording, I imagined the participant's voice when I reread the transcript, doing this helped me with a more complete analysis. The focus here was on the participant. As I read the transcript and listened to the audio recording, I would note down when the participant's tone would change. I noted down any recollections about the interviews that I conducted; noted my initial thoughts about the transcript. I was actively engaged with the data.

Step 2: Initial Noting

I found it hard to separate steps 1 and 2 because I found myself almost immediately making notes as I read through the transcripts. I noted everything interesting in the transcript; noting my scepticism at this point. Reading the transcripts several times helped me to immerse myself in the participant's world.

I sent my promoter a transcript with my initial notes, and she advised me to write my initial notes as comprehensive and detailed as possible. These comprehensive and detailed exploratory notes helped to transform the notes into emergent themes. These notes were descriptive, which is in line with the phenomenological focus of IPA. This means that I stayed very close to the participants explicit meaning. As suggested by Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014), the initial interpretation was on content (what was discussed); the language used by the participants (repetitions, metaphors, euphemism); and their context. Through the process of immersion in the data, I gained insight into the context of each participant.

Step 3: Developing Emergent Themes

At this point, the data set had grown substantially because of the comprehensive exploratory commenting. As suggested by Smith, Flower and Larkin (2012), I worked primarily with the

initial notes closely tied to the original transcript. This process involved recalling what I learnt during the initial noting process. Identifying themes involved breaking up the interview's narrative flow, which is referred to as a hermeneutic circle. This is when the original whole of the interview becomes a set of parts as one conducts their analysis, but then it comes together in a new whole at the end of the write-up analysis (Smith et al., 2009). This collection of themes was analysed and compared to the original transcripts to ensure accuracy.

At this stage, the researcher becomes more central in the organising and interpretation of the transcripts. The analysis includes more of a researcher who is closely involved with the lived experiences of the participant. Heidegger termed this as co-constitutionality. Co-constitutionality means that the meanings the researcher comes to in interpretive research are a merger of meanings voiced by both the participants and the researcher within the study context (Lopez & Willis, 2004). Therefore, the resulting analysis is a product of collaborative efforts between the participants and the researcher.

The focus is to capture what is essential in the text but bearing in mind the whole concept of the hermeneutic circle, where "part" is interpreted concerning the whole; the whole is interpreted with the part. At this point, the themes reflected the participant's original words in extracts; it also included my interpretation. Twenty-eight (28) emergent themes came from the first transcript.

Step 4: Searching for Connections Across Emergent Themes

Themes were organised chronologically. I then developed a map of how I thought the themes fit together; this involved grouping themes that are conceptually similar; searching for connections. I complied themes for the whole transcript before I started looking for connections. The following strategies, as suggested by Smith et al. (2012), for identifying patterns between emergent themes were used:

- **Abstraction:** Involved putting like with like and providing a cluster with a descriptive label, for example, in one of the participant's extracts there was a series to emergent themes around the loss of self-identity: detachment, without a purpose, feelings of worthlessness.
- **Contextualisation:** Identifying contextual elements within the analysis like attending to temporal, cultural, and narrative themes as these frames presented many of the local understandings within an interview. I was able to organise some of the emergent themes in temporal moments, like when the men spoke about their relationships before IPV and recalled the initial abuse.
- **Function:** The function that a specific emergent theme plays in the transcript, for example, the interplay of meanings. For example, one of the participants wanting to put himself on the record as a good guy who does not fight anyone because he was raised well by his grandma, he positions himself as a good guy who is not abusive (perhaps eliciting sympathy and care from me) or elicits praise, as he practices self-control. This facilitated a more in-depth interpretation of the data.
- **Table of emergent themes**: By the end of all the analysis, there were 14 tables of emergent themes since 14 interviews were conducted.

Step 5: Moving to The Next Case

I was mindful of what Gadamer (1960/1989) and Heidegger (1927/1962) termed as afore structure of understanding; it was defined as "an innate capacity that exists in all individuals to intuit the meaning of being" (Holroyd, 2007 p. 3). As I moved to another participant's transcript, I had to start from step one again, for me to do justice to all the transcripts that followed, I had to put aside themes that emerged from the previous analysis, in order not to impose meanings from previous analysis to the current participants. This was important to stay true to IPA idiographic commitment.

Step 6: Looking for Patterns Across Cases

Once I had individually completed steps 1-5 for all 14 transcripts, I then started to look for patterns across all 14 cases. At this stage, the text was more closely examined to obtain a greater depth of meaning and interpretation. Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) suggest that the researcher achieves the etic perspective, (deductive), which presents meaning in social science terms by looking at data through a psychological lens, using psychological theories to interpret. Finally, I produced a summary table of themes, and a detailed, interpretative reflexive written account.

Step 7: Final Step

Lastly, writing up the narrative account, engaged from low-level interpretation of data to a highly detailed, interpretative and theoretical level that generated new insights; and the new insights generated from the interpretation were used to develop support guidelines for abused men.

Method of Data Verification

To ensure that this study represented the actual lived experiences of abused men, I employed the technique of trustworthiness; which refers to the "truth value" of the study, its applicability, consistency and neutrality (Lincoln & Guba, as cited in de Vos, 2005). Smith (2009) recommended Yardley's (as cited in Smith et al., 2009) four principles for assessing the quality of qualitative research, these principles are, Sensitivity to context, Commitment and rigour, Transparency and coherence, and Impact and importance. Furthermore, he described how these principles apply to an IPA study. Lincoln and Guba (as cited in de Vos, 2005) also suggest four constructs that reflect the qualitative paradigm assumptions: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In this study, both Yardley's principles and Lincoln and Guba constructs were adhered to.

Sensitivity to Context

The first principle is sensitivity to context. A researcher may demonstrate this by being sensitive to the study's socio-cultural setting, the existing literature, and the participants' material (Yardley, 2000). IPA is sensitive to context through close engagement with idiographic and the uniqueness of every individual narrative. IPA uses purposive sampling as a recruitment technique of participants who share a particular lived experience (Smith et al., 2009).

In this current study, a literature review on men's IPV experiences was conducted, enough to inform the research questions. In line with IPA, I conducted a preliminary literature review in Chapter 1 to note gaps in research conducted on abused men, shape the research questions and inform the relevant methodology; extensive literature review was conducted as a control measure and discussed in the results and discussion sections. I further demonstrated sensitivity to the data by conducting and describing an in-depth analysis of the abused men's lived experiences and supporting my arguments with verbatim extracts from the men who were abused by their female partners.

Credibility, Commitment and Rigour

The goal of credibility is to demonstrate that the participants' experiences were accurately identified and described for this particular study (de Vos, 2005). The truth value is obtained from discovering human experiences as they are lived and perceived by the participants. Yardley (2000) suggested the second principle as commitment and rigour, which cuts across Lincoln and Guba's constructs.

Commitment to the research requires the researcher to engage with the topic and develop competence and skills to be used. Commitment can be shown through attentiveness to the participants during data collection and care with which the analysis of each case is carried out.

I relied on my training as a counsellor and sought to further develop my skills by conducting more reading on the methodology, attending IPA workshops, and role-playing to enhance my interviewing skills. According to Yardley (2000), rigour refers to (i) the thoroughness of the study, (ii) the appropriateness of the sample, (iii) the quality of the interview, and (iv) the completeness of the analysis.

In this study, credibility was achieved through the following techniques (de Vos, 2011):

Triangulation. Triangulation refers to the idea that multiple sources bring more credibility to an investigation. Triangulation aims to strengthen the study's findings' depth and breadth by using different sources of evidence. Yardley (2000) argues that commitment and rigour can also be demonstrated by employing data collection triangulation. There are four triangulation types: data, investigator, theory and methodological triangulation (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). In this study, I used semi-structured interviews and field notes to collect data; this was in line with data triangulation which refers to using more than one data source. The investigator triangulation refers to the involvement of more than one researcher. To achieve this, I developed the analytic themes, and they were revised by my promoter and reviewed by an external auditor who has a strong qualitative analysis experience, we then had a consensus discussion.

Tactics to ensure honest informants. When I approached every potential participant to participate in the study, they were allowed to refuse to participate. This way, I ensured that only genuinely willing people were included and prepared to offer data freely. I made it clear to the participants that they were free to withdraw from the research at any time, no questions asked (Shenton, 2004). The study wanted to develop support guidelines for men who are abused by their female partners. Therefore, only genuine people willing to give a detailed account of their experience were helpful.

Transferability and Coherence

Transferability refers to the extent to which findings can be transferred to other settings (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), transferability can be achieved using a thick description. Thick description is defined as the "researcher's attempt to capture all the details of a social setting in a highly detailed description to capture and convey an intimate feel for the setting and the inner lives of people in it" (Neuman, 2000, p. 521). The thick description also requires a thorough description of the methodology used and its techniques, which is fully described in this study. Thick description is in line with Yardley's third principle of transparency and coherence. Transparency means that the research process stages are clearly described in the write up of the research study (Yardley, 2000). To ensure transparency and transferability, I described how participants were selected, how the interview schedule was constructed, the interview conducted, and the analysis steps. I have also provided a detailed description of the experiences of men abused by their female partners, their perception of the abuse and how these men make sense of it. Furthermore, a thick description is essential in IPA because of the narrative account that is written at the end of the study. Thick description is vital for giving clarity and depth analysis to fulfil the need for rigour by leaving a decision trail, for example, keeping field notes. These track decisions made during the whole research process, including the rules followed when transforming data into categories (Pringle et al., 2011).

I also engaged in “reflexivity” to improve the study’s rigour and to reduce bias. Bracketing involves the suspension of critical judgment which would bring in the researcher’s assumptions and experience. This is not consistent with interpretative phenomenology. In IPA, pre-understandings are not bracketed; they become part of the research findings. The researchers’ presuppositions are valuable guides and make the research undertaking more meaningful. I remained open to the participants’ realities and engaged in self-reflexivity throughout the study

(Biggerstaff & Thompson 2008). I always kept a personal journal to record details of the nature and origin of any emergent interpretations throughout the study.

Coherence, dependability and confirmability and impact of the study are strategies for ensuring transferability and coherence. The application of these strategies in this study is discussed below.

Coherence refers to the fit between the research which was conducted and the underlying theoretical assumptions of IPA. The coherence of this study will also be judged by the reader of the finished write up (Smith et al., 2009). Therefore, the reader should be aware that they (the reader) are attempting to make sense of the researcher trying to make sense of the participants' experiences.

Dependability. Dependability refers to data stability over time and conditions (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Should this study be replicated by other authors on similar participants or in a similar context, the findings will be relatively similar. During the whole process of data collection, I constantly checked with my promoter that I am still in line with interpretative phenomenology's philosophical and methodological approach. This was achieved through peer debriefing.

Confirmability and Impact of The Study. Confirmability refers to objectivity or neutrality of the research data. In other words, findings are based on the research's focus and not on the researcher's bias (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). To achieve this, an adequate trail was left to enable the auditor to determine if the conclusions, interpretations and recommendations can be traced (Pringle et al., 2011).

Yardley's final principle is the impact and importance of the study. Yardley (2000) suggested that good qualitative research can be assessed on its impact on or significance for theory, practitioners and the community on which the research has been conducted. To this

end, I have discussed the anticipated value of this study to the policymakers and helping systems in Gauteng.

Self-Reflexivity

My opinion, as part of the world is also given, so my presuppositions brought to the research process are made known throughout this study. This was achieved as I engaged in a critical assessment of myself as a researcher. I include this brief section from my journal to create transparency in the research process:

As a trauma counsellor who is a female Tshivenda-speaking woman, my subjective role placed me in difficult situations during this study. There are certain things that a woman cannot discuss with a man that is not her husband. Specific cultural issues had to be worked through to conduct some of the interviews and analyse all the transcripts. I sourced my promoter's help in working through the cultural hindrances as she had similar encounters when she was conducting her studies.

When we started collecting data, our country's political landscape was unsettled with mostly gender-based violence issues, with women being killed, raped, and all sorts of abuse were being discussed openly, in the media and social networks. I clearly remember the case of Karabo Mokoena, who was murdered by her abusive boyfriend; she was burnt in April 2017. This case was discussed in-depth on social media, television and radio stations. Many cases were being reported of women killed by their abusive spouses, I became disheartened and asked myself why I should continue with this study on abused men. If I continued with this study about abused men, I would be betraying women like myself. I found that this affected me, concerning my initial noting of the analysis. Remember, I too am a woman and became sceptical. I remember reading one of the transcripts and thinking that this participant is not honest; maybe he cannot handle a strong woman. The debriefing sessions with my promoter assisted me to

get out of this mindset. Secondly, I heard an older man in one of our local radio stations who said that “It is terrible that women are being abused, but I am also being abused, and I cannot talk to anyone because no one is ready to listen. Instead, I am being ridiculed”. My perspective changed again when a close male friend of mine disclosed the abuse he had been experiencing. I had to change my way of thinking and remind myself why I was interested in this research area. An intervention needs to be developed to curb gender-based violence completely. How does one create an intervention to curb gender-based violence while ignoring the other gender?

Ethical Considerations

Ethics is a set of moral principles widely accepted and offers rules and behavioural expectations about participants' most correct conduct. This means that researchers are expected to behave in a way that will not harm their participants (Strydom, 2011). Research ethics aim to encourage accountability on the part of the researcher and to regulate research techniques to avoid unethical behaviours, making sure that risks faced by participants in research are minimal. In this study, I have observed the following ethical principles:

Permission to Conduct Research

Before conducting a study, researchers need to obtain approval to conduct the study from their institution (in the form of obtaining ethical clearance) and then from an individual in authority to gain access to sites and study participants (Bryman et al., 2011; Creswell, 2014). I obtained ethical clearance from the University of South Africa (UNISA) to conduct this study (See appendix A); I then obtained permission from the Founder of Moshate organisation to collect data, as he is the gatekeeper to the abused men (See appendix D). The founder is the gatekeeper because he is respected, and he works with abused men. In both cases, the nature, purpose and intent of the research, including the aims, objectives, methodology, risks and benefits were included.

Informed Consent

According to Strydom (2011), research participants' voluntary participation in a research study should be based on the information about the goal of the investigation, expected duration of their participation, the procedure that will be followed, and possible advantages and disadvantages to which the participants may be exposed to. Participants were told that participation is voluntary and that they could withdraw from the research at any given time (see appendix C). Before conducting interviews, I discussed the study's nature, the aims of the research, advantages and disadvantages of taking part in the study and limitations to confidentiality with the participants. After discussing these issues, the participants were allowed to choose whether they wanted to continue with the research study or not, and those that agreed, a written consent form was signed. Given the nature of the study, process consent was sought continuously from the participants. Process consent is an ongoing consensual process that involves the researcher and participants in mutual decision making and ensures that the participant is well informed at all times (Usher & Arthur, 1998). Process consent enables both the participants and researcher to renegotiate consent if unanticipated events occur (Remshardt & Flowers, 2007). I ensured this by negotiating consent throughout the interview process; I reminded the participants that they were free to withdraw from the study whenever they felt they no longer wished to be part of it. No participant in this study withdrew and any stage.

Privacy, Anonymity and Confidentiality

Privacy can be maintained through anonymity and confidentiality procedures (Polit & Beck, 2018). The anonymity principle is achieved when the researcher cannot identify any given response with a specific research participant after the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2001), meaning that the participants' identity is not recorded. Hence for this study, pseudo names were used to

refer to participants in the transcripts and writing up the thesis. I was not able to pair up a participant with the voice recording. The only other person who had access to the audio recordings of data was my promoter. Pseudo names help to prevent outsiders (readers of this thesis) from identifying or linking participants to this study's results. Participants were recruited through Moshate by sending out notices and those who were interested made contact with Mr Mashilo. An announcement was made at a church event, and the potential participants made contact with me. The principle of confidentiality was ensured by putting consent forms separate from the participants' recordings. Over time the transcripts and recordings that are safely stored will be deleted. I ensured that the participants' information would not be divulged to other people without their consent. Furthermore, everyone involved in data collection, transcribing and translating were trained on ethics and signed confidentiality forms.

Data management

A data management strategy is a document that outlines how a researcher will handle their data throughout a study and what will happen to it once the project is completed (Michener, 2015). Researchers are obligated to ensure the protection of their data at all times. Data management ensures data safekeeping during the research process. This reduces the risk of data being lost, increases accuracy, and verifiability enables the researcher to re-analyse the data later (Corti, 2008). Ethical consideration dictates that data must be kept safe and destroyed at a certain point.

Recordings, transcripts and field notes have been saved on my personal computer and an external hard drive, and they are password-protected. At the end of the project, the documents on the external drive and laptop will be deleted. Hard copies such as field notes and signed consent forms are stored safely in a file in my house, where I am the only one who has access. These hardcopies will be burnt as a way of disposing of them.

Benefits and Freedom from Harm

IPV against men is a susceptible subject; this puts men in a position of being vulnerable. Due to gender socialisation, these men can be seen as weak. According to Grinnell and Unrau (2008 as cited in Strydom, 2011), beneficence is an obligation for researchers to maximise possible benefits and minimise possible harm. Participants were informed that the research should not cause any harm to them. However, due to the nature of this study, emotional distress could occur. Therefore, counselling was provided to participants who needed it. Three of the fourteen participants requested counselling, of which it was offered to them. A social worker who volunteered at Moshate offered counsel to the participants. Most of the participants indicated that talking about their abuse helped them a lot; it was their first time relaying their story. They were reminded that participation is voluntary and could stop at any given time (Strydom, 2011).

Debriefing of Participants

After data collection, the participants were invited to an individual debriefing session, where they had an opportunity to ask questions about the study and clarify any misconceptions and reflect on their experiences (Strydom, 2011). I, the researcher, planned to conduct this session. The participants indicated that they did not need this session.

Competence of The Researcher

The researcher must ensure that they are competent, honest and adequately skilled to undertake the proposed investigation (Strydom, 2011). I am a trauma counsellor with a Master's degree in research and received training in conducting interviews. I spent some time at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) being mentored by seasoned researchers on qualitative research methods and attended IPA workshops. Furthermore, I had attended training on conducting interviews for qualitative research by the time I collected data. The

knowledge and skills acquired enabled me to conduct this study and embrace a qualitative research approach. I became very familiar with the method and the flexible nature of this method and learnt how to be an active listener when conducting interviews and train a fieldworker, which ensured detailed narratives of abused men.

Dissemination of the Research Findings

The research findings will be presented at national and international conferences and published in peer-reviewed journals to ensure easy accessibility by audiences like researchers and practitioners who handle IPV cases in South Africa. Manuscripts of the findings will also be given to Moshate (the owner of the organisation still helps men and boys on his own, since the organisation had to close its offices due to lack of funds) and churches to ensure that the participants in this study and other male victims of IPV will have access. An online copy of the thesis will be available on the UNISA library.

Practicalities of Conducting This Study

I have experience in conducting research; however, before embarking in data collection, I went for IPA training and read extensively on this design's philosophical underpinnings. This was for my own equipping and better training my fieldworker, who also had experience in data collection.

Before I collected data, I used to go to Moshate to get familiar with the environment. I was confident that I would not have many issues when the time came to collect data. By the time I was ready to collect data, Moshate had closed due to lack of funding. This posed a challenge as I asked myself the following questions:

i. Where does one start?
ii. Where can I interview these men?

iii. How am I going to find these men?

Mr Mnisi had the men's contacts, so he started making calls and we had more than 30 men interested in the study. However, only 14 honoured our appointments, which is still a lot considering IPA prefers small samples.

Interviews were conducted wherever the participants were comfortable; some of the participants invited us to their homes; others met us at a restaurant in their area. Being respectful to the sensitive nature of this study, I had to hire Mr Mnisi, to assist me with interviews because some men were more comfortable talking to another man about their experience of abuse; other men spoke to me as a black, Muvenda woman who was pregnant at the time of the interviews. The other important issue in this study and even for the chosen design is the language used. It was important for the participants to narrate their stories in their mother tongue. From my experience as a trauma counsellor, I know that the way Africans tell stories is different when one is using one's home language to narrating in English. IPA expects in-depth narration; I could not expect these men to give me that which they did not fully comprehend. These men used African idioms to express their feelings, and attitudes, for example *Lekau said**, "**keya go rwesiwa molato ke sao tsebeng"* (loosely translated to being accused of something that I do not know); another expression, "*yes it happened, but with the second child as I just said that I gathered with men to discuss the pregnancy issue, and I just became a man, and she remained a woman*". If it were not for a male peer reviewer of these transcripts, as a woman, I would not have realised that he was actually portraying himself as a passive recipient. There is a saying in Tshivenda that *"Nwana u divhiwa nga mmeawe,"* which means only the mother knows whose child they are carrying.

Both the fieldworker and I, kept extensive field notes; this made it so difficult when I was writing up this chapter, as I asked myself, whose process do I tell? I had this debate with myself

for a while until I realised that I could only talk to what I experienced, the only time I will include Mr Mnisi's reflection is if there was something that stood out. This was the most interesting study I have ever conducted; the men were also so appreciative that finally, someone wants to hear their stories and that they were given a voice.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I demonstrated how interpretative phenomenological analysis, as a research design which guided this study, was implemented. This method enabled a deeper understanding of the participants' lived experiences; and how they make sense of these experiences, particularly how abused men view or understand their being in the world of abuse. The motivation for choosing a qualitative research method was discussed by first illuminating qualitative research characteristics in conjunction with this study's aims. The detailed account on how the research methods were applied in this study was shown as the discussion moved to the practicality of the study, procedures taken, which included: sampling, data collection, data analysis, measures of trustworthiness undertaken to ensure good quality research and the ethical considerations. The research findings are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

Introduction

The preceding chapter addressed the research design and methodology. This chapter gives an account of the research findings. The research findings were derived from the analysis of the interview transcripts of men who were abused by their intimate female partners. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, the data collection process followed a qualitative approach, using IPA as a research design and was conducted through in-depth interviews to explore the lived experiences of abused men, as perpetrated by their female partners. I will commence by presenting the demographic data of the participants. This will be followed by a tabulated account of the themes and sub-themes that emerged from data analysis. Verbatim excerpts of participants, indicated in italics, were used in this chapter to support or substantiate the interpretation of themes.

Pseudonyms are used throughout the study to protect the identities of the participants.

Demographic Data of Participants

A total of 14 men participated in the study who experienced any type of abuse at the hands of their female partner in Gauteng. Table 4.1 below shows the demographic data of the participants. The purpose of providing demographic data is for the readers to have a mental picture of the information sources and help them understand the presented results. Furthermore, it enhances the transferability of the study findings. This can occur when a detailed description of the participants is employed, and whoever is interested in conducting a similar study can do so with the context in mind.

Table 4.1

Demographic Data of Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Ethnicity	Educational level	Occupation of participant	Occupation of partner	Area of residence	Number of children	Marital status	Nature of abuse	Length of abusive relationship
Bokang	53	Pedi	Higher certificate	Human Resource officer	Quality Assurance	Germiston	4	Married	Verbal abuse Physical abuse Psychological abuse Economic abuse Controlling behaviour	Still in the relationship; 10 years
Charles	25	Arabic	Diploma	Student	Not disclosed	Malboro	0	Married	Emotional abuse Verbal abuse Sexual abuse Psychological abuse Controlling behaviour	Separated; 3 years
Vhutshilo	35	Venda	Higher certificate	Not disclosed	Not disclosed	Alexandra	1	Cohabiting	Psychological abuse Controlling behaviour	Left the relationship; 3 years

Matsobane	41	Pedi	Higher certificate	Journalist	Not disclosed	Johannesburg	1	Cohabiting	Physical abuse Controlling behaviour	Left the relationship; 4 years
Lekau	50	Tswana	Grade 12	Not disclosed	Not disclosed	Alexandra	4	Married	Denial of conjugal rights Psychological abuse Controlling behaviour Economic abuse	Left the relationship; 18 years ago,
Duma	32	Zulu	Diploma	Metalworker	Not disclosed	Roodepoort	0	Cohabiting	Physical abuse Psychological abuse	Left the relationship; 2 years
Daniel	38	Zulu	Postgraduate in Information Technology	IT Specialist	Policewoman	Johannesburg South	0	Cohabiting	Physical abuse Psychological abuse	Left the relationship; 7 months
Thabo	39	Tswana	Grade 12	Self-employed Occupation not disclosed	Not employed	Soweto	3	Married	Psychological abuse Controlling behaviour	Separated; 4 years
Lesetja	31	Pedi	Grade 12	Artist	Not disclosed	Alexandra	1	Dating	Controlling behaviour Psychological abuse	Left 2 years prior to the interview; 4 years
Maropeng	33	Pedi	Diploma	IT specialist	Not disclosed	Cosmo city	2	Married	Denial of conjugal rights Psychological abuse	Still in the relationship

Ngwako	30	Sotho	Grade 12	Construction piece jobs	Piece jobs	Pretoria West	2	Married	Economic abuse Physical abuse Psychological abuse Controlling behaviour	Still in the relationship
Mpho	36	Tswana	Grade 12	Technician	Not employed	Alexandra	3	Cohabiting	Physical abuse Psychological abuse	Left the relationship; 9 years
Mojalefa	36	Pedi	Diploma	Sales manager	Not employed	Johannesburg	2	Cohabiting	Physical abuse Psychological abuse	Still in the relationship
Percy	33	Tswana	Grade 12	self-employed (occupation not disclosed)	Temporarily employment	Johannesburg	2	Cohabiting	Physical abuse Psychological abuse Controlling behaviour	Left the relationship; 5 years

In this study, as implied in the study title: **Experiences of, and support guidelines for male victims of IPV perpetrated by their female partners in Gauteng, South Africa**; the participants were all men who were abused by their female partners. The ages of the participants ranged from 23 to 53 years. Six out of 14 participants were married to their abusive partners; six were in cohabiting relationships, while two were dating their abusive partners. In terms of education level, the majority (6) of the participants had grade 12; three had a higher certificate; four had a diploma, and 1 had a post-graduate degree. Eleven participants had children, and the children ranged from one to four; three participants had no children. Some participants divorced or separated from their abusive partners. All of the participants had ways of earning an income; four were professionals; two were self-employed but did not disclose the type of business; two were students, and the rest were general employment like metalwork and construction.

It is worth noting that many South African NGOs were established as a response to African and Coloured people being deprived of resources (Heinrich, 2001 as cited in Kumaran et al., 2012), hence the educational profile of the participants. In general, people who seek help from NGOs have lower levels of education, translating to not having the financial means to seek help from the private sector. The education profiles of participants and their inferences will be explored at the post-doctoral level when conducting a more extensive and nationwide study.

Participants' Life Stories

Bokang. At the time of the interview, Bokang was a 53-year-old human resource officer. He lived with his second wife and their two children. Before this marriage, Bokang was married to another woman with whom he had two children. He divorced his first wife because he suffered from various abuse types: physical abuse, psychological abuse, and controlling behaviour. Bokang left one abusive relationship just to enter into another abusive relationship.

According to Bokang, his second wife is also abusive, and the nature of abuse he has experienced includes physical abuse, verbal assaults, and psychological abuse. He reports abuse but deems the wife supportive of him and his children from the previous marriage and lights up on the face when speaking about her. When he talked about his ex-wife and his current wife throughout the interview, he repeatedly indicated that he had no opinion about family matters; whatever they say goes. During the interview, his wife kept on calling, and he had to answer the call because he said if he did not answer, it would become a problem.

Charles. Charles was a 25-year-old Arabic man and a student at the time of the interview. He was living with his wife's employer because his wife forced him out of the house. Charles is originally from Morocco and met his wife while working as a tour guide. When he met her, he was 21 years old, and she was 41 years old. He described how he met his wife and how he came to South Africa.

"*So I helped them for the first day and the second day for them to say thank you to me they invite me to go for lunch and I accepted, and we went for lunch, and the last day there at the hotel she came to my room, I was 21 years old, and she was 41 years old. She came to my room, and you know happy was happening, and we had contact with each other after she went back to South Africa and but her friend, she stayed there for her reason".*

Charles explained how the relationship evolved very quickly. Before he knew it, he was in South Africa longer than the agreed-upon time and agreed to a marriage proposal within weeks of arrival. At the time of the interview, he had been in South Africa for three years and had not contacted his family back in Morocco. He experienced physical, psychological, sexual abuse and controlling behaviour.

Mojalefa. At the interview time, Mojalefa was a 36-year-old sales manager who was in a cohabiting relationship with his partner. They have two children together. He experienced

physical and psychological abuse. During the interview, he indicated that the thought of retaliating against his partner had occurred to him. Still, he also thought that if he did retaliate, he would hurt his children's mother.

Mpho. Mpho was a 36-year-old technician who was in a cohabiting relationship with his partner at the interview time. They have three children together. He described how they met and how he approached her to propose a relationship:

"*I just remember that when I met with her was in August. It was my birth month when I met with her. When I used to pass by her before we met, she would greet me when I was back from work, holding a daily sun newspaper, then I would read it and give it to her to read. As time went by I told myself that I am a man, this lady would take me for granted thinking that I am afraid of women, but the truth is that I was still new in the area".* From his explanation of how he met his partner, I gathered that he proposed a relationship to her out of fear that she might think he is afraid of women. It is interesting how he had to remind himself that he was a man before approaching her. His partner had sent her brothers to beat him up, so he has experienced physical and psychological abuse and controlling behaviour. Due to IPV, the children seem to be the ones who are suffering as they are in the middle of the fight. At the time of the interview, he lived with his mother and the children.

***Vhutshilo*.** Vhutshilo was a 35-year-old man who did not disclose his occupation. He indicated that he was previously in an abusive relationship. This is what he said about it: *"I was abused once, but that one is over now I don't have time for it*". He separated from his child's mother after he suffered psychological abuse; the abuse continued after the separation as she then denied him access to their child.

Furthermore, she moved the child to a location that he did not know. When he makes arrangements with her to see their child, she would agree on the last-minute cancel. He has

been to court to get the courts to force his ex-partner to honour his visitation rights, but his ex-partner is not complying with the courts.

Daniel. Daniel was a 38-year-old information technology specialist who was in a cohabiting relationship with a policewoman. They were no longer together at the interview time, but she refused to give him some of his belongings, like his clothes. He lived with his mother and sister. During their relationship, he experienced physical and psychological abuse. He admitted retaliating at some point. This suggested that physical violence could be thought of bi-directional. He was hospitalised because she stabbed him, and upon discharge from the hospital, he tried to open a case against her, and he was the one arrested. He felt that she abused her power as she was a policewoman and got him arrested.

Maropeng. At the interview time, Maropeng was a 33-year-old Information Technology specialist, married with two children. His wife, with whom he stays, filed for a protection order. He suggested that she obtained the protection order by falsely accusing him of physically abusing her. The protection order against him states that he cannot enter their bedroom but can share the rest of the house with her. At the time of the interview, he shared a bedroom with his children; the children are caught in the middle as they ask him why he does not sleep in his own room with their mother. He believes that she obtained a protection order against him so she can bring men home.

Lesetja. Lesetja was 31 years old, an artist who was socially abused by his partner. He indicated that things were good between them, but he later admitted that he had multiple relationships while with this woman. When he found out that she was pregnant, he indicated that he tried to make things right. He had a relationship with the baby until she was one year and a few months old. All of a sudden, she started denying him access to their child. He says this does not give him peace and he feels that she is abusing his feelings. He describes his thoughts as follows:

"*Obviously I feel like strangling her but I can't because she might go to the police and get me arrested. When I go to court, they will tell me that the child should only visit and I don't want that I want her to stay with me*."

The fear of being arrested and not having full custody of his child prevents him from admonishing her.

Thabo. At the interview time, Thabo was a 39-years-old man. When asked about his employment, he indicated that he was self-employed. However, he did not specify the type of business he was in. He was separated from his wife with whom he has two children and his ex-wife came into the marriage with a child, whom he regards as his own. He experienced psychological abuse and controlling behaviour. He indicated that towards the end, they were just two people raising children together. He left his wife, as the relationship was no longer healthy for either one of them. He is scared of divorcing her as he does not want to lose everything, including his children. Thabo was very bitter during the interview because he felt used, as he believes that she only married him to get citizenship as she was from Lesotho.

Duma. At the time of the interview, Duma was 32 years old and employed as a metal worker. He lived with his mother. During his 2-year cohabiting relationship, Duma experienced physical and psychological abuse. He was abused physically to a point where he went to the police station to open a case against his partner, and the police rejected his case. He was disappointed that the police did not take him seriously.

Lekau. At the time of the interview, Lekau was 50 years old and lived by himself. He was divorced from his abusive partner. He explained that he experienced psychological abuse during his marriage, denial of conjugal rights, economic abuse and controlling behaviour. He indicated that he married his ex-wife for the same reason he divorced her; she told him that he

impregnated her to discover later that she knew that he was not the child's father. However, he has another child with her.

***Ngwako*.** Ngwako was 30 years old and had piece jobs in construction. He lived with his wife and two children. He explained that he has experienced financial, physical, psychological abuse and controlling behaviour. In all his experiences, his wife seemingly called his mother a witch. She has managed to isolate him from his family and friends. He feels stuck as he cannot divorce her because of financial implications which will cause problems with his parents. He indicated that the abuse he has experienced had changed him to the point of not knowing himself anymore.

***Percy*.** Percy was 33 years old and self-employed. He has two children with his ex-partner, with whom he was in a cohabiting relationship. At the time of the interview, Percy and his partner had separated. He experienced different types of IPV like physical, psychological abuse and controlling behaviour. His ex-partner used different weapons to inflict injuries on him; he has sustained severe physical injuries, which led to him being hospitalised. After they separated, he also lost his children, as she does not allow him to see them. At the time of the interview, he expressed that he uses alcohol to sedate himself.

***Matsobane*.** At the time of the interview, Matsobane was a 41-year-old Journalist. He was separated from his ex-partner, with whom he was cohabiting. They had one child together. He indicated that the abuse started when their baby was born; after a while, they separated. She then started denying him access to his child. He took the matter to the magistrate, but they indicated that they needed both parents to appear in court. However, the ex-partner refused to go to court, causing the magistrate court to dismiss the case. He felt that the courts have disappointed him and what makes matters even worse is that he and the mother of his child are next door neighbours and can hear and see the baby but cannot touch, play, or parent the child.

Presentation of Findings

This section provides an overview of the main themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data analysis of the men's lived experiences regarding IPV perpetrated by their female partners in Gauteng. A consensus discussion between the independent coder and myself, facilitated by my promoter, resulted in seven themes and 33 sub-themes. Table 4.2 below is a summary of the main themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data.

Table 4.2

Main Themes and Sub-Themes Emerging from The Transcripts

Main themes	Sub-themes
1. Nature of IPV experienced	• Denial of conjugal rights • False accusations • Physical abuse • Sexual abuse • Psychological abuse • Controlling behaviour • Economic abuse
2. Perceived causes of IPV	• Cultural factors • Psycho-social factors • Socio-economic factors • Exploitation
3. Effects of IPV	• Psychological effects • Separation from partner • Fear of disintegration of families • Inability to be intimate with an abusive partner • Suicide attempt • Socio-economic effects • Incarceration
4. Coping strategies against the abuse	• Help-seeking behaviour • Maladaptive coping strategies
5. Trauma bonding	• Belief system • Child maintenance • Fear of losing their children • Avoiding economic loss
6. Experiences with psycho-social support	• Difficulty related to accessing financial support • Experiences with the health system • Secondary victimisation • Apartheid law
7. Empowerment needs as expressed by participants	• Appropriate socialisation • Professional counselling • Fair implementation of the law • Psycho-social support • Legal support

Theme One: Nature of IPV Experienced

This theme relates to how the participants understood their lived experience of being in an abusive relationship. The theme reflects on the participants identifying themselves as having been abused. In this study, participants' answer to a question concerning their understanding and lived experience of abuse yielded the following sub-themes: being denied conjugal rights, false accusations, physical, sexual, psychological abuse, controlling behaviour and economic abuse.

Sub-Theme: Being Denied Their Conjugal Rights

Some of the participants experienced IPV as being denied their conjugal rights. As defined by the participants being denied conjugal rights means their partners deny them the opportunity to engage in sexual intercourse regularly, as evidenced below:

Lekau: "*Yes, it is just like vice versa when it comes to women, like when you are a man, and you are with your partner then she comes up with excuses, like when she refuses to sleep with you or giving you restrictions*".

Maropeng spoke of being denied his conjugal rights, as his wife took out a protection order against him, falsely accusing him of abuse, which does not allow him to have access to the main bedroom, yet they share the rest of the house.

Maropeng: "*the problem that I have my brother is that my wife filed for a protection order against me because she claims that I hit her at home. Yes, they have approved it, and its final, and that protection order states that 'I should not sleep in my wife's bedroom, I should sleep in the children's bedroom'. Yes, I sleep at my children's bedroom with my children. I wasn't hitting her. We stay like brother and sister".*

The above extracts indicate that physical intimacy is critical to men, or else they would not have classified its withdrawal by their partners as a form of abuse. Lekau defined denial of

conjugal rights as when his wife comes up with excuses like refusing to sleep with him or being given restrictions. While Maropeng experienced it as being blocked from the area where sex is most likely to occur; he has been prevented by law to enter his marital bedroom, and he is instructed to sleep in the children's room. Sleeping in the children's bedroom means less chance of being sexually intimate. He later stated that they are like brother and sister, which indicates no intimacy between him and his wife.

Sub-Theme: False Accusations

This sub-theme explored how a participant was falsely accused by his partner, which led to negative consequences for this man. Maropeng was falsely accused of abuse by his wife, which resulted in a protection order against him. ***Maropeng*** said the following:

"She claims that I hit her at home. Yes, I sleep at my children's bedroom with my children. I wasn't hitting her. I never lift a hand on her. They believed her because she is having her own agendas on the side with someone else".

Maropeng believed that his wife falsely accused him of being physically abusive towards her to continue a relationship with another man. He implied that his wife was having an extramarital affair. As mentioned above, he repeatedly argued that he never laid his hands on her. This was peculiar as it was hard to wrap my head around the protection order as it only prohibits him from entering their bedroom, but he has access to the rest of the house, that he shared with his wife and children.

Sub-Theme: Physical Abuse

Participants reported experiencing various forms of physical abuse. This ranged from being grabbed by their clothes; slapping; to severe violence like using different objects to cause injuries.

Percy was thrown with a hard glass that hit his neck, causing serious injuries that landed him in hospital. He had the following to say:

"*Briefly I would say, eh I was abused like physically so because of the accident and incidence that happened to me. Eh especially, I mean when I was being thrown at with a glass, you know a glass of……. (Interrupted) A hard glass that time you know, she was very violent. In fact, I think she believes in violence. If there is a problem, she would resolve to violence, and actually at some point she would actually throw some like I mentioned before. She actually ehh, you know a glass...* ***Researcher****: a glass of whiskey as you said?* ***Participant:*** *Yeah, a glass, I mean and then hit my neck, I was scratched like that, you know. It was horrible, and I landed in hospital*."

Daniel was stabbed with a knife resulting in serious injuries that landed him in hospital and had the following to say:

"*Yes, I was once stabbed, yes, with knife straight. Stabbed. I was once spent week…. at hospital for blood to be drained from my lungs*".

Mojalefa indicated that he experienced physical abuse frequently and had the following to say:

"*Ummmh I can say the abuse that is toward me is physical abuse. The physical one. Almost every. Last weekend I got smashed with a glass of water which I survived cuts from my back, as you can see this is an injury here. I might be beaten time and time again*".

Most of the participants had objects thrown at them, and they sustained serious injuries, to the point of being hospitalised. The outcomes of Percy and Daniel's injuries were the same, they were severe enough for them to be admitted in the hospital but resulting from different experiences, which are Percy was thrown a hard glass while a knife stabbed Daniel. While Mojalefa and Percy's experience was similar, glass was used to inflict injuries, the outcome

for Mojalefa was not as severe as Percy's. However, Mojalefa still has the scars resulting from that incident. For Mojalefa and Percy, physical abuse was not a once-off occurrence. As mentioned above, it was a frequent experience.

Sub-Theme: Sexual Abuse

One participant indicated that he had experienced sexual abuse, he had no say, whether he wanted to have sex or not and his wife would do what she wants, and he felt that he had no choice. ***Charles*** narrated his experience as follows:

"If she wants to sleep with me she would come to me and she would do what she wants in the bed but me I have no choice I need to do what she asks me to do I need to do what exactly she wants me to do".

When Charles talked about his sexual assault experience, he would retreat, he would close off his body (he crossed his arms across his chest and looked down) because of feeling ashamed. Charles felt like he had no choice but to comply with what was demanded of him. Otherwise, he would find himself without a home to go to. As he has previously experienced this, as evidenced below:

Charles: *"So if I refuse to do something, she will chase me out of the room or chase me out of the house and after bring me back."*

Sub-Theme: Psychological Abuse

The results revealed different forms of psychological abuse as experienced by these men. Most men reported experiencing the following types of psychological abuse: (i) bullying behaviour, (ii) verbal abuse, (iii) perpetrators blaming the victim for the abuse, (iv) public humiliation, (v) emotional abuse, (vi) infidelity and (vii) home forceful removal.

i. **Bullying behaviour**: The following extracts show some of the participants' experiences of IPV in the form of bullying behaviour. **Bokang** had the following to say: "Uhh… (clearing throat) sorry for that. My experience is that uhh…most of the abusers…are very much petty. They would always want to justify their actions or behaviour. Most of them are bullies even if it means bullying uhh… a male partner. It does happen. I personally experienced that. It is because even now in the current one. I still experience the same kind of behaviour and bullying uhh…which is very much selfish on the other part of the perpetrator. (pause) uhh…what I've noticed is that the perpetrator would in most cases, apply for sympathy whenever there is a problem and it needs to be sorted out and uhh…when I meant…when I mentioned bullishness. I mean that with perpetrators whatever they say".

Bokang first described the characteristics of an abuser as petty, selfish, seek others' sympathy and must have the final word. He describes bullying behaviour as a form of IPV, but he also suggested that people who bully get away with bullying because they (abusers) always justify their behaviour, by being manipulative. From the extract above, Bokang feels like he has no opinion and whatever his wife says is the gospel. In the quotation above, Bokang implied that "most of them are bullies" meaning that most abusers are bullies and bullies are not even afraid to bully a man.

ii. **Verbal abuse**: Some participants experienced verbal abuse, like being called by terrible names like "big dog" and being called by their private parts as evidenced below:

Bokang: "*Ok. With this one, verbally the most. Verbally. She…she is very strong. Ok. Verbally. She would even call my private parts. She would call me any name that she wants*".

***Charles**:* "*sometimes she calls me a big dog. Sometimes she calls me some words I cannot say to you. I would never say one word she was calling me. Every week she would call me very terrible words*".

Bokang indicated that his current wife was verbally strong. Verbally strong in this context means that she is not afraid to use derogatory words, for instance, she would call his private parts, she would call him whatever name she wanted, while Charles indicated that he was called a big dog, some names he could not repeat, he was called terrible names weekly.

iii. **Perpetrators blaming the victim for the abuse**: Some of the participants were blamed for them being abused. As **Thabo** narrates his experience below:

"*That is what I don't understand…this was not the first time. It was also not the last time, because she blames. She says she does that because I push her to do it…*"

Thabo's extract above is referring to his wife, justifying her behaviour. He also referred to the abuse as continuous. At the time of the interview, he mentioned that the abuse will continue.

iv. **Public humiliation**: Some participants reported being humiliated in public by their female partners, as evidenced below:

***Bokang**:* "*Whether it is your brother or it's whoever related to you or is your friend. She will embarrass you in front of those people*".

Ngwako, "*even on the streets she could push me to fall down. Imagine, it's not good".*

These men have indicated that IPV does not only occur in the privacy of their own homes, but they are even abused in public. They both indicated that their women

embarrass them even in front of people. **Ngwako** was physically abused by being pushed in the street, leading to him being humiliated.

v. **Emotional abuse**: Some of the participants experienced emotional abuse. **Matsobane** has been denied access to his child; the issue here is that he lives next door to his child. He can hear the child crying. He can see his child growing from afar, as he passes his ex-girlfriend's house. He will stop, hoping to see his child. He consoles himself that he sees his child while he passes by his ex-girlfriend's house. This is emotional abuse as he can see his child from his house and hear him crying, but he cannot touch or console his child. This is what he expressed:

"*I see my boy gaining strength as he grows. Yes, I even see as I pass by the street. During one of the days, I decided to stop by. Maybe something you see. We still neighbour but…… Yes, and when they are carrying him on their back and I can hear him crying*".

Bokang indicated that he walks on eggshells as one never knows what will trigger his wife's moods. He had the following to say:

"*You don't even know today what's gonna happen. So, you must always be careful in approaching her. Sometimes. You greet her now. She's in a bad mood*".

vi. **Infidelity**: Most of the participants experienced IPV in the form of their partner being unfaithful. **Thabo** had the following to say:

"When you stay with a person, you know their routine …what time they came from work, how they leave…what time they leave…and when do they go back to work, what time they return, that sort of thing…So, when I realise that I have this problem…it is when I realised that she had a boyfriend. Let me put it that way. She fell in love and started dating our neighbour…I don't know when the affair started, but it was an old

affair…that means it started when we still lived in that neighbourhood, but I was not aware".

Charles: "*That period we were supposed to go to Namibia for our honeymoon because her family they send her a ticket two weeks before we fly there. So, she flew there alone for a week. The moment she comes back she chased me out of the house, and after that, she flew someone, for her was normal because she was doing what she wanted, she was cheating."*

Vhutshilo: "*The thing is I found out that this woman is in a relationship with some other person".*

The quotations above indicate that being cheated on is a form of abuse. It was during these interviews when I realised that infidelity is abuse. Men cheating on their female partners is a norm within the African socialisation of women, to the point that it never registered to me that it is actually abuse.

vii. **Home forceful removal**: **Charles** experienced IPV by being forcefully removed from their home. This is what he indicated:

"*So, the day she came back from Namibia is the day where she chased me out of the house*".

As mentioned above, Charles is from Morocco and has no family in South Africa. The person he came to be with in South Africa forcefully removed him from the only home he had known for 3 years.

Sub-Theme: Controlling Behaviour

The participants' controlling behaviour was further presented as vast because it included several controlling cases of abuse. Examples include (i) being owned, (ii) not making personal

decisions, (iii) being called several times, (iv) isolation, (v) parental alienation, (vi) refusal of partner's occupational independence, and (vii) poor relations with the paternal/husband's family.

i. **Being owned: Charles** said the following:

"*When I tried speaking up, she says she owns me. No man on this earth can take her things. She owns me now that she is…I am the one who bring you to South Africa, you can do nothing*".

Charles' extract above indicates how his wife treated him as an object. He essentially had no control of his life since he was a foreign national and was brought to South Africa by his wife. Therefore, his wife told him that she owned him, and there was nothing he could do about that.

ii. **Not making personal decisions:** Charles further expressed controlling behaviour in the form of not being able to make personal decisions. He showed that he had no control over the type of haircut he could have, as evident below:

"*I cannot cut my hair. If I want to get a haircut. She will make sure she sends me to her hairdresser, and she will send a picture of how she needs to cut my hair and yeah. And every time I try to defend myself because she now knows I have no place to go that's … I lost my family. I lost everything. She told me if you don't listen, I will divorce you and send you to the streets*".

iii. **Being called several times:** One participant spoke about a subtler form of controlling behaviour than the ones discussed above. **Mojalefa** had the following to say:

"*I get to get called by this woman, I get to get called so many times to an extent that if I miss any of the calls, the calling won't stop. When I get to answer the phone if I happen*

to, I am requested to come back home as immediately. When I get there, to our house, ahh well a lot is happening. Ahh well……."

iii. **Isolation:** Some of the participants indicated that their partners behaved so that it left them (the men) feeling isolated. The participants described how they were isolated:

***Charles*:** "*Because she kept me out from my family. She made sure that my family will never talk to me anymore. For 3 years now, I have been away from home. She told me if I really love her, her family they don't talk to her anymore, so it's the same with me. I cannot go see them, I cannot talk to them because we married in community of property and that we are going to be together forever. The time I come here to South Africa, she tried to make me to be scared all the time of Indian people, black people, coloured people. She always made me scared of them always. She told me that this country is very bad country".*

***Ngwako*:** "*She came to Jozi, as she got here…I and those I was sharing the yard with, we were assistive to each other with everything, we were tight neighbours but the time she arrived. I turned to be no longer close to my neighbours and the landlord*".

These participants reported that their wives alienated them from their families and neighbours. Charles indicated that for him to prove that he loves his wife she asked him to stop talking to his side of the family, he could not visit them. He was not only isolated from his family but she would tell him scary stories about South Africans so he could not form other relations. Ngwako's response suggests that when his wife stayed with his parents and not with him; he had close relationships with the landlord and other tenants where he lived. However, when his wife joined him where he lived, she caused divisions between him and his landlord and other tenants.

iv. **Parental alienation:** Some participants explained that they experienced IPV in parental alienation, which meant they were denied access to their children. Below is evidence of this:

Vhutshilo "*The thing is last year she made me see her, and she told me that she is bringing the child to McDonalds at around 5 ...another day this woman called me again at around five to tell me that, the child is refusing to come. And I found out that was just a story. From then I haven't seen the child from last year November till today* (6 months*). I tried to see her at school where they are taking her. I just come in the morning and see her, and after that, I leave. So that the child can also be happy*."

Percy: "*And ehhh now she is treating me like a stranger to her. I don't have access to my kids. And she doesn't even want my son to see me. And yeah you know, the list goes on. This woman denied me access to my child. This child is my blood and flesh*."

Lekau: "*No, what she decided to do was to punish me with my biological child by distancing her away from me*."

Matsobane: "*This woman denied me access to my child. This child is my blood and flesh*".

These men want access to their children. They want to maintain and be there for these children. However, they are being denied the opportunity to father their children. Vhutshilo's response suggests that his former partner lied and told him that the child does not want to see him despite that Vhutshilo still makes other means to see his child like going to her school to see him and him see her. Percy's response suggests that he has the right to see his children as they are his flesh and blood and cannot believe that she is treating him as a stranger. Matsobane speaks of being denied access to his child as being denied of his flesh and blood, this speaks about his life, that something

essential is missing. As suggested by Lekau, these men's former partners are using the children to punish them.

v. **Refusal of a partner's occupational independence: Charles** experienced IPV in the form of his wife refusing for him to work at a place of his choice.

Charles "*So she told me, yah, if you go to work I will go to the government and tell them that you are working because I am not allowed to work here in South Africa. Because she made sure that I will only be in the spouse and student visa, not the work visa, she made sure. And I accepted, and I went to school, was a government school Tshwane College in Centurion*".

Charles indicated that his wife refused for him to get a job and gain independence. From Charles' response above, it is evident that his wife needed him to be completely dependent on her hence, she threatened him with reporting him to the government should he find a job and she made sure that he is on a student and spouse visa.

vi. **Poor relations with the paternal/husband's family:** Bokang narrated that the abuse was directed to them and their families. The following extract informs this narrative:

Bokang: *"Oh yes and this now was related to finance. Where now or where when uhh…the…when her own family comes, for instance. I'll put the sister. The mother was working. She didn't have too much of money problems or so. Whenever the other sisters or family members come. She would take and give them the last penny that we have saved in the house for emergencies and that. And spend it on them even if it means giving to them when they go back and when I ask it's a problem. Ya (yes) uhh…and then I started observing and I said ok if this is happening, now I want to see when my part…my family part is coming in. I had my younger brother. Uhh…Who had passed his matric. Although he didn't uhh…pass well his maths and physics because he wanted*

to be an Engineer. I took him to…to…because we don't have…you know uhh…biological parents anymore. I was now to be his uhh…uhh…uhh…you know…uhh…somebody who would be looking after him so he was my…like my beneficiary or dependent. So, I took him to come and upgrade as the…at the Star schools in Braamfontein. Well uhh...sometimes I would give him a pocket money of let's say maybe of R20. It would be an issue on her side. Why doesn't he carry a skhafthini (lunchbox) or…or lunch. Then I explained to her that. You must know that wherever he's…he is attending. Most of the kids there are well off. They eat somethings like Chicken Licken, KFC and the likes. She would not understand that simple explanation and each time. I give him just a little thing. It's a problem".

Bokang shared his story about his wife and his family's interaction, which relates to his partner's controlling behaviour. Bokang's issue was related to finances involving his family versus her family. He suggested that when his wife's side of the family visits them, his wife can even give them their last cents whereas, if he gives his brother R20, it is a problem. Therefore, in this context money was used as a tool to initiate and sustain the control.

Based on the responses mentioned above, it is apparent that the participants were controlled by their female partners' behaviour intended to restrict, demean, shame, humiliate, and manipulate them.

Sub-Theme: Economic Abuse

Lekau reported experiencing IPV through being taken to court to pay maintenance for a child that is not his. Lekau had the following to say:

"No, I have responded because she went to open a case of maintenance that she demanded me to pay for, for the child that is not mine".

He further stated that:

"She demanded a thousand rand for maintenance, of which I said no, I cannot do that. So luckily the lawyer made it to be reduced to a hundred rand, and I never paid it, so she then took the child to the father, until today".

The extract above suggests what Lekau went through was economic abuse as his ex-wife took him to court to maintain a child; she knew was not his.

The above theme and its sub-themes resulted from the participants' definition and experiences of IPV. These men have experienced different types of IPV perpetrated by their female partners. These narrations demonstrate that men understand and are aware of other non-physical forms of IPV.

Theme Two: Perceived Causes of IPV

This theme relates to how the participants viewed the circumstances around them that could have contributed to them being IPV victims. The participants' answers to a question concerning their understanding and lived experience of abuse yielded the following sub-themes: cultural factors, psycho-social factors, socio-economic factors, and exploitation.

Sub-Theme: Cultural Factors

Participants attributed their abuse to various cultural factors. These factors included (i) the perception that men should be providers; (ii) they (men) being forced into getting married; (iii) unmet cultural expectations; (iv) socialisation (abusive behaviour as a result of an absent father figure in their partner's life; "*monna ke nku*"; ancestral revelation and gender role issues); and (v) others attributed their abuse to curses.

i. **The perception that men should be providers: Bokang** reported that his wife behaved abusively towards him because she believed that men should provide, as he narrated:

"*Just be prepared for that so we had discu...uhh…uhh…uhh…differences where now she even said ok. Wena* (you) *uhh…you don't help me with anything, remember. She earns more than me. You don't help me with anything and all that stuff. Ya (*yes*). Nna* (Me*), I was raised up where now I was told gore* (that) *a man provides. Having realised and came across all this. I decided it looked like I am not man enough. Ya (*yes*) until that person decide themselves that they…they have got another person. Who is better than me because I couldn't provide whatever that people are looking for*".

Bokang's partner told him that she was socialised so that a man must provide for his family; thus, earning less than her was unacceptable. In turn, this statement made Bokang feel like he was not man enough and felt threatened as he feels that she will one day decide to leave him because she would have found someone better than him. After all, what he is doing is not enough. He believes that there is someone better for his wife out there. At the end of his statement, he uses "they" instead of "her". As mentioned in the participants' life stories at the time of the interview, Bokang was in his second marriage. He caught his first wife with another man before he finally divorced her, so when he says "they", I think he believes that the current wife might do what his first wife did.

ii. **Being forced into getting married*:* Lekau** reported being forced into getting married, this is what he had to say:

"*No, the point is, I ended up marrying her because she was pregnant, and then we had to part ways or break up for the same reason I've mentioned above*".

Lekau married his wife because she told him that he had impregnated her. Lekau suggests that he was forced into marrying her because she was pregnant, and he thought he was the child's father. Cultural expectations are that if a man impregnates a woman,

that man should marry the woman. He later divorced her because he found out that the child was in fact, not his.

iii. **Unmet cultural expectations: Bokang** blamed unmet cultural expectations:

Bokang: "*I want to put it on record as well that the same wife when I had her. She never slept at my house although we were married when we go home uhh…in the rural areas, from Gauteng. She would want to be united with her family. I must be the one going to visit her. I tried to raise it. It was not taken (pause) it was quite difficult for me because I got a wife whenever I needed food. I can't have her closer. Whenever I wanted my clothing to be washed. I had to deliver it where she is in her own farmstead or family uhh…uhh…home by her father and mother and the whole…the rest of the family that was quite difficult for me hence at last I couldn't take it*".

The fact that his wife did not completely assimilate to the new family according to Bokang's family values, caused him some difficulties. Bokang felt that his manhood was challenged as he cannot explain why his wife does not join him.

iv. **Socialisation:** Most of the participants also discussed socialisation as a perceived cause of their abuse, be it their own socialisation or their wives'. Under socialisation, the following categories emerged: abusive behaviour resulting from an absent father figure in their partner's life; "*monna ke nku*"; ancestral revelation; and gender role issues.

Absent father figure - Some of the participants attributed the abuse to the absence of father figures in the perpetrators' upbringing as a cause for their abuse. As evidenced below:

Bokang: "*However, in my findings. I find that uhh…most of them had grown without a father figure next to them. They grew up having seen their mothers as being head of the families, leading the families, making almost all of the decisions*

so to me. It would have uhh...uhh…it means that they had took over from whatever that was happening as a practice in the home and now they want to come and practice it…practice it in their current new and I think that (pause) could be the (pause) the reason why they behave like that. However. I don't justify their behaviour or trying to defend uhh…whatever that they do but it is true. I have seen also with other men uhh…whom we shared our experiences regarding the same behaviour or…or attributes from the female side. In most cases. The characteristics or the behaviour are likely the same, are more or less the same, in the way they would behave or do things in those respective families. In most cases. They don't want to listen to a father figure or a…a male partner uhh…which I would like to differ with them because in any relationship there has to be some sort of compromise which they are not willing to let go or uhh…let it happen (pause) uhh…can we pause a bit?"

Bokang tried to explain why his ex-wife behaved the way she did, while at the same time indicating that he is not trying to justify her behaviour. He suggested that his ex-wife's behaviour resulted from observational learning – observing his mother's leadership style in her family, which resulted in his opinion being suppressed. He described this as his ex-wife's characteristic, but as a trait of every woman who comes from a single parent household headed by a woman.

"Monna ke nku" – One of the participants used this metaphor, which means that a man is a sheep that does not voice out its frustration or pain, to explain toxic socialisation that has led men to be victims of abuse. Below are extracts from some of the participants.

Lekau: "*Before ke bontshiwa* (I had visions*), wa bona ba re monna ke nku (*You see, they say that a man should die silently like a sheep and not cry out or speak out*), that thing is killing us."*

Lekau seems to be grateful to his ancestors, because if it wasn't for them giving him visions about the child; he would have kept his suspicions quiet, whilst dying silently.

***Mojalefa*:** "*I did not tell any of my family about this. Well, I can never tell what happens at my house, as a man I should at least bottle this thing and find ways to deal with them on my own. Well, you know as men. Men must be the head of the family, I can never go to the police and report this thing. I will get a laughing from them, that how do you report such a beating from your wife*".

Mojalefa would rather endure the suffering than tell anyone about the abuse.

He repeatedly used the words "as a man", meaning that there are certain expectations of being a man or specific criteria that one needs to meet to be called a man. He suggested that men need to bottle things up. Moreover, men are usually seen as their families' heads from what Mojalefa is saying his wife should not beat him. This statement also suggests that he feels like he has no control over his wife; he cannot head his wife.

Gender roles -Some of the participants felt that the issue of gender roles was the cause. The problem was that some of these participants would help around the house, be it either with cooking or cleaning and before they knew it, it became their job in the house. This is what **Daniel** had to say:

"*No, it started when I was home, she said to me, you are home, and since you said you are coming back while she knows, you went to... Maybe you went to a*

funeral, or you went to do something. You just find the person `all right, No! I am coming to fetch you now, I said and then? She would say you left without cleaning the house. Aa! it was not my duty to clean I left you at home. I then realised that it's like I am the woman in this relationship, But for me, I never saw it as a woman in a relationship, I saw it as a, she is my wife she is at work. So let me cook, let me clean, so that when she comes back from work at least, there is minus 2 or 3 stories".

Daniel suggested that he initially volunteered to clean the house and cook so that when his partner came home, she could have some time without worrying about cleaning the house or cooking. He never thought that this would automatically be assigned to him. As mentioned above, she would fetch him from wherever he was to come back home and clean the house. He might feel that this is abuse as we have been socialised that house chores are for women but then again, the fact that he is forced to the point of being called back home to come and clean is a form of abuse.

v. Curses: Some participants associated abusive behaviour to curses**,** as evidenced below:

Percy "*Eh in fact. I mean I was being told by her that, okay she couldn't even sustain any relationship, because she became violent in most of the cases. Because she believes that she was somehow cursed, our tradition. Bare there are some badimo and stuff like that (they say there are some ancestors and stuff like that)*".

Percy indicated that his partner confessed that he is not the first that she had abused, but she believes that she is cursed, or the ancestors are not happy with her.

Daniel suspects that maybe one of his ex-girlfriends have cast a spell on him. As evident below:

Daniel, "*Maybe, my ex or all women, maybe they are against me that is why my relationships do not work out. And I always get abused…*"

From the extract above, it is reasonable to infer that this is not Daniel's first abusive relationship. He suggested that maybe his recent ex, or all the women he has known, are against him. Hence, he always gets abused.

Sub-Theme: Psycho-social Factors

Participants attributed various psycho-social factors that led them to being abused. These factors included: (i) use of substances; and (ii) the company their women kept.

i. **Use of substances**: Duma indicated that his use of substance (alcohol) triggered the abuse. As he narrates his experience:

Duma: "*So, I was staying with the lady for two years, I am a person who drinks alcohol, so, I sometimes go out at night…going around with friends…when I arrive drunk at home, she starts a fight with me. When fighting like this she is the one who hits me. I arrived home drunk and she was upset and had not cooked, that's where the problem started. I asked her why she had not cooked. She said, why did my friends that I went with not cook for me*".

Duma attributed his use of alcohol and going out at night as the reasons for the abuse. He suggested that she starts a fight with him when he gets home late and drunk and that is when she hits him as well. According to Duma, there are things that his drinking influenced him to do when he arrived home like asking why his partner did not cook and thus triggering the abuse from his partner. He indicated above that he goes out at night, so he probably asks for food in the late-night hours.

ii. **The company their women kept:** Some of the participants attributed abusive behaviour to the company of unmarried people.

Maropeng, "*With the friends that she has now, she keeps a company of people who I don't understand and when I tell her she becomes protective, she thinks that I have jealousy for her and I don't want her to leave the house. And all of her friends are not married. Yes, she keeps a company of unmarried people, she is the only married one in her group. They influence her because they are 4 and she is the 5th one and all of them are not married.*

Daniel, "*You see what happened, like even if the woman is not at work, she socializes with other women and those women do not have husbands. They just go out and do what and what. So they started, she went out with friends, can you please cook when you get home if you can't, please buy take away. I am begging you please, I have cravings for…. Ao! But woman, you are home and I am at work. No, am begging you. I know you will knock off early. It all started like that. Sometimes, also I ran home and cooked. So, I do not know did I give her the power to abuse or what*?"

The extracts above indicate that the participants also apportion the blame to the company their wives keep and the company of unmarried people. They believe that their partners are being led astray by these women. Maropeng suggests that his partner was being influenced by her friends, meaning that she has changed and now behaving like a single person and not taking care of her responsibilities. He is suggesting that his wife is impressionable and that she is being naïve hence he said that his wife has once accused him of being jealous. Daniel suggests that these unmarried women can just go out and do as they please, as opposed to married women. Daniel further questions himself whether he gave her the power to abuse him; if he had said no the first time, maybe she would not have the power.

Sub-Theme: Socio-Economic Factors

Some of the participants attributed certain socio-economic factors as having contributed to being abused. These factors included (i) participants' family's low socio-economic status and (ii) employment of the abuser.

i. **Family's low socio-economic status**: One participant reported that he was abused because of his family's low socio-economic status within the community. As evidenced below:

Lekau: "*No, it just happened, her family viewed my family as being poor, as we were living in one room, and we were crowded in one room*".

Lekau suggested that the first pregnancy, which was not his, was just pawned on him because they were too poor, they were looked down upon. Lekau implied that because his family's socio-economic status was low in the community, then his family had no influence. Therefore, they would not even deny the pregnancy.

iii. **Employment**: Another participant reported abusive behaviour as being related to employment. This is evidenced below:

Thabo: "*There are many reasons I cannot say it was brought about by her employment status. It can't be the only reason. Remember; she had been all along at home raising kids. I was the one who could bring money in the house… she was a very sweet person...good person, now the problem started when she started going outside the home. Now she could work and she noticed. A woman is a woman and she is not marked as somebody's wife… Men will see her and want her… The fact that I am not working cannot be the only reason*".

Although Thabo is not suggesting that his wife being financially empowered is the only reason for the abuse, he feels that it contributed. He indicated that there were many reasons. However, for a long time, she was a stay-at-home mother, raising the children and now she is

working, leaving the house and started being noticed by men and women are always attractive to men. So, she is getting the attention she never got when she was a stay-at-home mother. Therefore, her employment status versus him not working contributed to the abuse.

Sub-Theme: Exploitation

Participants further attributed their abuse to exploitation, including (i) the misuse of immigration and (ii) the influence of the apartheid era.

i. **Misuse of immigration:** One participant's experience was that immigration forced him to get married while unprepared. As evidenced below:

Charles: "*After that she asked me to come to South Africa and I said to her but I don't have the money to come to South Africa, it's too expensive for me. She said to me I will buy you the ticket and I will send you the invitation to come to South Africa. I will do everything for you and I accepted, she sent me a ticket and invitation for 3 months so but our agreement was only for a month but she sent me invitation for 3 months and the embassy for South Africa in Morocco gave me a visa for 3 months. And I came here and the time I came here, she was alone at home and after 3 weeks eeee she asked me to marry her and that time I am 21 years old and she was my first woman. I never had a girlfriend before she was my first woman, I had contact with her sooo, yah. So, I accepted, she is the one. She bought the ring, she is the one, she's done everything. I asked her why she is in a rush, why she wants to get married. She told me no before her mother comes from Australia. Sooo I said to her but why, she told me "don't worry, me I will marry you". Don't worry about my family*".

The experience as narrated by Charles speaks to him being exploited into getting married before the time he intended. Therefore, marriage was used to lure him to coming to South Africa, as he had no money and also on account of his age. As narrated by **Charles** below:

"*So, I helped them for the first day and the second day for them to say thank you to me they invite me to go for lunch and I accepted and we went for lunch and the last day there at the hotel she came to my room, I was 21 years old and she was 41 years old. She came to my room and you know happy was happening and we had contact with each other after she went back to South Africa and but her friend, she stayed there for her reason. And actually, her reason was for her to sleep with me, the friend, but me I refused that and the time her friend comes back to South Africa*."

Charles uses words like 'happy was happening.' He used euphemism when he spoke about sex, this speaks to his innocence and inexperience. As he later said that his wife was the first woman he had ever been with intimately:

"I am 21 years old and she was my first woman. I never had a girlfriend before she was my first woman, I had contact with her so".

From the response, this was Charles' first sexual encounter. Furthermore, during the interview Charles came to the realisation that he was tested by his soon to be wife's friend to see if he will sleep with her. Again, he refers to his age, in his reflection and he felt taken advantage of on the basis of his age. That his wife was 20 years older than him, in retrospect, he realised the age gap and that there is a power dynamic issue. She could have been his mother.

ii. **Influence of the apartheid era**: One participant accredited his vulnerability to abusive behaviour to the effects of the black family structure and functioning during the apartheid era.

Lekau: "*Guidance and even the time of apartheid there was no control of anything so we end up falling into such things, whereby you can't even think back. Yes, sometimes it's the issue of being a child, you end up falling into things and on the other hand you do not have guidance*".

Lekau indicated that during the apartheid era, there was lack of guidance where he came from. He spoke about being a child as being naïve and in need of guidance so that he could

make informed decisions. The response above suggests that if Lekau had guidance he would have made different choices.

Theme Three: Effects of IPV As Experienced by The Participants

This theme relates to how the participants understood the effects of IPV. The theme reflects on the participants acknowledging that they suffered at the hands of their abusive partners and has yielded the following sub-themes: psychological effects; separation from partner; disintegration of families; inability to be intimate with their abusive partner; suicide attempt; socio-economic effects; and incarceration.

Sub-Theme: Psychological Effects

Participants reported a variety of psychological strains as a result of IPV. These psychological strains included the following:

i. alcohol abuse;
ii. pain;
iii. feelings of shame;
iv. being emasculated;
v. sense of despair;
vi. detachment;
vii. mistrust;
viii. experiencing bitterness;
ix. self-blame;
x. psychological distress;
xi. being traumatised; and
xii. fear of being labelled as weak.

The effects were narrated as follows:

i. **Alcohol abuse: Percy:** "You know obviously, whenever where there is violence you get emotionally drained you see. Like you go back all the time. Instead of going forward, you go back. Like it deals with you like emotionally and you know like even your personality. Like I mentioned, we are no longer together. You see, one of the reasons I am drinking a lot this is very personal and sensitive. Yeah you know she drove me into drinking a lot trying to sedate, my own eh tabulations, my own eh yeah".

From Percy's extract, substance abuse emerged as a result of him being a victim of IPV. He further said that he drinks alcohol a lot just to sedate his emotions because he felt emotionally drained.

ii**. Pain**: **Lesetja**: "*This was very painful because when you love someone, and she denies you then it is a problem. Imagine if I see my child somewhere and I call him or her and my child end up not knowing who I am*".

Lesetja indicated that his experience is so painful as he has no access to his child and the thought of the child not knowing him causes him pain.

Some participants reported experiencing feelings of shame:

iii. **Feelings of shame***:* **Charles**: "And in our world now if a man says he is being abused by his wife then everyone will look at him very bad because he is a man, but a good man is the one he never hurt another people. I don't want someone to be in my situation because I told you my story but I never went to detail because if I told you in detail, what is happening in the room; I don't to say that because that picture will stay with me all my life and I am ashamed of myself to say that because that was really happening to me".

***Thabo*:** "*Yesss…I mean…privacy…just think, everybody needs privacy. Can you image when you know a thing is yours? (woman) Being certain that this is mine and I share it with no-one…uhm…come to think of it…thinking that I share this with someone else …they know what is happening I felt like…naked. I felt humiliated*".

Charles said when he reflected about his experience, especially in their room, he becomes ashamed of himself. For Charles, shame means that if he tells people what happened to him, they will look at him badly and that he is a man why could he not prevent the abuse. On the other hand, Thabo's feelings of shame came about because people knew that his wife was unfaithful, resulting in him feeling naked and humiliated. Thabo's shame resulted from his realisation that the woman he thought was his and only his was not, and people around him seemed to know this.

iv. **Being emasculated***:* Other participants reported feeling emasculated by their abusive female partners:

Thabo felt that he was not man enough and that he felt that there was a better man for his wife. "*It meant now she had somebody. Who is like…better than me? Yes …it is like that. Yes…It is true that partners disagree with each other's. There is often a misunderstanding, but I find that with her every time we had a misunderstanding, she resorts to cheat on me*".

Maropeng reports feeling helpless with no say: "*Yes and you can't tell her anything, when I talk, the police intervene*".

Mojalefa sees himself as a man of a certain standing who cannot be abused. It is almost like there is disbelief coming from his side. That this is actually happening, that a man like him is reduced to nothing. "*Telling my story from my calibre, when I actually get to the house I'll be shouted, insulted to the extent where I get a beating with everything which comes the way. I can remember the previous…. Almost every. Last weekend I got smashed with a glass of water which I survived cuts from my back, as you can see this is an injury here. I might be beaten time and time again*".

Based on the excerpts mentioned above, it is evident that the participants felt deprived of their male identity as mentioned by Mojalefa when he said telling my story from my calibre, he feels that he has a certain stature that is being weakened by the abuse. Maropeng, on the other hand, has been crippled by the fact that his wife has a protection order against him, so he is silenced.

v. **Sense of despair***:* One participant expressed a sense of despair as evidenced below:

Charles initially speaks of not knowing what is happening in his life, he feels a sense of despair: "*I don't know what's happening in my life anymore. So, for now I just want someone to show me a life and love because for me now I see my life is nothing you know*".

vi. **Detachment***:* **Charles** further spoke about being detached; he felt like his marriage's past 3 years were a dream. " Now now I am busy waking up. I feel like the three years I was with her I was just dreaming. Now I feel l am busy waking up".

Charles realised that his wife had changed to someone whom he does not know and became afraid to ask questions because his wife will chase him out of the house**:** "*My life is not the same anymore I live as if I am a different person from who I used to be. And after that, I realised that she goes with him and goes out and comes to my house every day. And I cannot say nothing because if I speak off course my wife, she takes me out to the streets*".

Mojalefa's experience left him feeling like he is a child and he shared how he is miserable and sad in his own home: "*I see myself as not a fully-grown man. I mean I get a beating, I become sad and miserable most of the time since I can't enjoy my house anymore*".

The extracts above indicate that: Charles' reflections made him come to several realisations regarding the abuse's effect on him. He expressed a sense of being in limbo; he is not sure what is happening in his life anymore. This means that his life had a purpose before, but at this present moment, his life has no purpose. He further realised being detached as he indicated that

he is only waking up now, and he feels like the time he was married to his wife, and the abuse was just a dream. While Mojalefa expressed that he feels like he is a child, he feels this way because children were the ones who were disciplined through a hiding by their parents.

vii. **Mistrust**: Furthermore, the participants reported having trust issues as a result of the abuse they experienced. Some of these experiences are narrated below:

Charles indicated that if he were to go back to his wife, she would kill him or make up a story about him resulting in him being incarcerated. He seemed convinced that nothing good could come out of trusting his wife: "*If I go back to that house, she will kill me; she will send me to jail, she will make up a story. I don't trust her after I received a summons from her lawyer and what she says there. I don't trust her now…"*

Lekau also indicated that he does not trust women because of the previous relationship; he mentioned that women have traps. Although he perceives his current relationship as better than his previous relationship, he does not entirely trust her. However, he stays in the relationship because he is a human being, and he has to. He does not want to be alone: "*no, to get into marriage because of the trap that these women are doing.* ***Researcher****: so, but then why are you staying into this, the current relationship?* ***Participant:*** *no, I mean, as a human being I have to. No, it differs, it differs, and this one differs a lot from the other one, because this one, I don't know as time goes on because they change like the weather. For now, she's still respecting, even though you know sometimes there are those hiccups, but I'm actually respecting her as well, but you know, trying to forget of the past. But sometimes something the same thing happened, whereby it takes me back again*".

Thabo no longer trusts nor likes women; his experience has taught him not to commit to any woman again: "*I now disliked woman and felt that I could not be in a relationship with them anymore. I saw women as things that one can use and discard without any commitment*".

The extracts above indicate that these men do not trust women as a result of the abuse. This is what distrust means to them: Charles, on the one hand, believes that his wife would kill him. He just realised that he could not trust his wife and she is capable of anything, including murder. In contrast, Lekau believes that all women are the same; they can start by being respectful and just change. Thabo has developed not only mistrust but also contempt for women. He indicates that he will not commit but will use women and move on.

viii. **Bitterness***:* **Thabo**, more than any other participant, expressed serious bitterness towards his wife. He felt used, and that his wife only married him because she wanted to obtain citizenship in the country. He felt that his wife wasted his time. After the divorce, he wants her to remain with nothing, no citizenship, not property, nothing; if this happens then justice would have been served: "Even when we divorce, we must leave her the way I found her. She must be a Lesotho citizen. She must not obtain a South African citizenship through me. I don't care. I don't mind that someone must succeed in life, but not at my expense…not at the expense of my dignity or not in the expense of…Yoh! My effort…she wasted my time…she (inaudible)…in marriage knowing that she is not here to stay. She only wanted an ID that's all, so I feel that it will not be fair that she attains whatever, whether it is citizenship or shares in assets. I feel that it is not fair that she obtains those things and used so, knowing that she came here…meaning that this was a marriage of [pause]…**Researcher:** Convenience. **Participant**: Yes…of convenience because she had come to marriage with the mind that she has a benefit. She must obtain citizenship and stuff. She can't …I feel that she…it is not fair. Justice must be served in this one. People must, if they marry outside…if you get married to South Africans, do not marry him to get citizenship. I wish the law can change and state that you only receive citizenship if the spouse approves. Indeed".

ix. **Self-blame***:* Some of the participants blamed themselves for the abuse:

Ngwako was warned not to marry the woman he wanted to marry. His parents and his friend warned him, and he blames himself for not listening: "So as time goes my parents told me that, No!, As you say you want to take this person to move in with you, at the end she will give you difficulties and my friend from next door. So, I ended up doing what? Bringing that woman into my house".

Thabo narrated that because he was self-employed, he travelled a lot; he was not there to see what was happening hence he was the only one who did not know about his wife's infidelity: *"Ash… I was the only person who did not know because most of the time I was absent. I am hustling. I am always absent…. She fell in love and started dating our neighbour…I don't know when the affair started, but it was an old affair."*

x. **Psychological distress***:* Being denied access to one's child led, **Matsobane** to suffer from psychological distress**,** as evidenced by his response: "It did affect me mentally".

xi. **Being traumatised***:* Some participants reported being traumatised by their experience.

Lekau is scared by the thought of marriage, but he says he knows he has to marry. He says that at his age now, he ought to have been married, but this experience has left a deep wound: "*No it killed me because like now, when coming to taking a decision of marrying another girl, eish, eish, it's a long process. I'm thinking, you know I have been healing myself for all the years since she is gone and I had 2 children with another girl (uhm), I mean I'm getting old but I need to have married so itja tja…*"

Duma is traumatised and hurt to the point that the family is continually checking on him to make sure that he is not depressed or does not commit suicide: "*Yes…my mother and sister are treating me well. They ask me things like "why are so quiet? What are you thinking? Don't think like that. Please don't commit suicide because you loved a person. A person that hurt*

you, because things are worse because if you met someone from the street that you were interested in you wouldn't hit off with them right away?"

Based on the response mentioned above, it is evident that the experience has resulted in traumatised participants; meaning that the participants have indicated a lasting sense of shock because of their experience. Lekau indicated that the abuse has killed him, meaning that he has changed not for the better. Marriage for him is currently not an option. Although he says he is in a new relationship with 2 children with this lady, the thought of marriage still scares him. He knows that he is getting old and should marry, but he feels that he is not completely healed. Duma is sceptical about women, and it seems like he spends most of his time thinking about his feelings, including thoughts of suicide, which worries his mother and sister.

xii. **Fear of being labelled as weak***: **Mojalefa*** expressed the fear of being labelled as weak: "*yes, that ahhh that one! No, he is weak, he gets a beating from his woman*".

The extract above indicates that Mojalefa has a fear of being labelled as weak and that people will not take him seriously as they will refer to him as weak because his wife physically assaults him. It is evidenced by the response that being physically assaulted by one's wife is unmanly.

Sub-Theme: Separation from Partner

Participants reported separation (divorce, leaving the relationship) from their partners as a consequence of IPV. Participants who left their abusive relationships had the following to say:

Bokang narrated that he could no longer tolerate the abuse, so he divorced his first wife: "*And uhh…that's when I started off with the…the divorce. You know process where I approached a lawyer uhh…actually this was my brothers…my brother-in-law who is a lawyer*".

***Charles*:** "*She wants to make up to divorce me and force the judge, he doesn't give me half of everything she earns because she asked him on the summons she says that the community of property need to forfeit, it needs to go; need to fall back*".

Percy: "*The relationship now, you know I am just going to be frank with you. We are no longer together, she left in 2010. We separated in 2010, which is a very long time*".

Lekau*: "Yes, it's around 18 years, I'm not even quite sure, but it's more than 18 years because I have a 17-year-old child after our breakup, and a 4-and-a-half-year-old child*".

Daniel: *"No, Currently, have taken break from it I have) (1) month, I moved out, I felt that I need to take a break and breath and listen to myself. Wait a bit and see what happens*".

As evident above, some of the participants left the abusive relationship; with others, their abusive partner is the one who left. However, some participants still experience abuse even though they were no longer in the relationship. Charles suggests that his wife tried to cancel their marital contract as they were married in community of property. She tried to do this so that Charles does not get what is due to him, this means that she wanted him to continue suffering whilst she was the one who forced him out of their home.

Sub-Theme: Fear of Disintegration of Families

Participants expressed that the abuse caused their families to disintegrate. Some of the participants expressed the fear of having their children growing up in disintegrated families.

Ngwako felt that his children were better off staying with his family than with him and his wife: "*Yes, for my children to go and stay with my mom, or to go and stay with my family, for I think that way it will be better*".

Thabo's most significant concern was his family disintegrating. He wants to keep his family together. If he goes ahead and divorces her, he will lose something of value to him, his family.

He does not want their children and her child (his wife came into the marriage with a child) to separate, he wants all the children to stay together: "*I would have on the other hand have lost something that I value…family… My wife and children…I understand that when people divorce children are scattered. I will have to fetch my children. She will remain with her own child that I am not related to. I don't want that to happen*…"

Bokang indicated that leaving his children behind was hard: *"You have to leave those poor souls who are innocent behind".*

IPV against men also affects the children as narrated above by the participants, as children would be separated from either their fathers or both parents. Ngwako felt that his children were better off being raised by their parents than him and his wife. On the other hand, Thabo wants to keep their children and the wife's child together. He values the relationship the children have with each other. He wants to parent his children. Bokang, who finally divorced his first wife, indicated that the most challenging part was leaving his children behind, innocent children.

Sub-Theme: Inability to Be Intimate with Abusive Partner

Participants expressed that because of the abuse, they are unable to be intimate with their partners, as evidenced by the following extracts:

Thabo suggests that their intimate life is affected by his partner's affairs and as far as their relationship goes, they are just co-parenting while still living together: "*As I am saying, as I realise that there are changes which I found out that these changes came about because she had a new boyfriend. Remember, changes affect even the bedroom situation; things become… different from before. You find that even if you share the same bed, each one sleeps on different sides of the bed with his own blanket. You understand? We are just 2 people who are bringing up their children. We are nothing to each other. She is held by other hands.*"

Charles cannot be intimate or initiate sex because he is afraid that he will be accused of rape: "*Seeing that I'm nothing to her I do not even touch her anymore do you understand? She is someone else's wife, she mixes us up together with another man, so there is no need to… **Researcher:** what happens when you touch her? **Participant:** No, she is fully dressed at the time. How can you touch her? She will say you raped her, isn't it*?"

Maropeng does not even have access to their bedroom as he will get arrested if he enters: "*We stay like brother and sister. **Researcher:** So, if you enter her room it's contempt of court. **Participant:** Yes, I get arrested, I am afraid of being arrested*".

As reported above, it is evident that these men cannot initiate any form of intimacy with their wives because of the abuse. Thabo and Charles suggested that they cannot initiate sex because their wives belong to someone other than them. Although Thabo and his wife share a bed, they use separate blankets, advertently restricting any opportunity of engaging in sex. Charles further implied that if he initiates sex, his wife will accuse him of rape. While Maropeng indicated that his relationship with his wife is that of siblings as he cannot even enter their marital bedroom, he will be arrested if he enters their bedroom.

Sub-Theme: Suicide Attempt

One of the participants attempted suicide as a consequence of the abuse. ***Charles*** reported suicide attempt as his wife forcefully removed him from their home: "*I drink rat poison, so she called one of her friends, and the friend's husband came to the house because I was out and he opened my mouth, and he was putting milk in my mouth for me to start vomiting, and I start vomiting, and I remember her mother saying leave the kaffir to die, leave the kaffir die. She called me a kaffir, leave the kaffir die, and she said to that man take him away for a week. I don't want to see him for a week, and after a week he can come back to the house".*

Due to being forcefully removed from their home, Charles in his attempt to escape his pain attempted suicide just outside their house in the patio; as he had nowhere to go and he perhaps thought suicide was his best option. The fact that he did it in front of his wife and her family may suggest that he realised that he is her property, (as she repeatedly told him that she owns him). Alternatively, maybe he thought that she would change her mind about forcing him out of the house. His suicide attempt also signifies the depth of his pain, being isolated, rejected, and the feeling of being betrayed by the person whom he thought loved him. While he was vomiting the poison out, he endured further abuse from his mother-in-law. The mother-in-law called him a kaffir, a derogatory name which was used during the apartheid era when referring to black people. The fact that his mother-in-law kept saying they must leave the kaffir to die reinforced Charles' thoughts of his life being meaningless, without a purpose.

Sub-Theme: Socio-Economic Effects

One participant experienced socio-economic losses, like losing a job or their home because of the abuse.

Ngwako lost his job because he had to travel to his parents' home to address his house that burnt down. When he came back to Gauteng, he had lost his job. He has also experienced losing his home because of his wife fighting with the rest of the family:

"*Yes, I did not know the story yet. I went home, when I get there. They said, `our child we like you` that issues had now been resolved. I came back to Pretoria and found the news that I no longer have the job. I went to work at Sandton, as I was working in Sandton, I got another call again saying that the house has burned down I then went to traditional doctors and church, wanting to know why did the house went under fire. At home, they told me what set the house on fire and that my wife talks too much and that, the house was set on fire by my younger brother`s wife. Because they were always fighting*".

Ngwako further stated that he was physically injured by his wife to an extend that he stayed off work.

"She once beat me up for this hand to be oedematous and spent days away from work. I spend 2 days away from work. When I called my boss at work, he said to me, it will be better if I got separated with her, because now I stay away from work because of her doings".

Ngwako reported experiencing socio-economic effects due to IPV, which was extended to his family. This has affected Ngwako's livelihood; instead of being at work he had to travel home (Limpopo) to address problems between his wife and parents. Consequently, he lost his job. Therefore, he had to find another job; his wife's behaviour caused him to take leave in the new job because his house back in Limpopo was burnt down. Ngwako seems to believe in witchcraft, that what happened was outside the norm. This is evident because he did not go straight home to discuss the matter with the people who stay there. Instead, he went to a traditional doctor and church wanting to know the reason behind his house burning down. The situation worsened to the point where his boss advised him to leave the relationship as he had sustained injuries and could not work.

Sub-Theme: Incarceration

One participant expressed being incarcerated as a consequence of the abuse.

Daniel never thought that his relationship with his partner would get him incarcerated, while he tried reporting the abuse, he was the one arrested:

"So, I never thought that relationship will cause me headache or will cause me to be in jail, to cause me to go to…… what do you call it? Diversion sections, for anger management, and I am not an anger person". "At hospital, they said J 84. I even tried talking to the colonel, has never taken my story. I prefer not to mention his name; Instead, I have made myself to be arrested".

Daniel divulged that he got himself arrested; he communicates a sense of self-blame; if he did not try to open a case against his partner who was a police officer he probably would not have been incarcerated. Daniel is the one who was hospitalised, yet he was the one arrested. His partner's manipulation of the legal system evoked emotional distress, as Daniel mentioned that he never thought this relationship would cause him a headache.

Theme Four: Coping Strategies Against the Abuse

This theme relates to how the participants cope with the abuse they have experienced. This theme emerged from an exploration of the participants' coping strategies. The following sub-themes emerged: participants' help-seeking behaviour and maladaptive coping styles.

Sub-Theme: Help-Seeking Behaviour

This sub-theme reveals various help-seeking behaviour employed by the participants. This help-seeking behaviour includes seeking help from their social support structures like the pastor, family members, colleague and friends; consulting with the elders in the families; professional support; and belief in ancestral protection.

i. **Social support***:* Participants who sought help expressed their experiences of social support, as evidenced below:

Bokang relied on his pastor for support to the point that he felt he was troubling her with his problems*:* "*So since I…I came back. Mommy (he was referring to Mamoruti) phoned me…Mamoruti (woman pastor) and said, Bokang what happened*? *Why didn't you tell me*? *And then I said, you know what. I didn't want to trouble you anymore. I just wanted her to handle her issues*".

Bokang also sought for help from his wife's side of the family. For instance, his mother-in-law knew about the abuse, she at some point witnessed her daughter verbally attacking her

husband. He does not seek help from his family because he is trying to defend her: *So, in most cases I…in most cases I would defend that by not telling my own family but talking to her family that I did. Her mother came many times. I remember one incident uhh…She…the mother did visit us. Uhh…and when I was seated with her and the mother. We were in the lounge. When we were in the lounge after eating. I put my plate down next to me. That was a big issue for her. She started shouting at me. In front of the mother, and the mother reacted and said (pause) is this how you treat this husband of yours*?"

Mojalefa was laughed at by a colleague whom he thought was a nice man when he tried to share his story: "*Well, I have tried talking to my colleague. I have a colleague, a nice brother, I like. But then I was disappointed someday when I tried to explain and share my abuse with him, I got a terrible laugh*".

Lesetja received support from his friends: "*Yeah from my friends. I talk to my friends and we talk*".

Other participants received support from their families once they found out that they were in abusive relationships.

Daniel's family is very supportive of him. The family found out that he was in an abusive relationship because he had spent the night in a correctional centre. His mother indicated to him that he could move in with her as long as he separated from his abusive partner. When he came back from a night in prison, he then moved out. His mother supported him*: "No…I fetched my belongings from the house. I went and tried… I spoke to my mother. My mom agreed that I can go back to our house only if… "You separated from this woman, and she was not supposed to be near you and you near her". Yes. I know I stay with my mother. With my mother because I realise that I'll be in trouble if I can continue with her. Yes…my mother and sister are treating me well".*

In Bokang's case, despite being abused by his female partner, he still relied on his female pastor and later also requested his mother-in-law to intervene as opposed to his male pastor. Though he asked for help because he wants his marriage to work, he was still fearful of being laughed at by his male counterpart as he had tried to talk to his male colleague when he was still married to his first wife. This also speaks to him being hopeful that these women would talk to his wife woman-to-woman. Traditionally, young African women are counselled by the older women, specifically in areas like taking care of their husbands and children. Mojalefa, on the other hand, felt ridiculed, his manhood challenged by the fact that he tried to discuss his abuse with his male colleague. He used the word "tried" to explain, meaning that he did not go into detail before the colleague's laugh disempowered him. The difference between Bokang and Mojalefa is that Bokang relied on women for support and he received support, Mojalefa sought for support from a male colleague, he did not receive the support he expected instead he was silenced. Lesetja, on the other hand, received support from his friends. Interestingly, Lesetja was not physically or verbally abused like Bokang and Mojalefa; he received support; he was being abused by being denied access to his child. Fathers being denied access to children might not be defined as a humiliating form of abuse, and it is not a social taboo as many children grow up with absent fathers.

ii. **Consulting with the elders in the families**: Other participants followed the traditional route of consulting with the elders in their families to help them resolve their problems:

Matsobane, was disappointed by the traditional approach as his uncles were unable to resolve his family issues, so he sought the legal route as an alternative. He went and reported the matter to the magistrate.

"*With uncles, I do not know what happened, we are no longer close as before. Not knowing what they are planning, or things are now working. I then decided to follow the law, for I know the law… When we got to court, the magistrate*".

Thabo approached his and his wife's families asking for an intervention. His wife's side of the family refused to meet, so did his wife, as she did not want to meet for a family discussion because she does not want to be humiliated: "*We talked about it and I even told the elders about it. I went to the elder of both families. Her family and my family. I explained the problem to them. I said we have this and that problem. The family did not want to …. What shall I say? they did not want to come and listen what the problem was …they never came…**Researcher**: Whose family? **Participant:** My wife's family. Yes, she was angry because she said I am humiliating her. Remember that things that are said are sensitive. It is things that…they are humiliating remember? Understand? No one wants to attend a family meeting. Very intimate things are discussed. She feels they humiliate her, but for me, it is reality. A reality that happens daily*".

In traditional African communities, if there are marital problems in the home, the elders in the families are requested to intervene as indicated by Matsobane who consulted the uncles for assistance, no fruits were yielded from this intervention, instead distance grew between him and his uncles. Thabo approach both his and his wife's family to intervene, due to the nature of the problems his wife and her family refused as his wife does not want to be humiliated in front of her family. He felt that her reason was unfair as she humiliates him daily and wanted her to feel humiliated.

iii. Professional support: Percy expressed that he received support from a police officer:

"*Eh you see, I've got this guy, he is a police guy, and actually he knew what he was doing, he actually told me okay, listen you don't have to bottle everything in your stomach. But you*

needed to talk, I mean some sense, you need to talk, and then he actually said a lot of women don't understand that you could be arrested, we are putting you in these 4 walls, referring to the cells".

Thabo sought after professional counselling as a result of the abuse.

Thabo realised that he needed someone to talk to because there were somethings that he could not tell his family. There were intimate details that he felt he could not divulge to his family:

"First, in such cases, you need someone to talk to isn't it. Something's are too sensitive to discuss with family…they want someone…something's are sensitive especially when it comes to sexual affairs and stuff".

He then contacted LoveLife, they advised him also to contact Families South Africa (FAMSA) should he need face-to-face counselling. He received counselling from LoveLife and FAMSA; he received telephonic and face-to-face counselling, which helped him to cope because he received regular support. He had the following to say:

"*Yes… they advised me that, if I needed to talk to someone face-to-face, there is FAMSA in Soweto. I met a lady called Jennifer (pseudonym) well… she was someone of my age group. …So, we could…you see…I was able to open to them, because we are almost the same age. So at least emotionally I had a person whom I could open to, because we were of the same age. Yes, I had found someone I could talk to either Love Life…I would phone when I felt down. If I felt that I wanted to talk to Jennifer face-to-face, I could go there. I would…I would go and talk to her at FAMSA. So, this is what helped me to cope…it wasn't easy. And even so as you talk to him, he listens and does not interrupt you. You see? They keep quiet and you can talk until…Yes …and when you feel satisfied, he will ask you questions here and there. You see? Yes…no it really helped me a lot*".

Percy expressed receiving support from a police officer. The police officer empowered him by listening to him and encouraging him to disclose the abuse. This indicates that some police officers are aware of IPV against men and know the protocol they ought to follow should a man report abuse.

Thabo sought professional counselling and ended up opening up about his abuse to a female counsellor who was the same age. He attributed being able to open up to her that she is the same age as him; he felt that he could be emotionally vulnerable with her again because of the age. He tries to make sense of his ability to be emotionally vulnerable with this woman on account of her age instead of her being a woman. He is trying to understand why he felt he could trust her after all he has been through. He indicates that disclosing was not easy but talking about the abuse helped him cope with the experience. He appreciated that he could talk, and he was listened to without any judgement from the counsellors' side.

iv. Belief in ancestral protection: Lekau's belief in ancestral protection helped him in coping with the abuse that he experienced:

"*No, what she decided to do was to punish me with my biological child by distancing him away from me. But as I said, I'm still repeating myself, I believe on my ancestors, I knew that they would not leave this thing unturned. The child is even married, and the mother did not even inform me. Yes, my biological child but this thing as I am saying my ancestors, I believe in them, as they have shown me they even visited the child, my biological child. My biological child came to ask for forgiveness, and she knows that that boy is not my biological child because her mother usually confides in her friends about this boy and my biological child would eavesdrop, so my child knows that that boy is not my biological child*".

Lekau has mentioned several times during the interview that he is a traditional man and believes in his ancestors; they showed him that his first child was not his. He was sure that they

will open his biological child's eyes to see that his ex-wife used the child to punish him. Therefore, his belief enabled him to cope.

Sub-Theme: Maladaptive Coping Strategies

This sub-theme reflects on the participants' maladaptive coping strategies. This was evident in the following: Most of the participants indicated that they are not coping. Thus, resorting to the use of self-talk, avoidance of seeking help and use of alcohol as can be seen below:

i. **Self-talk: Charles** relied on self-talk and would tell himself that his wife would change:

"*Because she was my first woman I meet in my life and we already married so always before I go to bed I go to the bathroom and I sit there and I say to myself maybe one day she will change because I don't believe of divorce*".

ii. **Avoidance of seeking help***:* **Bokang** said that it took him a long time to seek help because of pride and embarrassment, resulting in him suffering prolonged abuse. Furthermore, shame has led to him not telling his significant others, including his family about the abuse. He explains it thus:

"*As a man uhh…I…I have…I must acknowledge that with men. We are very much uhh…full of pride. Uhh…firstly, we make things. We will hide things even from your colleagues or friends whoever. Your relative because you think you can handle it. Well, my…in most cases, I wouldn't…I didn't like to even still now. I don't like to tell my own family*".

Charles suggests that, in our society, it is unmanly to be a victim of abuse. He is implying that it is difficult to seek help due to the fear of being ridiculed by the community of men: "*And in our world now if a man says he is being abused by his wife then everyone will look at him very bad because he is a man but a good man is the one he never hurt another people; it's the good man who always stays away from trouble and it is the same as I was doing*".

iii. **Alcohol use: Percy** uses alcohol to sedate himself: "*You see, one of the reasons I am drinking a lot. This is very personal and sensitive. Yeah you know she drove me into drinking a lot, trying to sedate, my own eh tabulations, my own eh yeah*".

Self-talk is an adaptive coping strategy however in this context, Charles used self-talk to convince himself that things will change between him and his wife. He was in denial; he would tell himself that he is in this relationship for the long haul as he does not believe in divorce. The primary reason Bokang and Charles did not seek help is from the need to maintain a masculine identity therefore, they would hide the fact that they are being abused from family, friends and colleagues. Percy developed alcohol dependency as he used alcohol to numb the pain. This is also maladaptive as when he sobers up, he would still be in an abusive relationship.

Theme Five: Trauma Bonding

This theme relates to expressed reasons for these men staying in abusive relationships. The following are the sub-themes that emerged from this theme: belief system, child maintenance, fear of losing children, and avoiding economic loss.

Sub-Theme: Belief System

Most participants' reasons for staying in an abusive relationship were based on their belief system. Most of which included their spiritual beliefs, family cohesion, and 'till death do us part'. As evidenced below:

i. **Spiritual belief: Bokang**'s reason for staying in his current marriage is his belief in Christian values. This is Bokang's second marriage as he has been divorced before and he indicated that he had not found Jesus as yet when he divorced his first wife, which is not an option in the current marriage:

"Ok. Correct. Thank you for that question. My belief uhh…was and is, always that you do all your best to resolve any issues. Uhh…by then I was not uhh…uhh…a repented person. However, now I am a repented person".

ii. **Family cohesion: *Thabo*** does not want a broken family, although he comes from a broken home:

"*Yes, the reason why we have children is that we wanted to build a family, a strong family. I believe in family even if I come from a broken family. I believe that family, family is important, and children grow well when things are like that, you see? I would be depriving my children their natural rights…what can I say birth rights; to be with their brother under one roof*".

Maropeng wants to keep his family intact no matter the cost, because he grew up in a family with both parents, he wants the same for his children. He had the following to say:

"*I am thinking for my kids, because I didn't grow with my parents separated, I grew up with both my parents in the house, so I believe that parents should both be in the house*".

iii. **"Till death do us part":** Other participants expressed their understanding of the meaning of the phrase "Till death do us part" to imply the following: it is cheaper to stay married than divorcing, accepting the abuse, feeling responsible for the wife, and having love for the wife.

For instance, ***Ngwako*** indicated that divorcing his wife would cost him and his father, with particular reference to his father's cows. According to him, this would be a problem because his parents had warned him against his relationship:

"*Yes, you see our law* (Sotho culture) *is not the same as that in South Africa; and here when you divorce a woman, there are cows that needs to be given away too. I have only two cows, the rest are for my dad and I know that if I divorce her, those two cows and some of my dad cows will be taken away. My family will end up fight with me, since well they have told me to*

leave this woman since from the beginning. Because of my soft heart, I chose to suffer this way".

Ngwako further felt responsible for his wife:

"*Thinking that maybe her family will say something; if I can get separated with her, here in Joburg, because of our problems, her family will always be knowing that I am with her*".

For **Bokang**, this meant accepting the wife's verbal abuse because it is her nature; thus, implying he has to bear this as part of the marital burden:

"*But it's her nature. I think because even her own family, when she has differences with them. She takes them on verbally*".

Bokang has accepted that his wife will not change and there is nothing he can do about it; therefore, he has accepted he will be verbally abused.

Two participants reported that they stayed in their relationships because they loved their partners:

Thabo**:** "firstly, *Yoh…I loved her, …*". *Secondly, I believe in family.*

Mojalefa: "*I love this woman; she makes me happy and she is the mother of my two beautiful kids. Leaving her would change my life*".

The reasons for staying in abusive relationships provided by these men include the psychological investments in their families, and their commitment to their marriages and children. Commitment to their marriages was associated with their religious beliefs as mentioned by Bokang. Bokang's meaning of being a repented person means following what the word of God says about marriage, the Bible does talk about God hating divorce, therefore he will not divorce his second wife. Cultural customs as indicated by Ngwako keeps him in the marriage as divorcing his wife will have an economical effect on the extended family. Thabo

and Maropeng's main reason was their concern regarding the wellbeing of their children; they wanted to stay in the marriage so their children would be raised by both parents. They believe that for children to grow and develop well, both parents must be in the same home. However, they have not thought about the negative impact that witnessing abuse has on children. Thabo comes from a broken home and he does not wish his children to have the same experience as he did. Maropeng, on the other hand, does not come from a broken home and thus desires the same for his children. Therefore, both Thabo and Maropeng are concerned about their children's wellbeing. Both Thabo and Mojalefa reported staying in an abusive relationship because of love. For Mojalefa, this love is accompanied by not wanting to disappoint his children and thus, to prevent negative changes in his life and the children's.

Sub-Theme: Child Maintenance

Ngwako's concern pertained to maintaining his children from afar. He suggested that he would not be able to pay maintenance "*I saw that maintenance will bother me*".

Ngwako indicates that he would rather stay in the marriage and take care of the children rather than separating from their mother and pay maintenance from afar.

Sub-Theme: Fear of Losing Children

Some of the participants stayed in the abusive relationship because of the fear of losing their children to their partners as evidenced below:

Ngwako expressed that he stayed in the relationship because of the children, it seems like the wife was also not interested in their relationship because she told him that she could replace him: "*I am just staying for the sake of our children, if we had no children. Because she says to me, she is still young and has more chances of finding another person I would have divorced her long time ago*.

Maropeng worries that if he leaves, he will lose his children to his wife because of the protection order that is against him:

"*My family says I should leave the house, I can't leave the house because that's my house and I can't take my kids and stay with them at my home, what if they give them to her because the protection order is on her*".

Based on the above-mentioned response, these men reported staying in abusive relationships because of fear of losing their children. For Ngwako, the fear was motivated by the wife's lack of interest in their relationship while Maropeng's fear emanated from his wife falsely accusing him of abuse thus, making him anxious about losing the custody of the children.

Sub-Theme: Avoiding Economic Loss

The other reason why **Maropeng** stayed in an abusive relationship is because he did not want to lose his house. He worries that this will happen if he decides to leave:

"*My family says I should leave the house, I can't leave the house because that's my house and I can't take my kids and stay with them at my home* (his parents' house), *what if they give them to her because the protection order is on her*".

Based on the above-mentioned response, Maropeng, has several reasons for staying in an abusive relationship one of them is economical. He has invested in a family home and not wanting to leave is an indication that he does not want to lose his house.

Theme Six: Experiences with Helping systems

This theme reflects the participants' perceptions that because they were men, they were not treated fairly when they sought help for the abuse. In most of the cases, they perceived that they received poor psycho-social support. The following sub-themes were yielded: difficulty

related to accessing financial support; experiences with the health system; secondary victimisation, and apartheid law.

Sub-Theme: Difficulty Related to Accessing Financial Support

Charles reported that he had difficulty accessing financial support, since he cannot work as he is not a South African citizen, he is from Morocco and he has a student visa: "*I need the support. I am waiting for this article 43. So, for now my lawyer is applying for article 43 for maintenance for me to rent a room where I can stay because like I said I have nothing. My lawyer he told me she has applied for the article 43, so I am waiting if I am going to get maintenance or am going to go I don't know what's happening in my life anymore".*

Sub-Theme: Experiences with The Health System

Daniel reported having been hospitalised because of the injuries he sustained from being physically abused. He had a positive experience with the health system as they gave him a J88 form, to report that he was abused and sustained injuries.: "*Yes, I was bleeding too much. I spent one week at the hospital… they said J 88"*

Sub-Theme: Secondary Victimisation

Five participants had expressed secondary victimisation by the justice system, specifically the police and the court of law. The following were expressed:

i. **Victimisation by the police: Daniel** felt that his partner abused her power of being a police officer because while he was receiving support from the hospital staff, the police ended up arresting him upon being discharged from the hospital. This is because the woman he was in a relationship with was a police officer, and the police ignored the fact that she was the one who stabbed him. He further experienced institutionalised secondary victimisation as the police refused to recognise him as a victim of abuse:

"*because she is a police officer it turned to look as if I am the one who is wrong at hospital… I even tried talking to the colonel, has never taken my story. I prefers not to mention his name; instead, I have made myself to be arrested… the problem is, you know the woman I dated was a cop. I do not know if she used contact or she used something for her. For me to get arrested. Even today, I can't tell you, why I got arrested on that day. I got arrested whereas I was the one to open a case I still do not know. Does the female police officer have more rights than us or what? Cause it has been a while I complained at police station, there is no one who take my issues serious*".

Bokang also reported being ridiculed by the police officers and being denied a protection order, as illustrated below:

"*I was even laughed at by these police. Some of them. They even asked, is it difficult for you to control your wife. However, this person continues coming violently to me. Can I have a protection order here? Well the police you know having made a joke out of it. One of them decided to (pause) take the case and call the perpetrator, who is my wife, to come and appear there at the police station, and they talked to her. Though, few months later, it did manifest again. They talked to her. They did not give a…her that protection order*".

Bokang further felt like he was being judged and not supported, and he said that:

"*I think in my opinion, they were just trying to be judgemental and think they can because maybe that is how they deal with their own issues at home. They felt I'm unable to…control matters in my home. They felt that's the best way to can do it. They just came and…and uhh…called her and talked to her that we have received a complaint, and this is what uhh…we would do. Should they be any other further incidences and it gets reported by the victim uhh…We will advise the victim accordingly to take other further measures*".

Duma went to report his wife for abuse and the police rejected his case and when he retaliated, she reported him, and he was arrested:

"*Yes…when I arrived at the police station, I reported my case …they did not listen to me*". *She started insulting me. That's why I become angry and beat her. When I hit her, she left for the police station and came back with police. When she came back, she was accompanied by the police. They took me.* ***Researcher:*** *Then the police… The first time when you went to the police…were they the very same police?* ***Participant:*** *Those were the ones who arrested me, the same. Oh-they arrived and took me to the police station. I slept there, they released me that Saturday morning*".

Other participants expressed their experience with the unjust implementation of the law, which further victimises them. This is unjust because of how the law treats women versus how it treats the men, especially during court proceedings:

ii. **Victimisation by the Courts: Maropeng** feels that the justice system was not fair because there was no proof that he abused his wife, he is suspicious of the whole process that due diligence was not followed and that the justice system is gender biased; *"I don't know how it works because you can't say a person assaulted you without proof, there are things called J88, when a person is being assaulted he/she goes to the clinic/hospital to fill that J88 and a doctor's note and take them to court, but there was no such a thing at court. Yes they believed her because she is a woman. We only attended court twice for them to finalise the protection order. Court only focusses on one side. Yes, it does not cater for men because I don't know how they perceive men, a man's problems must not be voiced out, only women can report their problems, you must not even talk, when you attempt to talk they don't even listen to you".*

Matsobane went to court to get visitation rights to see his child, but his case was dismissed because the mother of the child refused to honour the court summons:

"When we got to court, the magistrate said, he will not be able to handle such process. In the absence of my wife, Yes, court said, it will send her a letter, for her to show up herself at a certain date. I pass the massage to her. We communicate via phones. Even though she fights, she sometimes not takes my calls. When I called her on that day, I said come to court so that we can sort out this issue. She said, No! I got nothing to do with court things I got nothing to do with that I explained to the court, people refused said we dismiss this case. Poor men you shall see how you deal with this matter on your own. Court failed, I said ok. Court failed. What is an alternative plan now? I then see that now. No! This thing does not seat well with a me".

Sub-Theme: The Apartheid Law

Lekau blames the apartheid law for the biased implementation of the law in the current system:

"*It is the one that lead to the suffering of many men, even now as I'm speaking, there are men who were arrested for somethings they do not know of, or wrongfully arrested, and women the way they are, they can plan, I was saying that the first law of whites is the one that oppressed men, because the court was always agreeing with women, or being on the women's side, and even the corrupt police officers. I once caught some of the police officers with my ex-partner after this incidence*".

Lekau's response thus suggested the need for a shift in the country's political landscape to change the perception of men and to accommodate their needs, as it does those of women.

The responses given by the participants regarding their experiences with the support that they sought pertained to the financial, health, police, legal and political systems. The experiences were mostly negative with only one participant reporting a positive experience with his interaction with the health system. Nevertheless, he was still victimised by the justice system within the health system. Charles expressed his frustration with the law on his

application for article 43 is an interim relief awarded to a spouse who has no income; it is an interim maintenance pending divorce. He felt that the process was taking a long time, considering that he desperately needed a place to stay since he was forced out of their home. Daniel expressed having had a positive encounter with the health system, after he was discharged from the hospital, he was given a completed J88 form, which is a legal document that a medical doctor must complete should a patient be admitted with injuries that warrant further legal investigation on the circumstances surrounding the patients' injuries. This document would assist Daniel in opening a case of IPV against his partner.

From the above-mentioned excerpts, it is also evident that some of the participants experienced secondary victimisation; from abuse of power, institutionalised secondary victimisation. In this case institutionalised secondary victimisation that was experienced by Daniel indicates that certain police officers will protect another police officer even in wrongdoing at the expense of Daniel who was a victim of IPV. Unlike in Daniel's case where the police member was his ex-partner; other participants reported being ridiculed by police members in the general population.

Bokang indicated that the police officers laughed at him and told him that he cannot control his wife. This means that there is a perception that abuse only occurs to a person who cannot control another person or only to a man who cannot control his wife. They refused to give him a protection order, however, male police officer who seem to have understood his plight took the case by calling Bokang's wife and explained to her the law with regard to IPV. Therefore, the police are aware of the criminal aspect of female violence against men; it seems like they apply more leniency to female perpetrators. The conversation between the police officer and his partner who was abusive to him left Bokang feeling judged and not supported as he felt that the police officer was trying to show him how to control a woman.

Another form of secondary victimisation that was reported was the unfair implementation of the law. Duma went to the police station to open a case against his abusive wife, the police rejected the case and upon his arrival at home, his wife was mocking him about him reporting her to the police. He then retaliated and she went to the very same police station, spoke to the same police officers that Duma spoke to and they responded to his wife's case and Duma was arrested for abuse. Duma and Maropeng both felt that the justice system was biased towards women. They felt that they did not receive any services because they are men. Matsobane's visitation rights case was dismissed because the mother of his child refused to honour the courts summons. In trying to make sense of this, if Matsobane was the one who refused to appear at court would they dismiss the case or have him arrested? Furthermore, he was told "*Poor men you shall see how you deal with this matter on your own. Court failed, I said ok. Court failed. What is an alternative plan now?*" This means that there are no services for men who want to parent their children, he should just accept that there are no laws that give fathers' rights to be fathers to their children. Meaning that mothers have every right to choose if they want the father of their children in the children's life without worrying about what is best for the children.

Lekau blamed the apartheid government for the biasness of the law. He suggested that the law oppressed men as the legal system only listens to women and not to men. He further stated that this law promoted corrupt police officers because during the time when his ex-wife was taking him to court, he saw her with some of the police officers so he suspected that the police officers were helping her plan against him. All these participants were victimised by the justice system because they are abused men.

Theme Seven: Men's Empowerment Needs

This theme stems from the participants' empowerment needs. Participants indicated that they need appropriate socialisation, professional counselling, fair implementation of the law, psycho-social support (which included collaborative task teams, support groups, and awareness campaigns), and legal support.

Sub-Theme: Appropriate Socialisation

Mpho advises that men should speak up, to go against what they have been taught. This speaks to better socialising the boy child: "*I would advise them to not just sit and do nothing and die due to cardiac failure, telling themselves that if maybe they voice out their feelings then people would think somehow of them. But I had to go out and talk with other people, I talked with them though they have a concept that a man should die with a secret. There are things that you can keep a secret but others you cannot because they may cause future problems. That is why sometimes you may hear that a man has killed his wife and children*".

Sub-Theme: Professional Counselling

Some participants suggested that they need professional counselling to form part of the support for men.

Lekau*, "No actually what happened after the whole thing I think for me, I need to have a good counselling of the whole thing, like it's the first time I spoke of this, only my family knows about it but you know, I didn't get to any place that can, whereby I can state my thing*".

Thabo, "*First, in such cases you need someone to talk to isn't it. Some things are too sensitive to discuss with family…they want someone…some things are sensitive especially when it comes to sexual affairs and stuff*".

Mojalefa, "*Well, I can say I really do need some counselling*".

Sub-Theme: Fair Implementation of The Law

Participants have indicated the need for the implementation of the law to be fair and not be gender biased, that they too should be heard in the courts of law and be assisted by the police without any judgement. The participants had the following to say:

Bokang, "*I think uhh…uhh…the…the…the…some of the laws uhh…regulating uhh…uhh…this uhh…uhh…uhh…activities of abuse and the like. It should change. In a way that perhaps it would be better if (pause) for instance, one person. It doesn't matter whether it's male or female*".

Thabo, "*There are many people who are sitting having problems…especially men. Things are done to them but they cannot say anything because they have no platform. I am not saying that the law is biased. We don't say that the law sides with men or woman. We want things to be balanced. Even the Constitution is very clear. Equality. I mean equality does not mind whether you are male or female*".

Lesetja, "*Please let the court hear this because there is a lot of people and they are not saying anything and there are those who kill…. Obviously I feel like strangling her but I can't because she might go to the police and get me arrested. When I go to court they will tell me that the child should only visit and I don't want that I want her to stay with me.*"

Lekau, "*No, what I want actually its, uhm, eish, I'm not so educated but if the law can change somehow, more especially on the men side...* ***Researcher:*** *oh, in terms of having access to the kids?* ***Participant:*** *yes, these people like now they've set 50/50, let it be the real 50/50. I must have a word, she must have a word yes, its fine. But now, the law, is still oppressing males, like I'm saying that there are men, many, I can't count them, who are arrested for nothing*".

Sub-Theme: Psycho-social Support

Some participants reported a need for psycho-social support to help them heal the psychological wounds resulting from IPV. This sub-theme includes support groups, psycho-social support, collaborative task teams, and awareness campaigns.

i. **Support groups:** Duma indicated that the support groups would allow men to be free to talk about their experiences without being afraid of being labelled as weak.

Duma *"Yes, you must go and complain because there is a saying that a man must not weep outwardly. You must not be afraid of being discriminated against because you are being abused by a woman. Or you are ruled by a woman, and a man must not be weak. So, these forums or support groups will be a structure so that men can go there and talk there".*

ii. **Psycho-social support: Bokang:** "*So that uhh…the story could be looked at and weighed up…out uhh…with the information from the victim and also the perpetrator and come up with a…a…a programme where now all be uhh…uhh…will be engaged so that this can be rooted out and…and be resolved. Either than being judgemental where now you say ahh this man is a stupid*".

Lekau: "*Yah (yes) but what I like it's if this thing, if there is any organisation that can help let it be known, let there be any number that people can know worldwide, because some of these things people don't like to talk about them, they are hiding them, that's why we men are in a big problem*".

Maropeng: "*I would be happy if there may be someone helping me with my children because I think for them and the divorce also impacts my children in a way which is not right. No, I can't divorce*".

Mojalefa: "*Well, I would say I will need all the help as I can get for example if counselling, I will clearly like, psycho-social support".*

iii. **Collaborative task teams:** Some of the participants called for a multidisciplinary team to collaborate in providing abused men with support, in an event where a man goes to the police to report abuse that the police are able to refer the victim to a social worker or a relevant NGO for further support, as evidenced below:

Bokang*: "If possible, maybe in my opinion. They (police) should have referred this matter to the social worker. Uhh…or any other party. Who is willing to assist maybe you know uhh…the NGO's that are maybe re…involved in such matters"?*

Maropeng*, "My brother often tells me that things like these are scarce, they don't happen often, he witnesses this for the first time with me, but I must get counselling or see a social worker with regard to my children because I don't see me and my wife getting back together".*

iv. **Awareness campaigns:** Some of the participants expressed their empowerment needs to include awareness campaigns as this will educate society regarding the plight of men. As discussed by Lekau and Mojalefa, conducting awareness campaign will educate society about male victims of abuse and these campaigns will help change the attitudes of people in the helping services and in the implementation of the law. As evidenced below:

Lekau*, "I even tried to go to the radio station in our area to try to can talk about it, but you know people that were there never took me serious, really they never took me serious, whereby I just decided to keep quiet. So, I don't want to die with this. yeah, this thing I think it will change the attitude of the police, this thing I think it can even be given input to the law to change it, way of punishing men for no reason".*

Mojalefa*, "And the most important thing I would like men to can raise their voice talk about these things and then hopeful this abuse, male abuse will settle down".*

Sub-Theme: Legal Support

Some participants expressed being in need of legal services, for guidance with regard to family matters and IPV.

Thabo: "*I need legal assistance; he must guide me as how to can do this*".

Mpho: "*When the situation is like this, the situation is already in a manner that I cannot predict what will happen because already I am in the process of court so I would like to be assisted with a lawyer if it is possible as I cannot afford a lawyer like I have already stated. My ex-partner has already promised the court that she will bring along her own lawyer, a family lawyer. I don't even know her family lawyer, I would be seeing it for the first time. So, the support that I would need is to have people on my side that will help me because I do not have the powers*".

The participants' responses above suggest that men should go against what they have been taught and talk when they have problems. This speaks to the need to socialise the boy child appropriately to express their emotions through conversation because the way boys are currently socialised could lead to health problems like a cardiac failure. As expressed by the participants, another empowerment need is a need for professional counselling as some of these men realised that they have serious problems that talking to family about will not help. They realised that a professional counsellor would not judge them, and they will be able to open up to them about everything, including sensitive matters.

It is also evident from above that these men are advocating for changes in how the law regarding IPV is implemented; that people who implement the law should do it fairly without being biased against men. There is a desperate need from these men to be listened to by the

legal system to prevent them from taking matters into their own hands, as indicated by Lesetja that he has thoughts of strangling his ex-girlfriend.

The participants also need psycho-social support in the forms of support groups and collaborative task teams. These would address the needs like being assisted with the counselling of their children so that the impact of divorce is reduced; their own healing and rebuilding themselves after a traumatic experience like IPV; a family programme that would engage with both partners to get to the root of the problems instead of assuming that men are always perpetrators of abuse.

Based on the above responses, it is also evident that these men believe that if there are awareness campaigns about the abuse of men, they will also be taken seriously and they will also get services from the police, health services, and the judiciary system. They believe that there will be a change in how society views these issues and the campaigns will help men come out and talk about being victims of abuse.

Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the reader to the research findings of this study. The demographic characteristics of the participants who took part in the study were presented in Table 3.1—followed by the reporting of the findings through an overview of 7 themes and the sub-themes, which were presented in Table 3.2.

Theme one addressed participants' expression of how they experienced IPV, and these experiences were presented under the sub-themes: denial of conjugal rights; false accusations; physical abuse; sexual abuse; psychological abuse; controlling behaviour; and economic abuse.

Theme two addressed circumstances as perceived by the participants that led to them being IPV victims and were presented under the sub-themes: cultural factors; psycho-social factors; socio-economic factors; and exploitation.

Theme three focused on the effects that IPV has on the participants and was discussed under the sub-themes: psychological effects; separation from partner; disintegration of families; inability to be intimate with an abusive partner; suicide attempt; socio-economic effects; and incarceration.

In theme four, the focus was on coping strategies that these abused men employ, and these were discussed under the following sub-themes: help-seeking behaviour and maladaptive coping strategies.

Theme five addressed trauma bonding, which explained why men stay in an abusive relationship and this was presented under the sub-themes: belief system; child maintenance; fear of losing children; and avoiding economic loss.

Theme six addressed participants' experiences with the helping systems and were presented under the following sub-themes: difficulty experienced related to accessing financial support; experiences with the health system; experienced secondary victimisation; and the apartheid law.

Finally, theme seven highlighted the participants' suggestions on the kind of help they need in order for them to feel supported. These empowerment needs were presented under the following sub-themes: appropriate socialisation; professional counselling; fair implementation of the law; psycho-social support; and legal support.

All these themes and sub-themes were substantiated by direct quotations from the participants' transcripts.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the findings using existing literature as a form of literature control.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS AND LITERATURE CONTROL

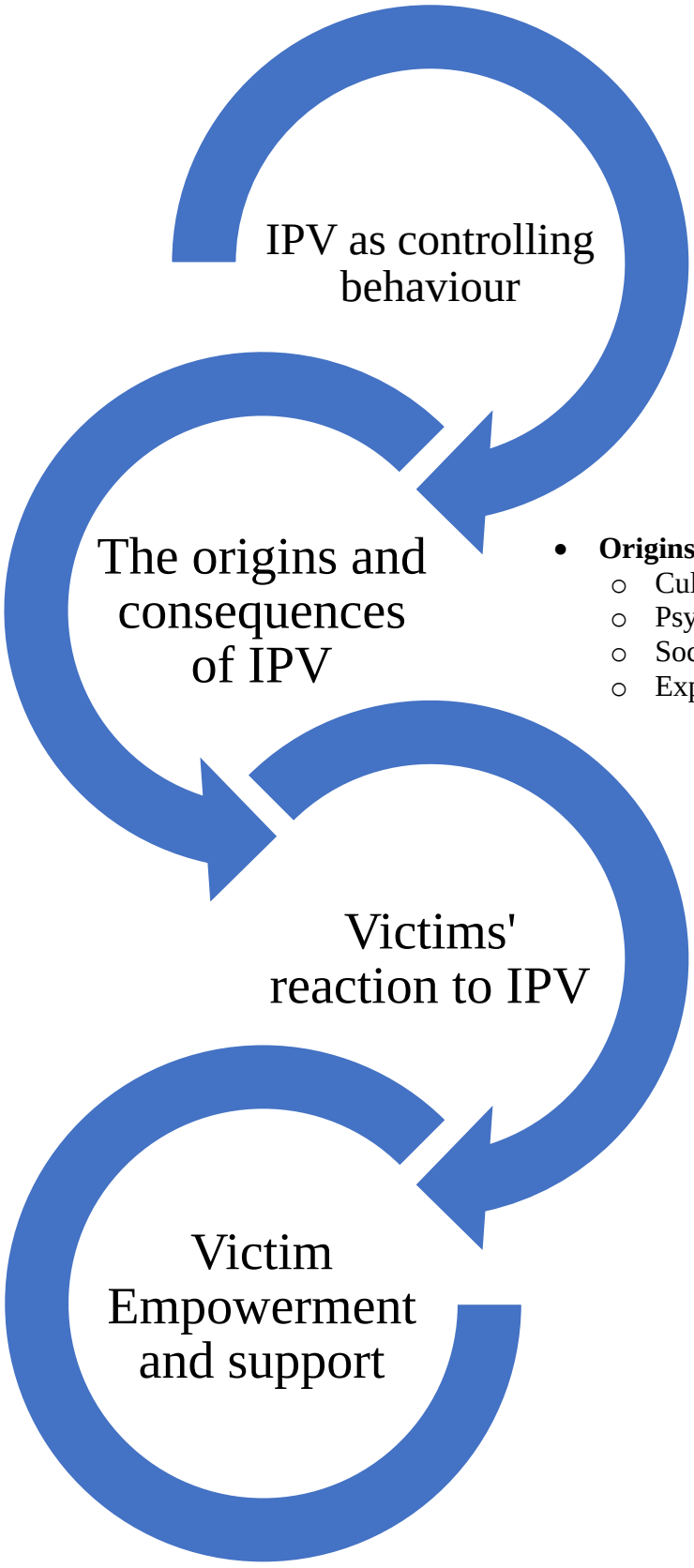
"*There is a gender construction in being a victim because men are not openly received as victims"* (Agbulos, 2017, p. 7).

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe the lived experiences of men who have been abused by their female partners in Gauteng with the view of proposing guidelines for support for abused men. In Chapter four the findings of the study were presented and described. This chapter aims to increase understanding of the men's lived experiences of abuse as derived from their accounts and the researcher's interpretation of them. This discussion chapter will analyse the findings and contextualise these findings within existing literature following the IPA writing up procedures. This discussion chapter is depicted in Figure 5.1 below.

Figure 5.1

The phenomenon of IPV experiences among a sample of men in Gauteng



- Parental alienation
- Denial of conjugal rights
- False accusations
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological abuse
- Economic abuse

- **Origins**
  - Cultural
  - Psycho-social
  - Socio-economic
  - Exploitation

- **Consequences**
  - Psychological effects
  - Suicide attempt
  - Separation from partner
  - Socio-economic effects
  - Incarceration

- Reasons for staying in an abusive relationship
- Coping strategies

- Experiences with helping systems
- Empowerment needs

Discussion of Findings

Seven main themes were identified during the data analysis, namely, nature of IPV experienced; perceived causes of IPV (the sense they make of the abuse); effects of IPV; coping strategies as employed by abused men; trauma bonding; experiences with psycho-social support; and empowerment needs (See Chapter 4, Table 4.2 for an overview of the themes and sub-themes). In this chapter, the focus of the discussion is on aspects of the study that are crucial to adding to IPV knowledge and the development of support guidelines. The aspects are intertwined and leading to a combination of some of the main themes, as seen throughout the IPV experiences. These aspects will be discussed under the following headings: IPV as controlling behaviour; the origins and consequences of IPV; victims' reaction to IPV; and Victim Empowerment and Support.

IPV as Controlling Behaviour

Controlling behaviour is defined as "a range of acts designed to make a person dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour" (Stark, 2020; United Kingdom, Home Office, 2015, p. 3). Follingstad (2007) recognised that psychological, emotional and verbal abuse are used interchangeably with controlling behaviours. Controlling behaviour is embedded in all types of violence; hence sometimes the terms are interchangeable (Follingstad, 2007); for this reason, I found some of the male participants' narratives overlapping across physical, psychological, financial and sexual abuse.

In line with other work in this area (du Toit, 2010; Hogan, 2016; Scicluna, 2015; Tilbrook et, al., 2010), including the work of Walker et al. (2017), the men in this study had experienced controlling behaviour, mostly in conjunction with other types of abuse like physical, sexual,

psychological and economic abuse. In examining different types of controlling behaviours amongst partners, Walker et al. (2017) found that economic control was the most dominant type of controlling behaviour perpetrated by both females and males.

Although the current study was exploring experiences of abused men and did not measure the frequency of such abuse, it is clear that each man experienced various types of controlling behaviour. For instance, as shown in Chapter 4, Charles was sexually abused by his wife as he could not say no if he did not want to engage in sexual intercourse with her. Coupled with this was being threatened on several occasions to be removed forcefully from the house. He was also isolated from his family and friends. Furthermore, he could not choose the type of hairstyle he wanted. Studies have reported significantly higher scores amongst women's use of threat and their use of isolation as a means of control over men (Walker et al., 2017).

Hines, Brown and Dunning (2007) found that isolation was a standard controlling behaviour used by women. This was achieved by keeping their partners away from family and friends. Like Ngwako and Bokang, their wives tried to rift between them and their families; Ngwako's mother was called a witch while Bokang's wife controlled him economically.

The following section highlights the types through which controlling behaviour manifested among the participants' intimate relationships.

Controlling Behaviour Experienced through Parental Alienation

Parental alienation is a type of abuse that refers to a child's unwillingness to have a relationship with a parent for illogical, untrue reasons (Bernet et al., 2016); it is an outcome associated with alienating behaviours (Bernet et al., 2016). This behaviour intends to damage the other parent's character and their relationship with a child. This could be achieved through one parent talking badly about the other parent or the parent keeping the child away from the other parent, making it seem like the other parent does not want a child's relationship. This kind

of behaviour is mostly used in families that have separated and fight for the child's custody. Nevertheless, it does not mean that it does not occur in intact families (Baker & Verrocchio, 2014). Whether the alienating behaviour leads to the parent's complete rejection by the child or not; they still negatively impact the child and the alienated parent.

The consequences of parental alienation include children feeling rejected and unloved; anger; educational problems; and depression (Harman et al., 2016). The current study confirms the above definition as it shows that parental alienation behaviours lead to parental alienation, for example, a child being reluctant or refusing to have a relationship with one parent due to the alienating behaviours of another parent with whom the child resides.

In this study, parental alienation was achieved by the female partners denying their children's fathers access to them. In line with several studies (Corbally, 2014; Drijber et al., 2013; Hines & Saudino, 2003), women use their children to gain and maintain power and control over the male victim. One of the participants in this study was punished for not adhering to his former partner's demands by cutting his biological child's access. Another participant's former partner lied to him that the child did not want to see him. By doing this these women gave their children a wrong impression that their fathers wanted nothing to do with them.

"Child affected by parental relationship distress (CAPRD)" has been added into the DSM-5 that includes parental alienation behaviours like badmouthing a parent to a child or preventing the other parent from spending time with their children or making false accusations. Children exposed to IPV, including being alienated from their parent, have lower academic performance, poor psychological and social adjustment and higher incidences of behaviour disorder (Douglas & Hines, 2016). Section 18 of the South African Children's Act 38 of 2005 states the following regarding parental responsibilities and rights:

> A person may have either full or specific parental responsibilities and rights in respect of a child. The parental responsibilities and rights that a person may have in respect of a child include the responsibility and the right (i) to care for the child; (ii) to maintain contact with the child;(iii) to act as guardian of the child; and (iv) to contribute to the maintenance of the child. (p.38)

In summary, parental responsibility and rights entail access, contact, care, custody and guardianship of the child. According to the Act, only a competent court can revoke these parental responsibilities. Having analysed the Act, one can argue that the mothers of the children in this study did not follow the legal route; they have infringed upon the children's right to care, this being in respect of their fathers; the fathers have tried to maintain contact with their children, but the children's mothers hindered them. These findings suggest that not only are the men being abused, and the children are also experiencing abuse as they are being denied access to their fathers. Researchers have argued that using parental alienation behaviours to cause parental alienation is a form of child psychological abuse (Harman et al., 2018). UNICEF (2003) has also indicated that anyone who alienates a parent from their child is committing a crime, and there would be punishment for such criminality. Parental alienation is a form of family violence; thus far, there has been little research conducted in this area (Harman et.al., 2018). This research would be important to bring awareness to the impact this has on children.

Secondary abuse is experienced through child custody rulings; Corbally (2014) argued that denying fathers from experiencing fatherhood was the most controlling and enduring form of IPV. Furthermore, Berger et al. (2015) found that legal and administrative aggression predicted mental health issues for the child and the father. According to Hines et al. (2015), legal and administrative aggression refer to a partner manipulating the legal and administrative systems to hurt the other partner, like making false abuse claims.

This study found that men also experience IPV as victims and not as perpetrators as suggested by much literature (Drijber, 2013; Maubane, 2016; Migliaccio, 2002; Perryman & Appleton, 2016). While the men in this study experienced the same forms of IPV as those found among women, this study sought to highlight these forms of IPV's unique experiences among the men. Some authors refer to IPV as gender-based violence, but gender, in their studies, refers to women and ignores men's gender as victims (Dzinanye, 2017; Mkhize, 2017). Some authors have suggested that women and men equally perpetrate IPV. Furthermore, the problem is societal narratives as this promotes men only as perpetrators and women as victims always (Dutton, 2007; Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2005; Hines & Saudino, 2003). This narrative refutes that men can be IPV victims.

The findings of this study provide evidence that female perpetrated IPV against men does exist in South Africa. This study's findings are supported by a qualitative study that was conducted with 258 men who had experienced female-perpetrated violence in Australia; the study found that these men had experienced a range of physical, sexual, verbal, coercive controlling and manipulative behaviour (Walker et al., 2019).

Controlling Behaviour Experienced through Denial of Conjugal Rights

Another form of controlling behaviour as experienced by the participants was the denial of conjugal rights. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines conjugal rights as "the sexual rights or privileges implied by and involved in the marriage relationship; the right of sexual intercourse between husband and wife". Grossi (2014) claimed that the term conjugal rights remained undefined within the legislation. However, the legal fraternity agrees that the definition includes sexual intercourse amongst married couples as an aspect of marital rights. Although Watts et al., (1998) did not use the term conjugal rights but used the term

“withholding sex” they suggested that in Zimbabwe there is a belief that men have a right to have sex with their wives whenever they wanted. This is in line with the definition above.

While denial refers to the refusal to satisfy a request, in line with the above definition in this study, denial of conjugal rights was defined by the participant as a wife always refusing to satisfy her husband’s sexual needs. Based on this definition, one can see the importance of physical intimacy in an intimate relationship. Denial of conjugal rights is a form of abuse and can be classified under controlling behaviour through which the abuser seeks power over their victim. Kornrich et al. (2014) assert that men and women’s sexual desires are different; hence sex can be used as a resource for exchange. It is believed that men have a higher sex drive while with women, they can go for an extended period without needing sex. Therefore, in this case, it is suggested that women can use sex to get what they want from men. In this study from the men’s narrative, their female partners did not use sex as a means for trade but rather for punishment because they did not report their women using sex to get something from them.

Apostle Paul’s definition of conjugal rights in 1 Corinthians 7 in the Bible addresses this power dynamic. He defined conjugal right as permissible and as a mutual obligation; it is a marital duty. He further indicated the conjugal act as a meaningful part of marriage and only meaningful within marriage; it is due to each partner, and therefore, something obligated to each partner. From a biblical perspective, the husband or wife should not withhold sex from their partner, and once they are married, their bodies belong to each other; however, not to the point of abuse. The Bible speaks of mutual responsibility and respect. This study's findings are in line with the biblical perspective of marital rights and roles as the participant felt that their partner is not meeting their marital obligations. Shakil (2016) suggested that women withheld sex without reason, and sex was used as a bargaining tool by India's women.

According to Grossi (2014), sexual intercourse in Australia was central to marriage's traditional legal definition. The law made it clear that upon marriage, a husband had unlimited

sexual access to his wife. The findings in this study suggest that despite the participant's belief that sex with his wife was his conjugal right, he never forced or demanded the right, he narrated the unfairness of the denial and defined it as being abuse.

The study further found that men are denied sexual intercourse in the following two ways: this includes outright refusing and making excuses for not engaging in sexual intercourse. One of the participants said he was prevented from sexual intimacy by being falsely accused of being abusive and a protection order was granted against him; the protection order prevented him from entering the bedroom he shared with his partner. He suggested that she did that so she could bring men to their house. In support of the current study findings, in a qualitative study conducted by McCarrick et al. (2016) among six participants from the UK; one of the participants expressed that he realised that his wife was falsely accusing him of being abusive so that he would leave the house and she could bring the person whom she was having an affair with into their home.

Controlling Behaviour Experienced through False Accusations

Hines et al. (2007) suggested that women often used false accusations of IPV or the threat of making such allegations to control their male partners. In line with the findings, Cook (2009) indicated that when male IPV victims report a case against the female partner, the female partner would often lay false allegations against him.

False accusations also involved prompting victims' arrests or restraining orders (Walker et al., 2019). This study found that one of the men experienced IPV using a protection order against him that does not allow him to enter their shared bedroom. This protection order was obtained through falsely accusing the participant of being abusive. A Form 2 application for a protection order is found in Section 4(1) of the Domestic Violence Act 1998 (Act No. 116 of 1998) www.justice.gov.za/forms/dva/dva-form%2002.pdf. Section 7(1)(d) of the Act provides

that a victim can request the Court to grant a protection order, preventing the perpetrator from entering “a specified part of such a shared residence”, namely, their bedroom. I (the researcher) have always been under the impression that when one obtains a protection order, it means that the perpetrator will not be allowed in the shared residence; hence I had to go find the form myself to see that it is possible to share a house with your “abuser”, but not a room”.

This study's findings were further supported by Hines and Douglas (2010a), who found that over half of the men in their study in the USA reported that their female partners made false accusations against them. They were falsely accused of hitting their partners or that they physically or sexually abused their children so that a restraining order could be filed against them under false pretences (Hines et al., 2007). Johnston et al. (2005) reported that 55% of women in California have made false allegations of IPV against their male partners during custody disputes.

These findings resonate with the previous literature (Adebayo, 2014; Ansara & Hindin, 2010; Bates et al., 2014; Cook, 2009; Corbally, 2014; Hines & Douglas, 2010b; Johnson et al., 2014; Morgan & Wells, 2016) demonstrating that some female perpetrators resort to deceiving the legal system or authorities to disadvantage men. The legal system has become a weapon used by women against abused men to either gain full custody of their children or arrest their male partners. The women’s ability to manipulate the legal system evokes emotional distress in some men and causes some of the men to stay in abusive relationships (Adebayo, 2014; Ansara & Hindin, 2010; Bates et al., 2014; Cook, 2009; Corbally, 2014; Hines & Douglas, 2010b; Johnson et al., 2014; Morgan & Wells, 2016). These findings indicate that men who fear false accusations are justified in having such fears.

Controlling Behaviour Experienced through Physical Abuse

Participants in this study reported experiencing physical assault at the hands of their female partners. Straus and Gelles (1986) found that 2.6 million men in a National Family Violence Survey (NFVS) had reported being victims of severe violence by their wives. The type of violence that was reported included being punched, kicked, beaten up and using a knife or gun. These are the same acts of physical violence that are still being reported today, 33 years later (Maubane, 2016; Morgan & Wells, 2016; Randle & Graham, 2011), including those reported in this study. The aforementioned remains so despite the belief that men cannot be victims of physical assault, as they are on average bigger and stronger than women (McCarrick et al., 2016).

Studies have suggested that men can experience physical assault in various ways, like, hitting, kicking, biting, shoving, restraining, slapping, throwing objects, attacking their groins, scratching them, and by spitting on them (Cook, 2009; Dhaka, 2015; Hines, 2007;). Flynn (1990, as cited in Hogan, 2016) posits that female abusers use weapons to inflict physical harm on their male partners; weapons compensate for lack of physical strength.

In a similar study conducted in India among a sample of 1000 men between the ages of 21-49 years, Malik and Nadda (2019) found that their wives physically assaulted about 6% of men. The study also found that the most common form of physical abuse was slapping (98.3%); the least common method was the use of weapons to inflict injuries (3.3%). Furthermore, men also experienced physical assaults that were severe to land them in the hospital. The findings from this study are consistent with Malik and Nadda's (2019) study. Similar findings have been reported by other researchers who have conducted IPV studies against men (Cho & Wilke 2010; Drijber et al. 2013; Hines & Douglas 2010a, 2011). These findings from previous literature reported that the male victims were either beaten up, attacked with a knife or a gun, or choked. The assaults led to injuries ranging from minor injuries like bruises and cuts to

severe injuries like broken bones and needing medical attention (Cho & Wilke 2010; Drijber et al. 2013; Hines & Douglas 2010, 2011). In the current study, two of the participants' female partners used household objects (like hard glass and knife) that inflicted serious injuries that these men ended up in the hospital.

Walker et al. (2019) found that approximately 80% of male participants were injured by their female partners, with 77.5% sustaining a minor injury and 35.1% sustaining a severe injury in the previous year. The male participants who sustained injuries were injured 11.68 times in the previous year.

The National Violence against Women Survey (NVWS) conducted in the USA measured physical and sexual abuse amongst 8000 men and 8000 women; the findings suggested that 44% of the men experienced being pushed, grabbed or shoved; 16% had been beaten up; 16% had been threatened with a knife; and 4% had experienced being choked or being drowned (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). In line with the previous study, the men in the current study sustained minor to severe injuries due to being physically assaulted by their female partners. This means that women's physical violence against their male partners is not inconsequential in nature (Pagelow & Pagelow, 1984; Saunders, 2002).

Controlling Behaviour Experienced Through Sexual Abuse

> I tried to call the cops, but she wouldn't let me… she beat me up, punched me…. She raped me with a dildo… I tried to fight her off, but she was too strong…. I was bleeding, and she wouldn't let me go to the doctor. (Hines et al., 2007, pp. 66-67)

Studies that have been conducted on IPV against men have found a small percentage of reporting being victims of sexual assault (Hines, 2007). It is already difficult for men to report being abused by their female partners, and this underreporting is because of shame and fear (Morgan & Wells, 2016; Shakil, 2016). This does not mean it is not happening, and that it is

trivial. From the findings of this study, a participant reported feelings of shame, distress and being helpless from being sexually abused. He expressed being haunted by what happened in the bedroom. He felt so ashamed that he could not share everything. As a result, he did not report the incident. These findings are consistent with those of women who were sexually abused by their husbands. However, the male's expression of such trauma would be different from that of a woman because men are socialised to keep quiet and express their emotions in a maladaptive way, like heavy drinking and being aggressive (Addis & Mahalik, 2003).

The participant in this study reported being sexually abused by his wife and was expected to have sex with her whenever she deemed it fit. He felt that because he had no place to go and was being threatened, the only thing left to do was comply with his wife's demands. Consistent with these findings, Hines and Douglas (2010a) found that men do experience sexual abuse by their female partners. While only one participant reported sexual abuse in the current study, studies on abused men have found that even though the percentage is small, that heterosexual men can be victims of sexual abuse by their female partners (Ansara & Hindin, 2010; Bates et al., 2014; Johnson et al., 2014; WHO, 2012), and it cannot be ignored. The percentage could be small because of underreporting or myths around the possibility of a woman raping a man. Similarly, Tjaden and Thoennes (2000) found that only 3% of men on a National Violence against Women Survey reported being victims of rape.

Hines and Douglas (2010a) reported that one of their participants reported being physically attacked by his wife because he withdrew from having sex with her because it was just after their child's birth and he was worried that her stitches might not have healed as yet. He further reported that when he suffered from performance anxiety, he would be physically attacked. This can cause erectile dysfunction. Regarding women, forced sex has been reported to cause gynaecological problems and can increase HIV/STI transmission (Campbell, Woods, Chouaf & Parker, 2000). Campbell et al. (2000) associated forced sex with a trauma that contributes to

high rates of gynaecological problems in battered women. Even though there is no empirical evidence as yet, one can assume that forced sex could lead to men experiencing sexual disorders. However, there is a dearth of literature on the impact of sexual violence on heterosexual men (Ansara & Hindin, 2010; Bates et al., 2014; Johnson et al., 2014; Hines & Douglas, 2010a).

Controlling Behaviour Experienced through Psychological Abuse

Men who have reported abuse have reported higher rates of psychological, emotional, and verbal abuse (Drijber et al., 2013; Hines & Douglas, 2010). Coker et al. (2008) suggested that men were more likely than women to report verbal abuse. Furthermore, it was suggested that psychological abuse is the most common form of abuse that men experience. Drijber et al. (2013) analysed a sample of 372 male victims recruited online in the Netherlands; 67% of the participants reported experiencing a combination of emotional and physical violence, and 25% experienced emotional abuse. Only 9% of the participants reported being physically abused by their female partners. Tsui (2014) also found that 67.5 % of their sample of 80 male victims in the USA experienced psychological abuse.

This study found that men are aware of other types of IPV besides being physically abused. As discussed in Chapter four, the study found that the participants experienced bullying behaviour, verbal abuse, victim-blaming, public humiliation, emotional abuse, the partner being unfaithful, and being forcefully removed from their home. Barnes (2013) found that the most common forms of psychological aggression were humiliation and belittling the men's masculinity; implying that they were less of a man. Consistent with the current study, (Allen-Collison 2011; Drijber et al., 2013; Hearn et al., 2005) found the most common forms of psychological abuse were bullying, ignoring, threatening, blackmailing and financial harm, being ridiculed and mocked, and partner being unfaithful.

Unfortunately, psychological abuse leaves no visible scars and is, therefore, difficult to prove (Randle & Graham, 2011). This difficulty is the reason why abused men do not report this type of abuse. Furthermore, this type of abuse is not easily recognisable; so, by the time these men realise that they are in an abusive relationship, the men might feel that they have invested a lot in their relationships resulting in the men staying in abusive relationships (Drijber et al., 2013).

The current study depended on the symptoms reported by the participants; therefore, there was no way one could confirm the nature and extent of the mental health difficulties; there may have been an underreporting of these difficulties.

Controlling Behaviour Experienced through Economic Abuse

One participant in this study was taken to court by the former wife to pay maintenance for a child he did not father biologically. This happened despite the former wife's knowledge about the paternity details. Unfortunately, there is no scientific literature to support these findings (Hines, 2007; Hoff, 2012). Most literature discusses economic abuse in the form of a woman controlling the money's spending (Walker et al., 2019). Corry, Fiebert and Pizzey (2002), agreed with the current findings as they reported that women use their male partner's money to control these men. The Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998, in its definition of domestic violence, "defines economic abuse as not paying for household necessities, bond or rent, selling/giving away property". The current study suggests including in this definition: knowingly suing the non-biological father for child maintenance. In agreement with this study's findings, Dhaka (2015) included the following as part of the definition of economic abuse: exploiting the economic resources of the victim. A participant in this study reported that his wife made excessive financial demands; he paid for everything. She would not contribute towards their household expenses when the participant did not have money to buy their family

food; she would borrow him the money. He must pay her back for the money she used to buy nappies for their child when he gets paid. Should he make a plan and come home with food while she knew he did not have money, she would throw the food away and accuse him of cheating. One of the male participant's partners refused him occupational independence; this was a tool to control him as he will always be dependent on her. These findings are similar to those found by Bates (2019), who examined men's experiences of IPV in the UK.

The Origins and Consequences of IPV

This theme emerged from the participants' trying to make sense of their lived experiences by attempting to understand why their partners were abusive. The participants reported the following as causes of their experiences:

i. Cultural factors
ii. Psycho-social factors
iii. Socio-economic factors
iv. Exploitation

These causes are discussed in detail below.

Cultural Factors

According to the participants, certain cultural factors contributed to them being abused. The factors that were associated with their abuse were: the socialisation process and the gender role of men as providers, being forced into getting married, unmet cultural expectations, and others attributing their abuse to curses. Anyuor (2012) is of the view that cultural norms contribute to men not reporting abuse. Similarly, men in this study indicated that culture plays a significant role in their abuse, as cultural norms are evident even in our languages as most of the South African languages have proverbs that support hegemonic masculinities such as:

In Tshivenda

- *Munna ndi thoho ya mudi* – A man is the head of the family.
- *Mubva ha na nzie nzie dzi khoroni* – A man has to go all out to get something for his family.
- *Khokhonya ila maanda ayo* – A man has to eat his sweat and should not expect anything from a woman.

In Xitsonga

- *Nwanuna I nyimpfu u rilela ndzeni* – A man does not cry.
- *Nwanuna i nhloko ya munti* – A man is the head of the family.
- *Nwanuna u ba xiqatula wansati a sula ritshuri* – A man is the breadwinner; a woman stays at home.

In Sepedi

- *Monna ke nku o llela teng* – men do not cry.

Adapted from Thobejane, Mogorosi and Luthada (2018)

Our proverbs did not take into account the changing world. In their study of gender role expectations within the institution of marriage, Thobejane and Khoza (2014) reported that gender roles are socially constructed, meaning that every society allocates roles to men and women, and that these roles are not static but dynamic. However, they iterated that men are allocated roles that are considered masculine, like providing for and protecting the family. It is becoming harder for men to be breadwinners; South Africa is transforming its workforce, favouring women for higher positions. Women are more favoured when it comes to promotion (Thobajane & Khoza, 2014). Hence it has become normal for a wife to earn more than their husband. This change has come with challenges in the home front because we have not been socialised that women can be providers. Thobejane and Khoza (2014) implied that the gender

roles are patriarchal, and Mataboge, Ngunyulu, Mogale, Mulaudzi and Peu (2015) argue that men enjoy the legitimate power where there is clear delineation of roles between men and women that are prescribed by the society, and if obeyed, might sustain the marriage. Although these authors were coming from the context of HIV/AIDS, the findings from this study are in contradiction as the very patriarchal system within the South African culture that is meant to be enjoyed by men is the very same system that contributes to the abuse of these men.

A participant in this study attributed the abuse he experienced to earning less than his wife. This was confirmed by Makabe (2009), who further claimed that a traditional African family was built around a father figure and the more a man could provide for the family, the more respect he would receive.

A participant in this study reported that he was forced into marriage because his girlfriend claimed he impregnated her. This is in line with the traditional Venda culture, that if a boy is accused of impregnating a girl, the girl's family will escort her to the accused boy's house – *u vhiga mulandu* (to inform the boys' family of the pregnancy). The boy would either agree or refuse the claim and be forced by both families to marry the girl without considering his wishes. This is almost the case with the participant in this study who was in a sexual relationship with his former wife whom after thinking that the partner is pregnant with his child, he did not only accept responsibility of impregnating her but he also married her. He reported that he married her because he thought she was pregnant with his child. On the contrary, Nduna and Jewkes, (2011, 2012 as cited in Serame, 2015) found that men remained silent about contested pregnancies and denied paternity.

One of the participants referred to the Sepedi, saying that "*Monna ke nku o llela teng*" (men do not cry). Loosely translated, this proverb means that a man is a sheep. He said that this proverb is "killing" the men. According to Thobejane et al. (2018, p.7),

This adage derives from the common knowledge by shepherds in most villages, that a sheep, (*nku)* when slaughtered, does not make much noise. It dies bravely, unlike other animals like goats, which face their fate bellowing and kicking. A man should, therefore, be like a sheep when he faces challenges. He should never cry or show signs of weakness.

As such, a man is expected to endure hardship. Unfortunately, the partners of the participants in this study used this notion to abuse the participants.

One of the participants attributed the abuse to unmet cultural expectations, whereby his first wife never visited his family home, and he felt that this was a form of abuse as it affected him. In African communities, when a man is married, when he goes to his family home, his family expects to see his wife, and when the wife never goes there, the men feel that their manhood is being challenged (Mqakelana, 2015). Olutola (2012, as cited in Moloko-Phiri, 2015) states that a wife is married to the husband and all his extended family members among the Yoruba people. This is also true to a lot of South African cultures (Moloko-Phiri, 2015). Hence, the husband would feel challenged when his wife does not conform to this. This somehow challenges his social standing as per the cultural expectations.

Studies on how culture contributes to abuse have been conducted extensively on women (Boonzaier, 2008; CSVR, 2016; Moloko-Phiri, 2015). When studying men, culture is used to qualify the notion that men are only the abusers, and therefore, they cannot be victims. There is scant literature on how this patriarchal cultural norm oppresses black men in South Africa. This theme highlights the men's attempts to understand and explain their experiences of IPV victimisation. This account captures the complexity of IPV victimisation (Heise, 1998).

Psycho-social Factors

This study found two psycho-social issues of IPV; one participant suggested that his drinking was the cause of the abuse while the other participant indicated that the abuse was

because of their partners having friends who are not married. Several studies have indicated alcohol abuse as a contributing factor to abuse, but it has been documented that the one who abuses alcohol is the abusive one (Arthur & Clark, 2009; du Toit, 2010; Malik & Nadda, 2019; Tilbrook et al., 2010). Conversely, in this study, the one who was being abused was the one drinking alcohol; this participant's abuse experience was not because his female partner abused alcohol, he never mentioned that she drank alcohol. However, he mentioned that the abuse gets worse when he is drunk. This finding contradicts other studies that reported that partners' abusive behaviour was related to abusing alcohol. They reported that the violence they experienced increased after the partners had been drinking alcohol (Hines et al., 2007; Jewkes, 2002; WHO, 2013).

The second psycho-social issue that was raised was the company their partners kept. The study men felt that because their partners had female friends who were not married, they were bad influences. One of the participants indicated that his wife would just go out and do as she pleased because her friends were not married. He further stated that she would request him to cook. The participant interpreted this as abuse. Moloko-Phiri, Mulaudzi and Heyns (2016) found that married women are expected to be obedient, humble and submissive in their study on culture and its role on women abuse conducted in South Africa. The participants' perception is that their partners were not being submissive because of their single friends. Moloko-Phiri (2015) examined a proverb *"lebitla la mosadi ke bogadi"* which translates as "the grave of a woman is at her husbands' place". Moloko's findings speak a lot about how this proverb instructs women to obey their husbands and to persevere; the woman enters into a new role, and her freedom of movement no longer exists. There is a dearth of literature that discusses the issues of married women keeping the company of single friends and how this contributes to IPV against men.

Socio-economic Factors

High socio-economic status offers some protection against IPV risk (Bhona et al., 2019; Krug et al., 2002). Though the studies were conducted on abused women and IPV cuts across all socio-economic groups, women living in poverty are affected (Krug et al., 2002). Based on the findings of this study, men living in poverty are also affected.

Studies have shown that low socio-economic status is a contributing factor to IPV. Several studies on IPV against women stated that the strongest predictors of IPV were economic conditions and decision-making authority in the family. Heise (1998) argued that men had this economic and decision-making authority in the family, which led to women's abuse. Could the same be said about women abusing men? Kumar (2012) answered my question when he argued that the increase in IPV against men is rising because of changing power dynamics, economic independence, and control over the economy and resources.

Bronfenbrenner's human development framework places socio-economic factors under the exo-system influences of the ecological framework; which are social structures that affect the immediate settings in which a person is found, influences or determines what goes on there. Exo-system influences are often the by-product of changes taking place in the larger social environment (Belsky 1980, as cited in Heise 1998). This could refer to transformation policies that are implemented to attempt to restore equality in South Africa. In this instance, Black South Africans are the benefactors of this implementation of these policies. However, they are not involved in decision-making processes.

IPV is more common in families with low incomes and unemployed men. Unemployment among men has been linked to woman abuse. Violence against women increases as the family's economic situation worsens (Bhona et al., 2019; Kumar, 2012). Hanisch (1999) indicated that the inability to provide for one's family could cause stress among people with limited

resources. Therefore, violence becomes an acceptable response to frustrations (Marcus, 2013). A study conducted in North America indicated that the likelihood of IPV is reduced when women are employed and have similar levels of education as their husbands (Kalmuss & Straus, 1990; Walker, 1984). Contrary to the findings from the study above, Tshifhumulo, Thobejane and Chimeri (2018) found in the Vhembe District that there are women who are breadwinners being abused by their husbands. This indicates that IPV is complex, and not one factor can be attributed to experiencing IPV.

A study conducted on abused women in Peru reported the that women whose socio-economic status is higher than their husbands and are dominant decision-makers were more likely to be abused than women whose status is equal to or lower than their husbands (Flake,2005). These findings contradict this study's findings as the woman who was employed was the one abusing her unemployed male partner.

Studies on abused women and socio-economic status have found that the unemployment of men and their female partners' employment is a risk factor to IPV against women. However, researchers in Peru found that the more educated a woman is, the higher the risk of IPV by their partner (Flake,2005). Some studies have indicated that men’s lack of material means of expressing their male power results in violence to express their domination (Artazcoz et al., 2019).

Unemployment is a risk factor for sexual and physical abuse for women, while less education is a risk factor for physical abuse. Oetzel and Duran (2004) suggested that lower socio-economic status is a risk factor for being a perpetrator of IPV, these authors did not specify if a man has a low income and education then they are likely to be a perpetrator. This means that this equally applies to women with lower income and education, which is in line with this study's findings.

Hamby (2009) argued that socio-economic status was not a direct factor for Alaska Native communities and American Indian women, but lower socio-economic status created stress that could result in IPV. Women are also experiencing economic pressure. This could result in them being aggressive to survive and provide for their families financially.

Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, (1980 as cited in Hines, 2007) argued that when men are unemployed, they become vulnerable to abuse. In this study, the participant's family's poverty is said to be the reason why the participant was falsely accused of impregnating his girlfriend at the time. From the participant's narrative, his former wife's family viewed his family as poor and without influence; he feels that is why they took advantage of them. In traditional African practices, pregnancy out of wedlock brings shame to the pregnant girl's family (IIika & Anthony, 2004). Therefore, there is pressure on the pregnant girl to get married so that she does not bring shame to her family and avoid being stigmatised (IIika & Anthony, 2004). It has been said that because of the marginalisation that poor people experience in society, their poverty does not allow them to defend themselves and assert their rights (Manganyi, 2016).

The other participant reported that he suspected that his wife's employment contributed to her being unfaithful. He further indicated that him being unemployed could not be the only reason, but it contributed to her infidelity because his wife was probably getting attention from men; attention that she had never received before her employment. Having an income has been associated with extramarital affair amongst men (Mtenga et al., 2018). Nonetheless, this association between having an income and extramarital affairs has not been explored amongst women. Therefore, there is a dearth of literature to support this finding.

Krug et al. (2002) believe that the role poverty plays as a risk factor is unclear; is it the low income in itself or other factors that accompany poverty, factors like homelessness and overcrowding, just to mention a few. Poverty generates stress and frustration. For men, poverty

creates a sense of inadequacy for having failed to live up to their cultural expectations of being the provider.

Exploitation

According to Zwolinski and Wertheimer (2017), exploitation is when someone takes unfair advantage of another person. These authors claimed that the procedure by which the unfavourable outcome was achieved by the wife coercing or manipulating her male partner depended on factors such as the male's age and low financial status like not being able to finance one's visa, plane ticket or stay in South Africa. One participant reported being exploited by his wife because of his immigration status and age, while the other participant attributed the wife's exploitation to apartheid. The latter participant suggested that if it were not for the apartheid system through which parents, particularly fathers, were separated from their families, he would have received guidance from his father about how to handle intimate relationships and thus, would not have fallen prey to and be exploited by his wife. This participant was falsely accused of impregnating his then girlfriend. Therefore, he married her thinking that the child was his.

According to Zwolinski and Wertheimer (2017), exploitation can be described as transactional (where one person takes unfair advantage of another person be it through coercion or manipulation) or systemic (structural exploitation is a system in which the "rules of the game" unduly benefit one group of individuals at the expense of another). Transactional exploitation can be seen in the case where the participant's wife took advantage of their substantial age difference (the wife being 41 years and the participant, 21 years at the time they met) as well as the participant's immigration status.

On the other hand, the other participant's experience is an example of structural exploitation because he blamed his wife's exploitation of him on apartheid. Lekau indicated

that during the apartheid era, there was lack of guidance where he came from. He spoke about being a child and thus, being naïve and in need of guidance so that he could make informed decisions. The response above suggests that if Lekau had guidance, he would have made different choices. During apartheid, a lot of African men would leave their homesteads for employment purposes leaving the children under the care of their mothers; the fathers' visitation to their homestead was not as frequent as a growing child would need; so, the male child had to grow up fast and take the responsibility of being the head of the family.

Francis (2014) suggested that young women's low socio-economic factors could lead them into engaging in intergenerational sex, with them also being vulnerable to exploitation. The findings of this study show similar trends to the study conducted by Francis. In this study, the participant was 21 years when he got married to his 41-year-old wife; she was his first sexual encounter, and the wife had the financial means. The wife convinced him to come to South Africa on specific terms, which later changed when she asked him to marry her. He felt exploited as he was financially dependent on her. It was found that Thai women marry foreigners to improve their living conditions (Duangkumnerd, 2009). In this case, the participant was coerced from Morocco.

Research findings support some of the findings from this study; a study conducted on 40 Thai immigrant women who experienced IPV by their Swedish husbands found that these marriages were based on unequal power and lacked equality (Pongthippat et al., 2018). The participant's marriage in this study was based on unequal power, there was a significant age gap between him and his wife, and he depended on her financially. Different countries' traditions and norms and not having a support system forced these Thai women to remain in abusive relationships. The women attributed the abuse to the husband's alcohol and substance abuse; cultural differences; husband's immaturity; and husband being unfaithful (Pongthippat et al., 2018). The participant blamed his wife's violence on her infidelity and the influence of

her mother. Another issue was highlighted by Fernbrant et al. (2014), suggesting that social isolation among immigrants is an obstacle to integration; this speaks to a lack of personal support.

The other participant explained how political and historical factors (apartheid) were used to fuel exploitation. The unjust and discriminatory laws of apartheid resulted in economic and social catastrophe. This institutionalised violence resulted in social issues like the disruption of family life (Patel, 2016). The participant reported that due to his father's absence, he ended up being exploited. He further alluded that the root cause for his father's absence was due to apartheid. The fathers leave home to become migrant workers, who eventually stop returning home to their families. This participant grew up during the era of apartheid, and he felt that he would have made different choices if his father were around to offer guidance.

Manganyi (2016), in his memoir titled: apartheid and the making of a black psychologist, discussed that Christmas time was when migrant workers like his father would go home to visit their wives and children. Due to their visits home's infrequency, many African men who were migrant workers made the cities and towns of Witwatersrand their second home. These men were compelled by the apartheid laws to move back and forth between the Johannesburg hostels and homelands. Eventually, these men settled in these cities and towns, seeking a second wife. They then became known as a "*Kholwa*" (one who never returns to their homestead) abandoning their children and wives, whom they had left in their respective homelands. This resonates with the participant of this study's narrative.

According to Louw and Louw (2019), South Africa has been reported to have one of the highest rates of absent fathers. apartheid's migrant labour system contributed to separating African families. According to the Department of Social Development (DSD, 2011), weakened family life factors are an absent father, high levels of poverty, and inequality. Absence of fathers in South Africa is problematic, especially for the boy child. As a result of the weakened

family life, the family is unable “to play its critical roles of socialisation, nurturing, care and protection effectively, this being due to failures in the political economy and the legacy of colonialism and apartheid” (DSD, 2011, p.8).

According to StatsSA (2010), the conventional family structure disruption is prominent amongst African children. Bozalek (2010) suggested that the impact of apartheid forced removals and migrant labour on African families is still reported today. DSD (2011) agree as migrant labour systems undermined and continue to undermine the African family; this led to its disintegration.

A father’s involvement is essential for positive childhood and adulthood as suggested by the participant, who implied that if it were not for apartheid, his life would have been different because his father would have guided him. A present father's impact reduces psychological distress for sons, engagement in risky practices and promotes a successful intimate relationship (Choi & Jackson, 2011). Ratele et al. (2012) examined the discourses of fatherhood and fatherlessness. They found that the absence of biological fathers resulted in their participants experiencing loss even though they acknowledged the importance of social fathers. A family provides psycho-social and economic support, plays a role in socialisation, and nurturing (Clowes, 2006; Ramphele & Richter, 2006).

The country's industrialisation and urbanisation led to the migrant labour system, which caused men to move away from their family homes, leaving their wives and children (Ngobeni, 2006). Migrant workers were housed in same-sex hostels undermining the traditional African family system. Exploitation weakened the African family because enforced labour migration forced families to live apart (DSD, 2011).

Young men lacked a father figure who would model the authority and responsibility of a man in a patriarchal society (Ramphele & Richter, 2006). Many young people grew up without

their fathers and left to find their own path into adulthood. Ramphele and Richter (2006) concluded that the disruption of families under colonisation and apartheid had left its mark in the South African society.

Men are disempowered when they must depend on women who are seen as inferior to them by the patriarchal society. When analysing the movie 'Boyz 'n the hood', Hooks (1994 as cited in Ngobeni, 2006) interviewed an actor named Ice Cube, who had played a character named Doughboy in the film. Ice Cube suggested that Doughboy could have turned out to be a good boy like Tre (who lived with his mother and father, and he became a success) if he had had the right guidance; if he had a father in his life. Ngobeni (2006) extrapolated that the proper guidance emanated from a father. The participant shared this view in this study.

The Consequences of IPV against Men

Several authors have suggested that the effects of IPV are the same for both male and female victims; these experiences include feelings of shame, fear, stigmatisation, isolation, guilt, confusion, and a loss of self-worth and confidence (Agbulos, 2017; Barber, 2008; Hines & Malley-Morrison, 2001). Furthermore, IPV is a public health problem with damaging health consequences like mental illness (like depression and posttraumatic stress disorder). The sub-themes identified in this study were:

i. psychological effects;
ii. suicide attempt;
iii. separation from a partner;
iv. socio-economic effects; and
v. incarceration.

The five sub-themes are discussed in detail in the following sections.

Psychological Effects

The study findings revealed the expression of psychological consequences on African men who have experienced IPV in their female partners' hands. The participants shared the suffering they sustained due to the abuse. The participants' accounts revealed the following psychological effects: emotional distress; pain; feelings of shame and emasculation; a lost sense of self/detachment/feelings of worthlessness; mistrust; bitterness; depression; self-blame; psychological distress; trauma; fear of being labelled; and suicidal ideation. The impact of IPV on men's mental health has been associated with the stress of living with recurrent, escalating and unpredictable attacks (Ingram et al., 2007).

This study concurs with Hogan's (2016) findings, who reported that participants described that they no longer trust women because of the abuse they had experienced at the hands of their former female intimate partners. One participant in this study indicated that he loved the woman he was dating at the interview time. Based on his previous marriage, where he experienced abuse, he feared marrying the woman he was dating because she could change. He further went on to compare women to weather, that they could change at any point. This illustrates his change in the perception of women and intimate relationships. This account demonstrates the negative changes in future relationships' perceptions (Linley & Joseph, 2011).

Men have been reported to be in denial of what has happened to them and brushing the incident off as a one-time event; some men believe in the best characteristics of their female partners; others assume that they did something wrong to trigger the violence, therefore ending up blaming themselves (Allen-Collinson, 2009). This is supported in this study, as the findings indicate that some of the men undermined the incidents, but many men reported disbelief that they were being abused. It is evident in this study, as some men reported blaming themselves for the abuse.

Some studies have found that IPV may result in psychological symptoms like PTSD, depression and suicidal ideation (Randle & Graham, 2011). This study did not find any participant who had been diagnosed with any psychiatric condition. This could be because the men did not seek help from a mental health practitioner. However, they presented with specific posttraumatic stress symptoms (like being detached; emotional distress) and feeling depressed. They also admitted to abusing alcohol to numb the pain of IPV. Heise (2011) reported that some abused women turn to alcohol as a form of self-medication; the same could be said for men who have experienced IPV. Du Toit (2010) argues that IPV victims, in some instances, use alcohol or other substances to cope with the violence and degradation in their lives. Oliffe et al. (2017), in their study on 20 men in Canada, who attempted suicide found what was prevalent amongst the participants was the overuse of alcohol to distance themselves from their traumatic experiences. Numbing pain of the abuse by using alcohol is an avoidant coping strategy. This is not only found in abused men; the use of alcohol as an escape or for self-medication was also found amongst police officers. Gumani (2012) found that some police officers in the Vhembe District use alcohol to escape their unpleasant emotional states evoked by their job. Hegemonic masculine standards promote men's resilience to tolerate the traumatic experience of being abused by their female partner. This tolerance is likely to have encouraged most abused men to attempt to escape the pain through the abuse of alcohol and other substances (Oliffe et al., 2017). Talking about the emotional impact of the abuse puts the men at risk of being ridiculed and further marginalisation (Oliffe et al., 2017). Kelly and Johnson (2008) further reported that some men began to drink alcohol excessively or became depressed or had panic attacks, sometimes requiring time off from work due to the IPV. A participant reported experiencing belittlement that was severe, that the man considered suicide. These control tactics were premeditated, inclusive and effective (Kelly & Johnson, 2008).

Kelly and Johnson (2008) found that their study's primary psychological effects included fear, anxiety, loss of self-esteem, depression, and posttraumatic stress. These symptoms are similar to those found in this study. Furthermore, the experience of controlling behaviour was found to be associated with suicidal thoughts. One particular participant was not allowed to choose his hair cut or who cuts his hair; his wife made those decisions for him; she isolated him from his family; she would not let him find a job. These are some of the controlling behaviour he experienced. This controlling behaviour affects victims' social networks, family and children and their productivity at work (Kelly & Johnson, 2008).

Martin et al. (2013) and McCarrick et al. (2016) contend that men experience depression differently. These experiences range from anger to aggression. This being as a result of societal ideas of masculinity which contradict the symptoms of depression like men are not allowed to be sad or cry. They propose that male experiences of depression may manifest themselves through symptoms that are not currently in the diagnostic criteria. This could mean that the psychological consequences of IPV amongst men could be understated or unrecognised.

There is limited research on the mental health of men who have experienced IPV, especially within the African communities; there is uncertainty surrounding the psychological consequences of male IPV (Maubane, 2016). Hines and Douglas (2010b) conducted a quantitative study in the US, investigating the association between PTSD and IPV among men who reported having experienced IPV by their female partners. Their findings provided evidence of a significant positive relationship between PTSD symptoms amongst help-seeking men who experienced IPV. However, this is not enough evidence to deduce other mental ill-health. The current study did not test for any specific mental disorders. Therefore, this study cannot say that the participants had PTSD or depression, but it can say that the participants presented with symptoms of mental disorders. Further research exploring the psychological consequences of IPV against men is necessary.

In their study on 70 male undergraduates who have been abused by their female partners, Simonelli and Ingram (1998) reported that the emotionally and physically abused men reported greater psychological distress and depression levels. IPV against men leads to negative mental health issues, coupled with negative experiences when seeking help further isolates the male victims of IPV; keeping them in an abusive relationship for longer. These adverse experiences are traumatic (Hines, 2011).

Another reported consequence of IPV in this study was fear; fear of disintegrating their families and fear of being falsely accused of rape. It has been found that both abused men and women appear to accept the blame for their family's collapse (Migliaccio, 2002). Some of the abused men were fearful that their children would come from a broken home. This reported fear is also one reason why these men stayed in the abusive relationship for as long as they did. Fear of a broken home paralysed some of the men into enduring abuse.

Those who continued the relationships reported inability to be sexually intimate with their abusive partner because of fear. They were scared to be intimate with their partners in fear of being falsely accused rape. As evidenced above, fear of being falsely accused of rape is not irrational as some of the participants in this study had been falsely accused of abuse. Drijber et al. (2013) and Hines et al. (2007) found wrongly labelling a victim as the perpetrator was a form of psychological aggression. As a consequence of abuse, the participants developed a mistrust of their female partners. Johnson (2008) concurs with the current study's findings; IPV is destructive to a relationship; therefore, if there is an experience of IPV, there will be a decline in the quality of the relationship.

Suicide Attempt

Suicide attempts or the thought of committing suicide are common and usually extreme reactions to IPV (Malik & Nadda,2019; Migliaccio, 2002; Taylor et al., 2013). McCarrick et

al. (2016) reported suicidal ideation amongst men who have experienced abuse. Some participants reported thinking about committing suicide in this study, while one of the participants attempted suicide. The one participant's abuse was so severe to such an extent that he attempted suicide; he is the same participant who reported being raped by his wife. His wife controlled every aspect of his life; he was isolated from his family. The day he was forcefully removed from their home was the day he attempted to kill himself. IPV is so detrimental to the point that a victim can take their own lives. Clay (2014) has reported that suicide and IPV are major public health problems; survivors of IPV are twice as likely to attempt suicide. Brown and Seals (2019), conducted a study in Kentucky, the study investigated intimate partner problems and suicide. They found that 26% of all suicide cases involved intimate partner problems.

Participant's feelings of disconnectedness increased because they were isolated. A poor social network is a risk factor for suicide to a person who already feels alone and apathetic about their lives (Salvatore, 2018). The difference between those who thought about committing suicide and the participant who attempted suicide is as follows: The participant who attempted suicide was an immigrant whose only family was his abusive wife. He had no social support, nor did he have any children. Lien and Lorentze (2019) conducted a study on men's violence experiences in intimate relationships in Norway; their findings concur with this finding. They reported that for immigrants, the experiences of isolation and loneliness could be overwhelming. Another possible cause for Charles' attempt to commit suicide could be because of what Lien and Lorentze (2019) discussed as additional complexities of being an immigrant —feeling threatened by the unknown environment, afraid of being deported, and losing everyone connected with when they were married. According to Kleiman and Riskind (2013), social support functions as a buffer to suicide. Social support offers tangible benefits during a crisis, like sleeping at a friend's place when there is a need. This explains why some

of the participants reported thinking about suicide but did not attempt it; while the one participant who had been isolated from his family had no friends and is an immigrant, attempted suicide.

Social support has a stress-reducing effect by moderating the negative consequences of a traumatic event (Cohen & Wills, 1985). In agreement with Rees et al. (2010, p. 506), social support moderates the "affective reaction to a traumatic event, therefore, decreasing the importance of the event and leading to improved coping mechanism". Contrary to these findings, du Toit (2010) found that suicide can be used as a tool to control the victim, this is when the abuser threatens to commit suicide should the victim leave the relationship; however, this is not the case in this study.

Separation from Partner

A social effect of IPV in this study was separation from a partner. It is not because they stopped loving their partners that they left. Five out of the 14 participants had separated from their abusive female partners. Three participants eventually left the abusive relationship. The awareness reinforced this that the abuse was detrimental to their wellbeing (Oliffe et al., 2014). In line with this study's findings, Maubane (2016) conducted a study on South African men who had experienced IPV and found that despite these men's religious and cultural beliefs around marriage and divorce, they went ahead and divorced their abusive partners. The other 2 participants were forced into separation as their abusive partners left them; this indicates that they would still be in an abusive relationship. This relates to a study conducted by Mbedzi (2018) that reported different forms of abuse, like physical, verbal, and sexual; which led to divorce, though the participants that were abused in Mbedzi's report were female. According to Watson and Ancis (2013), IPV is a cause of divorce or separation.

Socio-economic Effects

Mqakelana (2015) suggested that IPV not only has psychological and social consequences; however, it also has an economic consequence on the victim. Bunthal et al. (2010) believe that IPV victims suffer economic loss because they cannot go to work, which results in loss of income. Campbell et al. (2000) further posit that people may miss work because of going to the doctor due to injuries. One participant in this study reported losing his job because he had to address a feud caused by his wife. Therefore, IPV against men impedes the economic and developmental growth of society.

Incarceration

Congruent with previous findings (Hogan, 2016; Hines et al., 2007; Tsui et al., 2010), one participant in this study was wrongfully incarcerated on the day of his discharge from the hospital due to severe injuries he sustained as a result of his female partner's abuse. When he tried to report the abuse, he was incarcerated. He was the victim, but he was treated as the perpetrator. These findings are also consistent with a study conducted by Walker et al. (2019) in Australia, with a sample of 28 men. Their study aimed to explore men's experiences of IPV, help-seeking and reporting behaviours. Some of their participants reported that their female partners falsely accused them of abuse which involved instigating the participants' arrests (male victim). This participant's experience of being arrested while he was a victim of IPV, is one of the most cited reason by several researchers as a barrier to reporting female-male IPV (Douglas & Hines, 2011; Hogan, 2016; Hines, 2007; Tsui et al., 2010). Walker et al. (2019) concluded that due to some police gender-stereotypical perception of IPV, this led to inadequate support to male victims.

Victims' Reactions to IPV

This theme captures the various reactions that the men used to cope with their IPV experiences committed by their female partners. Under this theme, the men discussed why they stayed in abusive relationships and the coping strategies they employed. These reactions influenced men's decision to remain in an abusive relationship. For some, these strategies delayed their exit from these toxic relationships.

Reasons for Staying in An Abusive Relationship

This sub-theme discussed reasons for not leaving abusive relationships. The indicators found in this study include trauma bonding and barriers to seeking help. Barriers to seeking help contributed to staying in an abusive relationship.

Trauma Bonding: This sub-theme highlights factors that influence men to remain in abusive relationships. It has been argued that men find it easy to leave a relationship based on two reasons: being financially stable and resourceful (Pagelow, 1985). Secondly, they are not psychologically invested in their family (Loseke & Kurz, 2005). This study's findings do not agree with both arguments, as most of the participants stayed in the abusive relationships because they were not financially stable and because they were invested in their families. Men discussed several reasons for not leaving their abusive relationships, ranging from avoiding economic losses to being committed to their families. The reasons that the men gave are termed trauma bonding, which is defined by Hogan (2016, p. 55) as "traumatic bonding, this pattern of continual punishment and reconciliation is associated with a strong psychological investment in the abusive relationship, for both perpetrator and victim, which is often difficult to break". This means that the cycles of abuse and reunion lead to a strong attachment that is not easily broken (Walker, 2000). Trauma bonding is when men find reasons for staying in their relationships even when the relationships are toxic. These findings are supported by

earlier research that found that men stayed in abusive relationships because of their commitment to their relationship and children, love and concern for their children (Cook, 2009; Hines & Douglas, 2010a; Hogan, 2016). Cook (2009) warned researchers and therapists not to take internal constraints (like strong emotional attachments) lightly because they have been the primary reason men do not leave abusive relationships. One participant simply said, "I will not leave my wife because I love her". Cook (2009) concurs with these findings as they found that 71% of their participants revealed that they stayed in the relationship with their female partners because of love. Love should not be overlooked as a real barrier to leaving abusive relationships.

Tsui et al. (2010) found that male IPV victims feel trapped in their relationships because of partners beliefs (like in Chapter 4, one of the participants reported that their wife told him, where she came from men should provide); societal and cultural standards on masculinity. The shame and ridicule become reasons why men stay in abusive relationships (Tsui et al., 2010).

Basile (2005) suggested that men stayed in abusive relationships because of their responsibility as parents and desire to keep the family whole. This is consistent with the findings of this study. Contrary to the findings of this study and Basile (2005), Messing et al. (2015) reported that most men in their study feared the negative impact that witnessing IPV could have on their children and cited that this was their reason of leaving.

Adams et al. (2008) posit that economic abuse decreases the victim's standards of living, especially when they leave the abusive relationship. This is one of the reasons that make victims stay in abusive relationships. This links to the social and economic consequences of IPV.

In this study, men are evidently psychologically invested in their families, preventing them from leaving the relationship. Those who had children feared that they might never see their

children again, and they felt the need to stay and protect their children. This could be attributed to them being concerned that their children would be abused should they leave. Other men expressed fear that they would lose custody of their children. These fears were based on the assumption that women predominantly gained custody of children. In one man's case, this fear was real as his wife got a protection order against him by making false accusations. There was an issue of lack of financial resources that were reported by these men, indicating that they do not have enough money to move out. Corbally (2014) affirms that men's acceptance of IPV in marriage results from their commitment to masculine gender roles of being a husband.

Barriers to Seeking Help*:* Participants' accounts also reflected a reluctancy to disclose their experience of IPV because of fear of further emasculation. This contributed to most men staying in an abusive relationship, and those who left did not leave immediately when the abuse started. Being a male victim of IPV perpetrated by a female partner is emasculating, because they could be viewed as less masculine (Migliaccio, 2001).

The findings resonate with previous literature demonstrating that fear is an emotion that impeded the participants from seeking help (Scicluna, 2015). The participants in this study also feared disclosing the abuse because they were afraid that they would be laughed at. Dunn (2012) argues that being a victim and seeking help is viewed by society and the abused men as powerless. Therefore, the abused men are reluctant to identify as a victim of female perpetrated IPV; as they would be seen as having failed to sustain masculine norms.

Male victims are influenced by societal perceptions of IPV as something that happens to women and not men. Therefore, they become reluctant to disclose any IPV victimisation (Douglas, Hines, & McCarthy, 2012). Therefore, the fear of emasculation limited participants' help-seeking behaviour (Migliaccio, 2001). Supporting earlier studies (Hogan et al., 2012; Walker et al., 2019), participants reported feelings of embarrassment and shame, denial and

self-blame; these feelings could prevent them from seeking help (Hines, 2007). Participants reported fear of being disbelieved or thought of as a wimp (Walker et al., 2019).

There are various reasons for underreporting. Most people do not believe the men who report being a victim of IPV. When men narrate their IPV experiences, struggles, and harassment within their marriage, they are judged, not listened to; instead, people laugh at them. Many men are ashamed of talking about being abused by their wives (Shakil, 2016).

Societal norms of masculinity serve as a barrier to seeking help because men do not want to be perceived as weak. Availability of social support was a significant predictor for at least one form of help-seeking behaviour (Coker et al., 2012). It appears that male IPV victims struggle with the stigma of being abused by their wives. Some of the participants avoided disclosing to family and friends to protect their partners, despite the abuse they were experiencing.

Coping Strategies

This sub-theme discussed coping strategies as employed by the abused men. The indicators found in this study include adaptive coping strategies and maladaptive coping strategies.

***Adaptive Coping Strategies*:** The strategies used to cope with a traumatic experience include using social support to reduce mental health problems.

Help-seeking behaviour is defined as disclosing victimisation to acquire assistance. Walker et al. (2019) cite that men's feelings of fear and shame defined their experiences of seeking help. Furthermore, the men's help-seeking behaviour was influenced by their perceptions of whom they could trust and their need for their experiences to be validated. Coker et al. (2002) pointed out that help-seeking is beneficial to IPV victims to the point of mediating the distress experienced by the victim. However, there is limited literature on help-seeking behaviour among male IPV victims perpetrated by their female partners. Studies on males seeking help indicate that men are less likely than women to seek help. The men who sought help first

overcame internal and external hindrances (Galdas et al., 2005). Men will not seek help for problems that society deems as something men can control themselves (Addis & Mahalik, 2003).

As a result of a dearth of literature that focuses on help-seeking behaviour for men, one can argue that help-seeking behaviour amongst men is also associated with perceived good social support, meaning that perceived social support facilitates men's help-seeking behaviour. Kamimura et al. (2013) and Coker et al. (2002) suggested that having a sound social support system for women who experienced IPV may reduce the impact of the abuse on their mental health. Based on the findings of this study, one can argue that this is also true for abused men. Furthermore, these authors suggested that social support was a potential protective factor for abused women not to experience adverse mental health problems. Coker et al. (2002) associate extensive social networks and supportive social resources to a good prognosis regarding a victim of IPV's mental health. Therefore, the fact that abused men reported their abuse to Moshate means that they needed help, and the current study revealed that.

The participants in this study who eventually sought help described various reactions to the disclosure of their IPV experiences from the family, police, pastor, mental health practitioner and colleague. They reported receiving support from the following: female pastor, the wife’s side of the family, and their family and friends. Other participants relied on inviting the elders to help resolve family problems. Unfortunately, the elders could not help the family. One participant’s wife’s family refused to attend the meeting while the other participant did not know what happened instead his relationship with his uncles was strained. Maubane (2016) confirms these findings of seeking help from social structures, as they found that abused men used mediators like pastors and family elders. However, the men in their study ended up divorcing their partners despite the intervention.

A study conducted on 15 abused African American women found that family was useful in providing instrumental support, like providing the victim with a place to stay (Morrison et al., 2006). This is evident in the current study as some participants reported staying with their family once, they left the abusive relationship. In the same study, most of the women reported that their family lacked emotional support (Morrison et al., 2006) which contradicts the current study's finding, as the men who reported disclosing their experiences of IPV to their families, received emotional support; for example, Daniel reported his sister and mother continually checking on his mental state.

Machado et al. (2016) found that men who have experienced IPV would instead seek informal help (family friends, colleagues and pastor) and reported receiving valuable support from friends and family. Thus, I agree with Douglas and Hines' (2011) findings who found that 84.9% of 302 men seeking help for IPV victimisation first seek help from their social support (family, colleagues and friends). These men reported their social support as being the most helpful resource.

Cubbins and Vannoy (2005) argue that Russian abused men or women may grow older without social support and resources in their long-term abusive relationships. Effective support is not necessarily institutionalised; informal network support and encouragement effectively prevent further harm to those who experienced IPV (Coker et al., 2012).

The findings in the current study suggest that some of the participants were able to continue with their lives when strengthened by family and friends' support. Social support from in-laws, pastors, and family helped the participants develop coping skills and hope. Wallace et al. (2019) found that the lack of available support for men left them believing that they were alone in their experiences. Some of their participants reported needing social support to reduce isolation.

Interestingly, one participant felt supported by a police officer. This finding is contrary to what the other participants in this study reported because most of the participants experienced inadequate service from the police like being ridiculed and wrongfully arrested. This finding is also in contrast with other studies that found that men were generally not believed to be victims in IPV encounters and were always treated as perpetrators by the police (Drijber, 2013; Hines & Douglas 2010b; McCarrick et al., 2016).

In addition to this, out of the 14 participants in this study, only one participant sought help from a mental health practitioner, and he reported that the counselling was beneficial to him. A comparative analysis on abused men conducted by Scicluna (2015) in Maltese society; interviewed 12 male victims and six female victims reported only one of their male participants seeking counselling. Interestingly enough, that participant only realised during counselling that he was in an abusive relationship. Supporting earlier findings (Hogan, 2016) the men suggested that when all else fail, they will go for counselling because of the belief that therapy was for weak people, thereby contradicting the notion of hegemonic masculinity. A number of the participants indicated that they would need counselling and that it would be helpful because they will be able to tell the therapist things, they cannot tell anyone. However, only one of the 14 participants contacted a helpline to get counselling.

It thus appears that the participants who sought help did so from the following spheres: their social support structures; and professionals. These findings are partially in line with Hines' (2011) affirmation that men who experience IPV seek help from different systems, the most predominantly used system is an informal system, like family, friends, and the Internet, and the formal system used are mental health professionals.

Msomi (2011) conducted a study of the effect of gender-based violence on men in Clermont a mixed-method study with 120 men. They found that men who experienced IPV often suffered alone in silence because they could not share their feelings, stories or experiences with their

friends, colleagues, or families. In line with existing literature abused men suffer in silence because their friends and colleagues do not believe them or take them seriously (Msomi, 2011).

One of the participants reported being unsupported upon his disclosure to a colleague at work. He experienced being disappointed. After all, he felt that he could talk to the colleague because he assumed, he was a nice man. He indicated being laughed at. It has been reported that men are five times more likely than women to talk about IPV to friends and family (Wallace et al., 2019). Men who are IPV victims do not have social network support, as men, in general, do not talk to each other about their feelings and relationship problems. Participants in this study felt this negatively impacts their lives as IPV victims, leaving them vulnerable and feeling unsupported (Wallace et al., 2019).

***Maladaptive-Coping Strategies*:** Kocot and Goodman (2003) argued that IPV victims use different strategies to cope with removing threats to their physical, safety and emotional wellbeing.

Participants in this study reported using avoidance as a coping mechanism. They reported leaving the room so they could avoid conflict. This supports Migliaccio (2001) findings, who claimed that IPV victims fear an escalation of the violence, so they avoid retaliation. Scicluna (2015) supports this study's findings as some participants were in denial of the abuse and minimised the abuse they received.

A traditional approach that was reported to be most helpful by one participant was his belief in his ancestors. The participant believed that his ancestors were protecting him, which helped him cope with the abuse; this delayed the man from leaving an abusive relationship. In this context, the participants' traditional approach was to his disadvantage.

One of the participants in this study reported that his alcohol consumption increased because of the abuse. These findings are in line with Hogan's (2016) findings whose participant reported

that their alcohol consumption increased as the frequency of the abuse increased. The other finding in this study was that some participants reported drinking to numb their pain, which led to alcohol dependency. Confirming the findings from this study, McClennen et al. (2002) found that men frequently reported abusing alcohol and drugs to help them cope with the psychological consequences of the experiencing IPV. These findings correspond with earlier research that documented a relationship between experiencing IPV and alcohol/substance abuse (Hines & Douglas, 2010a).

Self-talk was another coping strategy that was employed; positive self-talk is generally an excellent coping strategy (Hamilton et al., 2011), however, in this study, the self-talk was to the participants' detriment. One participant would tell himself that things will change because she was his first woman and they are already married; this speaks to him not seeing any other way out and being hopeful that his wife would change someday. This type of maladaptive coping style was reported by one participant only.

While the current study findings have been contextualised in various literature sources, Table 5.1 below specifically shows how the study findings agree/disagree with the assumptions of the ecological framework, power wheel theory and hegemonic masculinity.

Table 5.1

Theoretical Control Illustration

Theoretical control illustration	
Existing theoretical assumptions	**Current study findings**
Ecological framework • **Microsystem** o Influences of biological and personal history factors like	The current findings agree with the assumptions of the ecological framework as follows: **Microsystem** **<u>Causes of IPV</u>**

history of family violence that influence how a person behaves and increase their likelihood of becoming a victim or perpetrator o Demographics like young age, low income o Substance abuse • **Mesosystem** o Influences of close relationships and how they increase the risk of IPV o Marital conflict o Helping services o Family • **Exosystem** o Influences of community contexts o Issues of high level of unemployment o Accessibility to alcohol o Women's financial empowerment o Education o Helping services o Politics • **Macrosystem** o Influences of the larger cultural context and societal factors o Media	**Family setting:** • No history of family violence – never witnessed parental violence • Some of the men were raised by single parents **Individual factors:** • Alcohol abuse by the victim of IPV • Young age • Being an immigrant • No income/low income **<u>Consequences of IPV</u>** • Psychological effects • Suicide attempt • Socio-economic effects • Incarceration **Mesosystem** **<u>Causes of IPV</u>:** • Psycho-social factors • Marital conflict • Lack of family support • Some of the participants came from a low-income household **<u>Consequences of IPV</u>:** • Parental alienation • Separation from a partner • Isolation from family and friends **Exosystem** **<u>Causes of IPV</u>:** • Low socio-economic status • Transformation policies

	• Unemployment • Cultural factors – socialisation, gender role of men as providers, being forced into getting married, unmet cultural expectations • Social isolation – immigrant • Unbelief by the general and professional communities • Lack of helping services **<u>Consequences of IPV</u>:** • Socio-economic factors • Barriers to accessing help services for abused men • Culture of ignoring abused men **Macrosystem** **<u>Causes of IPV</u>:** • Exploitation – SA's political and historical factors (apartheid), e.g. migrant labour system, single mother headed families, absence of the father figure • Cultural norms that support IPV against men • Patriarchy • The law- the unfair implementation of the Domestic violence Act, Children's Act • **<u>Consequences of IPV</u>:** • Unfair implementation of the law • Secondary victimisation • Cultural norms that support IPV against men.

	IPV coping strategies based on influences at all levels • Perceived social support • Spiritual belief • Help seeking behaviour
Duluth Power and Control Wheel **Controlling behaviour:** • Physical violence • Sexual abuse • Using emotional abuse • Using isolation • Minimising, denying and blaming • Using children • Using male privilege • Using economic abuse • Using coercion and threats	The men in this study experienced all the controlling behaviours as described in the Power and Control Wheel theory. The behaviours manifested in the following ways: • Parental alienation – using children to abuse emotionally and control the male victim • Denial of conjugal rights • False accusations • Physical abuse • Sexual abuse • Psychological abuse • Economic abuse • Instead of male privilege, this study found that women used their privilege by misusing the system that is designed to aid female IPV victims; female abusers could get a protection order under false pretences, thereby labelling the male victim as the perpetrator.
Hegemonic masculinity • As defined by Connell (1995, as cited in Langa and Kiguwa, 2013, p.21) hegemonic masculinity is the configuration of gender practice that embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees the dominant position of men and the	The findings in this study reported that this type of masculinity causes further victimisation of the abused men such as: • Fear of being ridiculed • Building barriers to seeking help

subordination of women and other men who are considered to be weak. • This form of masculinity is known as patriarchy over women and subordinate masculinity.	
Social learning theory Akers' (1998) four social learning concepts based on the social learning theory were applied in this study. These are as follows: differential association (knowing those who have been victimised, parents' attitudes against IPV), imitation (engaging in a behaviour one observed another doing), definitions (person's own evaluative judgments, attitudes, or meanings attached to a particular behaviour), and differential reinforcement (perceptions of others' reactions to IPV, cost-benefit analysis of IPV). This theory explains how intervention programmes should emphasise not only the removal of physical impediments to leaving an abusive relationship, but also the development of coping skills and self-efficacy.	The participants in the current study agree with the assumptions of social learning theory for intervention as follows: **Appropriate socialistion** • Socialise boys and girls in the evolving gender roles/expectations • Socialise boys to acknowledge their feelings • Socialise with a new perspective by reframing and redefining masculinity positively and healthily **Psycho-social support which includes:** • Multi-pronged abuse acknowledgement • Public awareness (this theory also articulates the importance of transmissions of beliefs, values and norms conducive to IPV, therefore public awarenessregarding IPV against men would be demystified) • Counselling (helps with developing self-efficacy and coping skills) • Support group

Victim Empowerment and Support

This theme will focus on two crucial factors. Firstly, the participants' experience with psycho-social support, including challenges they experienced. Secondly, the empowerment needs from the male perspective. The word psycho-social is a combination of the words "psychological" and "social" aspects of a persons' life. Psycho-social support looks at addressing the emotional, social, physical, mental and spiritual needs of direct and indirect IPV victims to reduce the adverse effects of IPV (DOH, n.d). Psycho-social support helps a person cope with the stressors that disrupted their lives. This kind of support aims to respond to the psychological and physical needs of male IPV victims. Appropriate psycho-social support can help prevent distress and suffering from developing into severe mental health problems; help male IPV victims cope better and help male IPV victims resume their everyday lives (Neswiswa, 2014; Štrin & Minič, 2017). Therefore, adequate psycho-social support can decrease the risk of developing mental ill-health (Hansen, 2009), however, lack of psycho-social support is related to barriers to reporting abuse and staying in abusive relationships, as mentioned above.

This section will first discuss the experiences these participants had with psycho-social support. These include experiences like:

- Difficultly related to accessing financial support.
- Experiences with the health system.
- Secondary victimisation.

Difficulty Related to Accessing Financial Support

According to Agbulos (2017), there is a belief that men have resources and do not require housing. This belief is contrary to the findings of this study. A participant reported that he had nowhere to go and could not look for work because he was prohibited from doing so by his

visa. The three years he was married to his wife, she was the breadwinner and supported him. He filed for a Rule 43 interim maintenance application, pending divorce application under the High Court Rules. This rule involves a claim for maintenance pending finalisation of a divorce (Venter, 2015).

A Rule 43 application, also known as interim relief, can be applied for if the divorce process is taking long or if one of the spouses is a homemaker with no income. This interim measure is meant to help an applicant quickly with minimal legal costs (Amendment Act, No. 9 of 1929). Rule 43 is applied for when the divorce process is taking long; however, this process felt lengthy, for someone who did not have shelter, which led to the participant's frustration.

Experiences with the Health System

The number of studies investigating IPV among men who seek health care services is limited. Bergman and Brismar (1994) had argued that men who are beaten by their female partners do not seek medical services as the injuries are either minor or non-existent. As studies on abused men increase at an alarmingly slow pace, there is evidence to suggest that some men bear severe injuries at the hands of their female partners (Douglas & Hines, 2011; Hogan, 2016; Machado et al, 2016; Mqakelana, 2015). Some of the participants in this study reported seeking health care due to injuries sustained. Amongst the participants who sought after health care, one participant reported a positive experience at the hospital. The rest of the participants did not report their experience as positive or negative. They never mentioned their experiences with the health care system. As mentioned by Scicluna (2015), medical services received the least criticism. This could be because of IPV victims' sought-after such services for medical purposes only. However, Daniel felt that the health care system was supportive as he was given a completed J88 form.

Douglas and Hines (2011) found that only 18.1% of male IPV victims accessed healthcare workers, and they were satisfied with the support they received. The J88 form is an official document from the Department of Justice which serves as an official legal, medical record. This form is used in criminal proceedings. It records injuries sustained by victims of crime, including IPV. The health care providers must take a patient's history, complete an examination and document what they see, smell, hear and touch in the J88 form (Mogale et al, 2015). The form conveys a precise clinical description of injuries and is completed by healthcare providers and is endorsed as *prima facie* evidence in violence cases against women (Mogale et al., 2015). What happened to Daniel upon his discharge from the hospital leads us to the next section, secondary victimisation, as he was arrested.

Secondary Victimisation

Secondary victimisation is defined by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DJCD, 2006) as

> the processes, actions and omissions that may intentionally or unintentionally contribute to the re-victimisation of a person who has experienced a traumatic incident as a victim through disbelief of the person's account; blaming the victim; lack of (or insufficient) support services to assist the victim at an interpersonal, institutional and broad social level. (p.2)

The participants in this study further experienced secondary victimisation by the justice system. Secondary victimisation comes in the forms of, amongst other things: blaming the victim, not believing the victim, arresting the victim, not providing the victim with a protection order when requested, and the unjust implementation of the law. Daniel, as mentioned above, was arrested upon his discharge from the hospital. He felt that his arrest was because his former partner was a police officer, and she was abusing her power. He also experienced institutional victimisation, as the police refused to recognise him as an IPV victim. The Department of

Justice and Constitutional Development (2006) argued that police "loyalty" amongst their colleagues when dealing with IPV is non-compliant with the duties of police as set out in Section 2 of the Domestic Violence Regulations Act (Act 116 of 1998). These findings are congruent with Hogan's (2016) findings, where the men reported being wrongfully arrested by the police. The difference between Hogan's findings and the findings of this study is that Daniel was not just dismissed as a victim of IPV; other charges were made up for him to be arrested. This is what Wetendorf (2000) called the misuse of institutional power, as the police officer had a badge, a weapon and the support of their department; Daniel's partner used her department's support and the badge against him. It has been argued that police officers may tend to be abusive to gain some sort of control, which has been attributed to their stressful work environment (Anderson & Lo, 2011; Erwin et al., 2005).

The participants who sought help described their experiences of reporting the IPV to the police. These men expressed being failed by the police and the judicial system; as they did not respond to their reports adequately or the way they would have responded, should a woman have reported the abuse. The police reactions to these men's reports ridiculed the men; denying them protection orders; conforming to the gendered stereotype that only women are IPV victims and arresting the men. These findings are consistent with previous research findings that the police and the judicial system further victimise IPV victims (Cook, 2009; Douglas & Hines, 2011; & Tsui, 2014). It is evident in this study that the police officers were not helpful to the abused men due to the societal understanding of IPV, hence some of the participants were asked if they could not control their wives. Some authors found that some female perpetrators of abuse get arrested. However, fewer are convicted (Dewar, 2008; Hines, 2007).

However, this study found that among those men who reported their partners to the police or took their matters to the courts, none of those women were arrested, nor given protection orders against their female partners. This practice of refusing men a protection order against

their abusive female partners contradicts Section 2 of the Domestic Violence Regulations Act. The Act states that “any member of the South African Police Services (SAPS) must explain to the complainant the content of such notice in the prescribed manner, including the remedies at his or her disposal in terms of Domestic Violence Act (Act 116 of 1998) and their right to lodge a criminal complaint”. This indicates that the police were denying the men their right to be protected from the abuse perpetrated by their female partners.

McCarrick et al., (2016) conducted a study on men’s lived experiences of the criminal justice system following female perpetrated IPV. They found that not being believed and being treated like the perpetrator by the criminal justice system further traumatised the male victims. Therefore, they reported being further victimised by the system. The men in their study further reported feeling dismissed or ignored by the police. This is consistent with the findings of the current study. In the study conducted by Walker et al. (2019), the participants reported a wide range of reactions from the police, some reported being ridiculed by the police; they experienced indifference from the police; some of their participants stated that the courts did not take violence against men as serious. Consistent with this study, some of Walker’s participants indicated that they were laughed at and ridiculed and were told to get brave and deal with their problems.

Participants in this study reported experiencing the unjust implementation of the law, which further victimised them. This form of secondary victimisation included: the police rejected a participant’s report of abuse; the other participant was served with a protection order against him without due diligence; another reported the mother of his child refused a court summons. Therefore, leading the participants into believing that the justice system is gender-biased. Dewar (2008) implied that this unjust implementation of the law perpetuates a culture of victim-blaming. The justice system's attitude instils mistrust and demotivates men from seeking help since they felt invalidated by their experiences were judged for not adhering to

expected conventional gender norms. This can leave male victims feeling re-traumatised. They are further alienated because service providers' reactions also reflect the female perpetrators' behaviour (Walter et al., 2019).

This is consistent with the findings of this study as one of the participants reported going to the police to open a case against his wife, and the police mocked him; when he arrived home, his wife mocked him, asking him “where are the police” as he had told her that he would come back with them. This provocation led to him retaliating by physically beating his wife. The police reacted when this men’s wife called them. When he called the police, they did not respond. Consistent with these findings, men have reported being “re-victimised by a system set up solely to help female victims, including being treated with suspicion, disbelief and even being accused of being a perpetrator when seeking help” (Hogan et al., 2012, p.45). Hogan (2016) found that the police's inaction enables the abusive partner to maintain a cycle of control, which endangers the men’s wellbeing.

The unjust implementation of the law by the courts has been reported by other researchers (Hines et al., 2007; Hogan, 2016; Tsui et al., 2010). Similar to this study, the men perceived the legal system as underpinned by the patriarchal beliefs around parenting, which works against the men. Furthermore, apartheid was blamed for this unjust implementation of the law. apartheid was a legal system of racial discrimination with an ideology that promoted Afrikaner supremacy and pride; this racial discrimination system was imposed through economic, social and political deprivation of Black South Africans (Mhlauli et al., 2015). During this time, some laws gave White people privilege and disadvantaged Black people. This is what one of the participants alluded to. However, the participant argued that some of these laws are still implemented today and these laws disadvantaged men. He suggested that the apartheid laws oppress men even today, as the law is biased towards women. It was suggesting that women

can manipulate the justice system because of these laws. There is a lack of literature indicating the link between IPV and apartheid laws.

Empowerment Needs as Expressed by Participants

Almaseb and Julia (2007) advocate that empowerment is a theoretical framework that helps people take more control over their own lives. Victim empowerment facilitates access to a range of services for IPV victims to restore and build a healthy society (DSD, 2007; Mbowana,2016). Empowerment is facilitated by good and adequate psycho-social support. Victim support is a process through which victims receive support to deal with victimisation's harmful effects by providing necessary material, medical, psychological, information, advice, practical help, and social assistance (DSD, 2008). The victim empowerment policy aims to support and empower individuals, families and communities that have been victimised (DSD, 2008).

This section in the theme captures the men's perceptions of changes that need to be made in order for them to be empowered and also to enhance the recognition and understanding of IPV against men. Support is always available for women as there are shelters for women who have experienced IPV and victim empowerment programmes. In 2011, there were 98 shelters established, NGOs and some managed by the government; only two shelters were established to address and protect the needs of men who are IPV victims (DSD, 2011). It is concerning that it took me a long time trying to find a shelter for abused men in Gauteng, this means that they are not visible nor easily accessible. According to Lopes (2013), SAPS are responsible for referring and transferring women to shelters; therefore, suggesting that one cannot go straight to the shelters. However, similar services of support do not exist for men who experience IPV. There are only two shelters for men in South Africa. I am not sure how accessible they are, or even the practicality of access by someone based outside of Gauteng. Charles, who was

forcefully removed from the only home he has known in South Africa, had no idea that there was a shelter that he could go to. This suggests that the system is not set up to meet men's needs. This speaks to a lack of awareness campaigns regarding IPV against men. Participants in this study reported the following sub-themes that supported the main theme:

i. Appropriate socialisation;
ii. Psycho-social support;
iii. Fair implementation of the law;
iv. Legal support.

Appropriate Socialisation

Socialisation is a "process through which individuals acquire the beliefs, customs, attitudes, values and roles of their culture and social group, to be integrated into and accepted by society" (Louw & Louw, 2019, p. 220). According to society, these values or skills are necessary to be a "successful" man or woman (Lawson et al., 2015). Therefore, gender roles are socially constructed, meaning that gender is learned through socialisation. Gender roles evolve in response to the ever-changing social, political and cultural milieu. As discussed earlier, women are now becoming providers, earning more money than their male partners, and occupying higher positions in the workplace. Men have been expected to be strong, to be the sole providers for their immediate and extended families, they have been socialised never to seek help and never display any form of emotion unless it is aggression. This means that they cannot show emotional pain, sadness or fear, "real men do not cry" or discuss feelings. They are defined as men if they are the protectors of women and children; therefore, if they need protection from women, they are not men (Fontes, 2003).

This study's findings contribute to new understanding as men themselves are recommending a different approach to male socialisation, which would encourage men to talk about their

problems. They recommend an approach contrary to patriarchy/masculinity that will bypass feelings of shame and embarrassment, leading to men seeking help. Masculinity suggests that being a man is reflected by being aggressive and unemotional. Hooks (2004) suggested that patriarchy demands that men "engage in acts of psychic self-mutilation, that they kill off the emotional parts of themselves," if they do not succeed in this, they can count on patriarchal men to assault their self-esteem. The men in this study realised that this patriarchal ethos do not work for them; as Mpho suggested, this socialisation has led many men to kill their wives and children because they are not taught how to deal with difficult situations appropriately. Patriarchy is said to allow and disregard male victimisation (Patel, 2016). Some of the men in this study reported that they were raised never to beat a woman. Other men reported not disclosing that they were IPV victims due to societal perceptions of men being aggressive and unemotional.

Psycho-social Support

Participants have reported a need for psycho-social support. Their needs are in line with the South African Victim Empowerment Programme. This programme aims to alleviate psycho-social problems and mitigate IPV's effects through trauma counselling and management; treating victims with respect and dignity (Mbowana, 2016).

The participants shared their pain and harassment by their intimate female partners. This suggests that it is time to recognise IPV perpetrated by females against their male partners as a social and public health issue and develop appropriate interventions. As indicated by the participants, they can be helped through appropriate interventions like professional counselling, programmes for both victims and perpetrators of IPV, support groups, collaborative task teams, education and awareness campaigns. Agbulos (2017) suggested

interventions like acknowledging IPV against men by women as a public health issue; a helpline for the male IPV victims; and education and awareness.

Agbulos (2017) found that abused men's needs include housing, having access to their children, case management, counselling, support groups, improved psycho-social support and trauma-informed care. This study's findings support the current findings as this study found that male victims' needs range from having support groups; housing resources; financial resources; job training; counselling and therapy; and legal support.

Participants recommended professional counselling. Mental health services play a vital role in the recovery process of victims of abuse; they can either facilitate the recovery process or further traumatise the abused victims (Ingram et al., 2007). One of the participants in this study had to overcome internal (feelings of shame and self-blame) and external barriers (being ridiculed), and he sought psychological counselling. However, some participants acknowledged the importance of seeking professional help even though they had never consulted a counsellor. These men not seeking help could be because men might perceive accessing counselling as being weak, which challenges their masculinity (Gillon 2008).

The findings from this study have important implications for professionals like psychologists and registered counsellors. South Africa currently has 8030 psychologists (clinical, counselling, educational, industrial and research) and 2559 registered counsellors (HPCSA, 2020). There is no information available about the areas where registered counsellors work; however, based on my experience as a practising registered counsellor also working as a lecturer and the reports of other registered counsellors that I trained with, only one of them is working in the field as an EAP. EAP is a workplace service offered as a support intervention for distressed employees. They play an important role in minimising absenteeism, workplace accidents and grievances (Rajin, 2012). Moreover, others have gone to other fields; some went on to obtain a master's in research psychology. Mental health in South Africa is not prioritised;

only when a person exhibits severe symptoms are, they considered for help. Mental illness negatively impacts the general functioning and quality of life of the affected individuals (Lund et al., 2009).

One-third of all South Africans have mental illnesses, and as many as 75% of this population will not get any mental health care (Tromp et al., 2014). Such a massive number of people will not access mental health care because most psychologists are in private sectors. This notwithstanding, they are not enough to service this population. This brings us to the creation of the registered counsellor (RC) category by the HPCSA. Registered counsellors are trained to offer basic primary psychological counselling at a community level. RC is meant to close the gap in the mental health care, for disadvantaged communities by affording them access to affordable mental health care professionals (Abel & Louw, 2009). Pretorius (2013, as cited in Fisher, 2017, p.9) described the RC category as:

"They (RC)will provide a workforce to address the South African problems in the South African society, prevent mental health problems, and enhance wellbeing and development. RCs will also make primary psychological services on grass root level accessible and available".

An RC's role is to perform psychological screening, primary mental status screening, basic assessment and psychological interventions with individuals to enhance personal functioning and performing supportive, compensatory and routine psychological interventions (HPCSA, Amendment No. R. 704). RC should be the first in line to provide psychological support in the community (Mashiane, 2019). However, they are not visible in the community of men who have experienced IPV. Studies have shown that South Africa is training Registered Counsellors without providing them with employment or making sure that the registration is known to the public (Abel & Louw, 2007; Elkonin & Sandiso, 2006). Another role of registered counsellors is to help with preventative interventions that focus on support and promote the enhancement of the wellbeing in a community context (HPCSA, Form 258). Registered counsellors play a

role in alleviating the burden placed on mental health services in South Africa (Mashiane, 2019); they can assist in creating awareness to the public about IPV against men as one of the registered counsellors' role is to create psychological interventions like community education regarding IPV against men and participate in policy formulation (HPCSA, Form 258).

The men's narrative indicates that they have experienced IPV, which was traumatic and negatively affected them. There are those men who are still in abusive relationships who would need a different kind of support to those who have left. Therefore, this study will bring awareness to counsellors on the impact that IPV has on the men (Hogan et al., 2012). Ultimately, there is also a need to raise awareness among abused men regarding what counselling can help them with. As indicated in Chapter 4, one of the participants reported having a beneficial experience with a counsellor, who was non-judgmental and seemed to understand him. This finding highlights the need for non-judgmental counsellors (Hogan et al., 2012).

Ending violence requires intersectional approaches from all affected individuals. This means different sectors collaborating to assist a victim of IPV. VEP focus is on promoting a victim-centred approach to crime prevention. Therefore, it is intersectoral. Table 5.2 below is an example of how different sectors can collaborate to assist men who experience IPV.

Table 5.2

Different sectors collaborating to assist men who experienced IPV.

The male victim reports to the hospital requiring treatment for an injury sustained like Daniel who was hospitalised after sustaining a serious injury caused by his female partner; health care workers are required to obtain physical evidence for a possible trial (**Hospital**).
The male victim might require emotional support and counselling due to trauma (**Registered Counsellor**).

The male victim will then be referred to the police who will take their statement regarding the incident and investigate it. In the meantime, the police will help the male IPV victim obtain a protection order against their female partner (**Police**).

In case of an arrest, the police may ask the male victim to identify the female perpetrator

If the perpetrator is prosecuted, the prosecutor may ask the male victim to give evidence of the abuse (**Courts**).

If the perpetrator is convicted, the male victim will need to be informed of her release to be protected from potential victimisation.

(*Adapted from Integrated Victim Empowerment Policy, 2007*).

The lack of non-profit services to heterosexual IPV victims does not reflect their reality of being in violent relationships (Agbulos, 2017). If South Africa intends to eradicate IPV, there need to be services that cater specifically for male IPV victims and services need to be gender inclusive. According to Tilbrook (2010), these services should be designed with understanding men's specific needs and the impact victimisation has on their masculinity identity.

Tsui et al.'s (2010) recommendations were: to increase awareness of IPV against men through campaigns; gender-inclusive service practices; and create gender-sensitive training for service providers. These recommendations would narrow down the myths around IPV against men and broaden people's knowledge regarding IPV. Consistent with the current study, the visibility of resources for abused men is limited by its exposure and number of services available to these men.

The study further recommends campaigns to be done in a way that acknowledges men as IPV victims. Furthermore, these campaigns must be inclusive of the language used to symbolise the importance of IPV. The Department of Social Development (DSD) has campaigned against Gender-Based Violence (GBV). However, when DSD mentions GBV they

mean women who have experienced IPV perpetrated by men; this is also apparent in their campaigns. However, GBV is all-encompassing (including both males and females). There is a need for intersectoral programmes that serve all victims, using gender (male and female) inclusive language (Tsui et al., 2010). Consistent with McCarrick et al. (2016), this study revealed a need to transform the criminal justice system and the health system to demystify IPV myths. This will provide an understanding of what abused men go through and encourage a gender-informed perspective.

Fair Implementation of the Law. Biasness in implementing the law is the most significant barrier to reporting IPV perpetrated by women against men. The men's major concern in this study was how differently they were treated by the criminal justice system based on them being men. Existing research on male IPV victims has reported this biased treatment (Hines et al., 2007; McCarrick et al. 2016; Randle & Graham,2009). Literature indicates that not being believed or being treated as a perpetrator by the criminal justice system has psychological consequences on abused men because of the secondary victimisation.

This unfair implementation of the law could be because the police and the courts are also influenced by the prevailing gender stereotypes regarding abuse (McCarrick et al., 2016). The participants reported the need to be heard by the courts and for the police to apply the law, as stipulated in the Constitution and the Domestic Violence Act. The Domestic Violence Act (116 of 1998) uses gender-neutral language. This means that the Act acknowledges that men can be victims of abuse too. The problem then is in the implementation of these laws.

Legal Support. The men in this study reported not being believed by the police, or no action was taken against their female perpetrators, most men who went to the courts did so because they were fighting for their children. However, the courts did not listen to them. South Africa has free legal aid support, which helps assist people who cannot afford an attorney. Legal aid derives its mandate from Section 35 of the Constitution, which provides that every person has

a right to a fair trial, this includes the right to have a legal representative assigned at the state's expense (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

Chapter Summary

Just as Dhaka (2015) argued, the current study shows that the purpose of all forms of IPV is to gain and maintain control over the victim. The male victims in this study have experienced a range of abusive behaviours from their female partners. Interestingly enough, most of these behaviours mirror those that abused women experience. Just like Hines et al. (2007), based on the findings from this study, I have classified the men's experiences of abuse into those described by the power and control wheel of the Duluth Model (Pence & Paymar, 1983). The men in this study experienced all the Power and Control Wheel behaviours, acts like emotional abuse, economic abuse, intimidation, isolation, using children, coercion and threats, minimising, denying and blaming. The "male privilege" was changed to "using privilege". I could refer to this as "female privilege" as some men were victims of their partners misusing the system that is designed to aide female IPV victims. In line with the current study, Hines et al. (2007) also found that female abusers could get a protection order under false pretences, thereby labelling the male victim as the perpetrator. Children in this study were used to abuse the fathers emotionally.

The findings that men can be victims of female perpetrated violence corresponds with other studies (Hines et al.,2007; McCarrick et al., 2016; Migliaccio, 2001). However, there has been an on-going debate that IPV is mostly bi-directional with both male and female partners alternating between victim and perpetrator and a gender symmetry and asymmetry in IPV (Johnson, 2006), with a broader spectrum of abusive behaviours. Unfortunately, this study only focused on exploring abused men's lived experiences by their female partners, not on the

possible bi-directional IPV amongst couples. This calls for further research in this area to better the services offered to families experiencing IPV.

In this study, IPV experienced by male victims was described as a pattern and not a once-off incident (Hines & Douglas, 2010; Migliaccio, 2001). On the one hand, the study findings show that the participants' female partners used power and control to abuse the men. On the other hand, culture is portrayed by the same men to be promoting the image and behaviour of men who are masculine thus strong, powerful, bold and brave. Based on the findings, one can argue that culture is not the only determinant of whether a man can or cannot be abused. Other factors like their socialisation, being an immigrant, not being the one earning more money than their wives, and the abusive female partners' attributes, which are beyond the scope of this study, contribute to men being IPV victims.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

In Chapter 5 the study findings were discussed and supported by a literature control. This chapter presents a summary of the study's major findings and their implications. Recommended guidelines for support for male IPV victims perpetrated by their female partner and the study's limitations are addressed, followed by a conclusion to the study.

The purpose of this study was to develop guidelines for support to male IPV victims perpetrated by their female partners. This study explored the lived experiences of abused men by their female partners in Gauteng Province. The study's aim was achieved by conducting interpretative phenomenological analysis; semi-structured interviews with 14 male IPV victims.

For this study, the following main research question was asked:

What are the experiences of men who are abused by their female partners?

The following were the sub-questions that the study answered:

- How do abused men understand intimate partner violence?
- How do men experience intimate partner violence perpetrated by their female partners?
- How do the men cope with the experience of abuse by their female partners?
- What are the men's experiences with the helping systems?
- What is the empowerment needs of abused men?

The following themes emerged from the analysis and interpretation of data gathered from interviews with male IPV victims:

- Theme 1: IPV as controlling behaviour.

- Theme 2: The origins and consequences of IPV.
- Theme 3: Victims' reaction to IPV.
- Theme 4: Victim Empowerment and Support.

Overview and Summary of the Study Findings

IPV as Controlling Behaviour

The findings in this study suggested that men can be IPV victims perpetrated by their female partners. They experienced different IPV forms, namely, denial of conjugal rights, false accusations, physical assault, sexual assault, psychological abuse, economic abuse and parental alienation. These types of IPV experienced by these men were centralised by their female partners' need to control them. The participants' most common type of abuse was psychological abuse; the least common as reported by the men in this study was sexual assault. The sexual assault might be the least reported, but that does not mean it is not happening. The findings also suggest that the female partners that physically abused the participants used weapons to inflict injuries. This demystifies the myth that women cannot be physically abusive as they do not have the body strength. Therefore, the women compensate for the lack of body muscle with objects like knives, glasses just to mention a few. Parental alienation is a form of abuse that was used to punish or emotionally abuse the victim. However, this type of abuse directly affected the child, as well. This study shows that IPV against men is also genuine, it is not trivial, and men can sustain severe injuries.

The Origins of IPV

The study also discovered that these men in their sense-making of the abuse attributed their abuse to multiple factors like culture, psycho-social and socio-economic factors, and exploitation. I concluded that there is no one contributing factor to IPV and trying to figure out what makes one man a victim of IPV over the other is such a complicated process.

It is complex because, for example, cultural factors are known to be contributing to female IPV. These men are attributing the very same cultural factors to their own abuse. For instance, parents use the language to socialise the boy child, from a very young age a boy child is told not to cry; they are told that men are providers. This kind of teachings are problematic. A proverb by the Tsonga people "*Nwanuna u ba xiqatula wansati a sula ritshuri*", loosely translated: a man is the breadwinner, a woman stays at home) is very problematic in this ever-evolving economic, political and social environment. This statement can be said to be oppressive to both genders. It denies a woman's financial independence while at the same time stifles a man who earns less than his wife. As discussed in Chapter 5, times have changed, and now women are more competitive in the workplace, they are getting better positions, and some of the women have become sole breadwinners. The gender role socialisation does not take into account the changing society that we are living in. South Africa comprises different cultures, but they have one thing in common – patriarchy (men are more privileged than women, Witz, 1992). Based on this study's findings, an honest discussion needs to be held around whom does patriarchy serve or benefit. The findings suggest that patriarchy is not serving men; instead is oppressing them further and alienating them from society.

Psycho-social issues were a participant reported that his drinking of alcohol was the cause of the abuse experience. Other participants attributed their wives' single friends as a problem. These men assumed that they were being influenced badly by these friends because their wives had single friends. I guess there are different expectations for married women.

One participant reported that his family's socio-economic status contributed to the abuse. Suggesting that they were undermined because of their low socio-economic status, and he was falsely accused of impregnating his former wife. I wondered what the woman would gain from accusing this man of impregnating her; I realised that a child out of wedlock in an African family is an embarrassment to the girl's family (Fubam et al., 2019). People with good financial

resources would request a paternity test, while a person from a low socio-economic status might not have any other recourse. Therefore, their financial position does not allow them to defend themselves.

One participant reported being exploited by his wife because he was an immigrant, was dependent on her financially, and there was a 20-year age gap between them. Exploitation has been found in several studies that focused on immigrant women in abusive relationships (Duangkumnerd, 2009; Pongthippat et al., 2018). 'Sugar daddy' (older men in relationships with younger women) said that younger women are exploited because of the age gap and socio-economic status (Gbalajobi, 2010). Another participant reported that the apartheid-laws contributed to men's exploitation because their fathers were absent when they were growing up. Their father's absence deprived them of fatherly guidance, which, according to the participant, would have reduced the opportunity for him being a victim of abuse.

The Consequences of IPV against Men

Participants in this study experienced different types of controlling behaviour that resulted in the deterioration of their mental health and economic status. These participants reportedly experienced various psychological consequences like intense shame, emotional distress, pain, emasculation, symptoms of depression, trauma, suicidal ideation, and attempted suicide. Most of the men experienced emasculation, which impacted on their sense of self-worth. Others experienced a loss of employment and were socially isolated.

Some participants reported ongoing psychological consequences of those behaviours like being controlled and falsifying paternity, which resulted in mistrust of all women. Another consequence of abuse, as reported by the participants, was separation from their partner. While some of the men left because they could no longer accept the abuse, other men were forced out of the abusive relationships by their abusive partners. It was clear that it was not an easy

decision for most men who separated from their partners as they were invested in these relationships. One participant attempted suicide as a consequence of experiencing various forms of abuse.

I concluded that the men in this study have tried to make sense of their abuse by attributing it to various factors. This makes IPV origins more complicated, as suggested by the ecological model (Krug et al., 2002). Secondly, IPV against men has severe, long-lasting consequences, just as it has also been found in abused women studies.

Reactions of IPV Victims

Under this theme, the following reactions were captured: participants' coping mechanisms (adaptive coping strategies, i.e. help-seeking behaviour and maladaptive coping strategies), reasons why men stayed in an abusive relationship (trauma bonding and barriers to seeking help). The coping mechanisms that the participants used were avoidance behaviour like leaving the room where the partner was in, traditional approaches like belief in ancestral protection, alcohol abuse to numb the pain and self-defeating self-talk.

Another coping strategy that was used was seeking help. All the participants who reported seeking help had to overcome their internal obstacles like feelings of shame. Hooks (2004) argued that shaming is used to socialise boys away from their feelings towards patriarchal ideology; therefore, many men have an internal shaming voice. This results in men feeling ashamed of being a victim of abuse, thus preventing them from seeking help early. This study found that help-seeking behaviour can either be facilitated or constricted by several factors. The facilitators of help-seeking behaviour were the participants' perceived social support, and people they felt they could trust. On the contrary, help-seeking behaviour was inhibited by fear of being laughed at and not being believed. Participants reported being supported by their social networks. One participant reported being supported by the police, and another reported that a

mental health practitioner supported them. The participants who were able to leave the abusive relationships reported that the support they received from their family was invaluable. Contrary to some studies, a participant in this study reported feeling supported by the police (Drijber, 2013; Hines & Douglas 2010b; McCarrick et al., 2016). As mentioned above, men also reported barriers to reporting their experiences of IPV. There were internal obstacles like fear of being further emasculated, these fears are not without base, as some of the participants reported being emasculated. At the time of the interview, one of the participants was still in an abusive relationship and tried to disclose to a colleague whom he thought would support him; however, the colleague laughed at him instead. He never disclosed the abuse to anyone. This participant experienced a barrier to seeking help, and one hears this about abused men; they are laughed at when they report abuse. One can further argue that this behaviour further negatively impacts their mental health. These men's fear is valid; however, based on these findings, I concluded that these men also hold the belief that IPV is perpetrated by men and women are victims. Hence, they would feel like they have failed in sustaining masculine norms; again, this speaks to their socialisation.

The study also found why men stay in abusive relationships for reasons that were termed trauma bonding. This refers to the inability to leave a toxic relationship because of the formed attachment with the abuser. Therefore, those who are abused find all sorts of reasons to stay. Participants reported being committed to their families, loving their wives, fear of losing their homes, fear of losing their lifestyle should they separate from their partners, and the fear of not seeing their children after leaving the relationships. I concluded that leaving an abusive relationship is not easy for men, just like women. They too are psychologically and economically invested in their families; hence they fear loss.

Furthermore, the participants who had children were adamant that they wanted to raise these children in a whole family. They did not consider that their families' dysfunctionality could

cause more damage to the children who witnessed the constant abuse of their fathers. This is contrary to Messing et al. (2015) who reported that their participants' reasons for leaving their abusive relationships were because they wanted to preserve their children's mental health by reducing the impact of witnessing IPV.

Victim Empowerment and Support

The current study's findings offer insight into the participants' positive and negative encounters with psycho-social support services. While the participants reported good experiences with the health system, some reported being unable to access financial support and encountering secondary victimisation.

Participants' positive experience with the health system could be because they were not aware of the doctors and nurses' responsibilities when it came to IPV. The participants visited the health care facilities for injuries due to IPV, and they were helped.

Contrary to the cultural belief of men being providers, the study found a male participant who was financially dependent on his wife. Since she forced him out of their home, he had no money to sustain himself. Therefore, his financial standard had to change.

Participants also reported various forms of secondary victimisation like not being believed as a victim of IPV, being arrested, not being afforded a protection order when they went to report the abuse to the police, being ridiculed by the police, and experiencing the unjust implementation of the law. What stood out in this study, which I did not find in other studies on abused men, was the arrest of one of the participants admitted at the hospital for serious IPV-related injuries. What is unique about this experience is that his former partner who caused the serious injury was a police officer herself. According to the participant, his former partner misused her institutional power as she had the support of her colleagues, who are police officers. Other participants' experiences with the police included police officers' reactions as

ridiculing the men; denying them protection orders; and conforming to the gendered stereotype that only women are IPV victims. In one particular incident, the police refused to take a participant's case when reporting his abusive wife's actions. Upon arrival at home, his wife tormented him about the police, asking him where they were, which made him feel provoked and hit his wife. His wife went to the same police station that he went to, and the same police officers who refused to take his case were the same ones to arrest him. This led to the conclusion that the police officers' reactions to IPV are one of the reporting barriers. This kind of reaction by the police further victimises the IPV victims and could lead to greater psychological distress.

Participants reported experiencing the unfair implementation of the law as secondary victimisation. The participants mentioned that they were aware of the laws about their human rights and felt that the justice system favoured women over men. This is the reason they perceived this as the unfair implementation of the law. This suggests that while the written law is gender-neutral, the law's implementors are subjective in their implementation.

As discussed in Chapter 5, empowerment is facilitated by excellent and adequate psycho-social support. According to the participants, good support includes access to shelters, different socialisation approaches, like gender-neutral upbringing, psycho-social support through the Victim Empowerment Programme, advocating for mental health care for men, fair implementation of the law, and legal support.

Limitations Inherent in this Study

The findings in this study provide insight into the unique challenges experienced by male IPV victims and are useful in developing interventions to support them. However, these findings need to be examined in relation to the limitations of this study.

- The study used a qualitative approach, which offered context-bound information. Though the findings of this study add to the knowledge gap of IPV against men, this approach does not allow the generalisation of these findings to a population (Strydom & Delport, 2011). This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of men who have experienced IPV perpetrated by their female partners, and a quantitative approach would not have yielded these results.
- The scope of the population was limited as this study was conducted in the Gauteng Province. Maybe if the study was conducted in other Provinces, the findings could be different.
- Accessing the population of men who experienced IPV was a significant limitation since IPV against men is not widely recognised. The participants I had access to were mostly from an NGO, and even then, most were reluctant to talk about their experiences.
- My gender, being a female, was also a limitation in this study. There was resistance from some male participants not wanting to talk to me. I mediated this issue by hiring and training a man who assisted me with data collection. This man had experience working with abused men.
- Another limitation in this study was that the study only focused on the men. The men's partners were not interviewed. Therefore, only one perspective was explored.

Recommendations

This study presented the lived experiences of men who were IPV victims perpetrated by their female partners. The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this study and the conclusions drawn from them. In addition, the Enhancing WHO's Standard Development Guideline Method, which refers to fundamental steps in the process for

guideline development (WHO, 2012), speaks to the process that was implemented in this study as follows:

1. **Formulating key questions** – the research questions in this study were formulated from the research problem and were as follows:

What are the experiences of men who are abused by their female partners?

The following were the sub-questions that the study sought to answer:

i. How do abused men understand intimate partner violence?

ii. How do men experience intimate partner violence perpetrated by their female partners?

iii. How do the men cope with the experience of abuse by their female partners?

iv. What are the men's experiences with the helping systems?

v. What is the empowerment needs of abused men?

2. **Evidence retrieval and synthesis** – semi-structured interviews and field notes and interpretative phenomenological analysis methods were used to collect data from the participants, to analyse the data and to present the findings in a way that represents the participants' IPV experiences and meaning, their reactions to IPV, as well as their empowerment and support needs. These have culminated into the following recommendations: appropriate socialisation, psycho-social support; training of stakeholders; and need for a victim empowerment programme (VEP) specific for men.

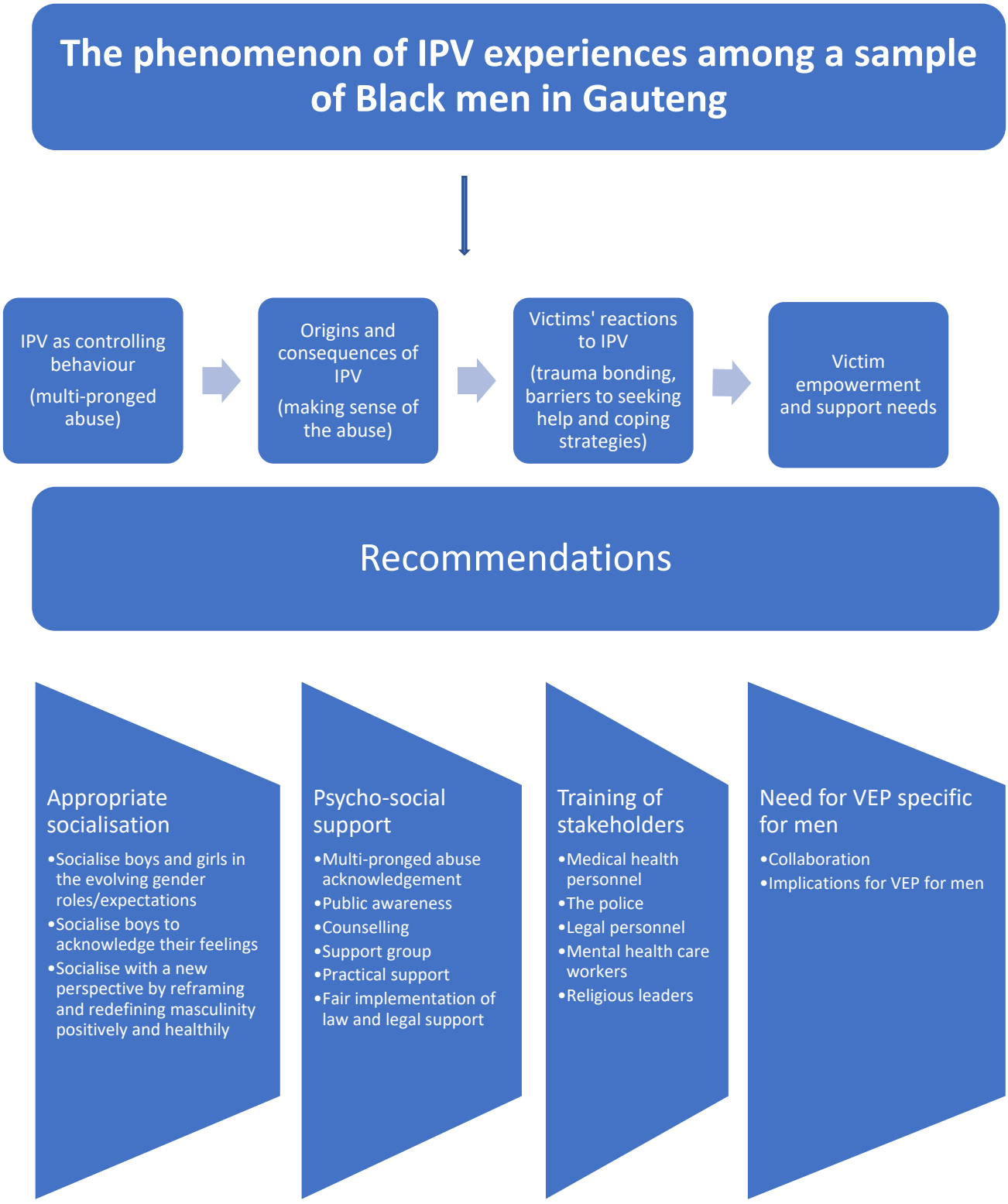
3. **Appraisal of the quality of the evidence** – techniques for ensuring the trustworthiness of findings were applied, as discussed in chapter three.

Interventions should promote social justice, the equitable distribution of resources and access to resources, participation in decision-making, non-violence and addressing vulnerable and marginalised groups (Swart, 2007). Therefore, this suggests that resolving IPV requires

many sectors' involvement, working together at community, national and international levels. The recommendations are presented in Figure 6.1 below. Thus, the following recommendations are directed as guidelines for support for men who have experienced IPV perpetrated by their female partners.

Figure 6.1

Recommendations for guidelines for support for men



Appropriate Socialisation of Children

The participants in this study advocated for better socialisation for the boy child to talk about their problems. Socialisation reinforces victim-blaming that leads to myths about men who are IPV victims (Tsui, 2014). Shakil (2016) argued a critical point that gender roles are learnt through socialisation, and they evolve in response to changes in the social, political and cultural environments. At the primary intervention level like psycho-education, children can be taught attitudes, behaviours, roles, and activities to combat IPV. This could include conflict management skills. Migliaccio (2001) found in their study that some men did not try to defend or restrain their wives when they were physically aggressive towards them because of social learning. They further reported that one of the participants in their study indicated that his mother instilled in him, from a young age, not to hit a woman. This finding is in line with one of the participant's response in the current study who indicated that his grandmother told him that under no circumstance could he beat a woman. While boys cannot be socialised to start acting aggressively towards girls, the same socialisation should occur among girls. I have personally observed that when a boy child hits his sister, all parents are quick to jump and reprimand. However, when a girl child hits her brother, the parents' response is rather slow.

The other issue that Migliaccio (2001) found is that men are socialised to rely on themselves. Hence, they are very slow to ask for assistance from others. Asking for help is perceived as a sign of weakness; therefore, there is a stigma associated with asking for help. Participants in the current study were afraid of being thought of as a wimp or weak.

Therefore, it is important to socialise boys to acknowledge their feelings, including pain. Hooks (2004) advised that shaming should not be used in socialising boys away from their feelings. In agreement with Tsui (2014), there is a need to socialise boys and men with a new perspective by reframing and redefining masculinity positively and healthily.

The Need for Psycho-social Support for Men

The participants in this study recommended that they need psycho-social support, implying that if they had received support, they would not have stayed in abusive relationships for as long as they have. Some of the participants continued experiencing IPV even after the relationship had ended.

Multi-pronged Abuse Acknowledgement. This could start by recognising the need for a change in society's perspective regarding IPV against men. Migliaccio (2001) suggested that if society acknowledged IPV perpetrated by women against men, then the men would not be afraid to report that they are being abused; this could improve men's social support services. The lack of acknowledgement of IPV against men may increase their vulnerability, as this has been noted as one of the barriers to help-seeking (Tilbrook et al., 2010). This also includes the abused men themselves, acknowledging that they are victims. South Africa has excellent policies that are inclusive. However, people cannot provide inclusive services due to the lack of acknowledging men as IPV victims. South Africa needs health services to recognise male IPV victims as well. Therefore, admission assessments in medical centres must also include screening tools to identify abused men. There is also a need for mental health workers, the police and the court system to acknowledge that men can be victims of IPV; this will reduce secondary victimisation from the helping system. The courts need to acknowledge that parental alienation can be used by a female intimate partner to abuse their male victim; therefore, a thorough investigation should be conducted before awarding any parent parental custody.

Public Awareness of IPV Against Men to Demystify Issues Around IPV. Participants argued that there is a need for more awareness of IPV against men. Tilbrook et al. (2010) advocated for psycho-education and awareness campaigns that recognise patterns of violence by either partner; educating the public that some men are at risk of being IPV victims. These psycho-educational programmes should include what IPV looks like regardless of the gender.

This will increase the understanding of what constitutes IPV, help with changing public perceptions regarding IPV against men, and could increase disclosure by men who experience IPV. Campaigns would invoke empathetic people towards the plight of men who do not conform to hegemonic masculinity. Lien and Lorentzen (2019) suggested that an experience unique to men is the feeling of being the "wrong" sort of victim in the helping services' eyes, including society. They are still regarded as unacceptable victims of violence in intimate relationships. This is another reason public awareness is important.

There is a need for specific campaigns that directly target stereotypes around who can be abused, including rape, which acknowledges how masculinity norms influence help-seeking behaviour. This does not take anything away from the plight of women. However, we cannot pretend that some men are not being abused. In line with the findings of Cheung, Leung and Tsui (2009) who did not find sources in Asia, Australia and New Zealand that advertised programmes exclusively for male IPV victims. I have not seen any campaign that speaks to the victimisation of men in South Africa. Instead, the campaigns, even organisations for men; use words like "not in my name" advertising men as the abusers and not as victims. This contributes to the alienation of abused men. Espinoza and Warner (2016) advocated for a humanist perspective to address IPV. They argued that we should rethink one gender's plight being advocated at the expense or neglect of the other's obstructs solution. Therefore, both genders' interest and wellbeing must be equally acknowledged, however, bearing in mind their uniqueness.

Another recommendation by Cook (2009) is that the media and society should stop depicting a female slapping of their male partner or female perpetrated IPV as humorous.

Counselling. This was found to be an important form of support. The participants reported the need for and importance of counselling. However, the men suggesting this know theoretically the importance of counselling; nevertheless, they did not seek this kind of support.

Tilbrook et al. (2010) suggest that mental health workers like registered counsellors should create an excellent therapeutic relationship; one where fear of shame is minimised.

Based on the good experience reported by one of the participants who sought after telephonic counselling, there is a need for empathetic registered counsellors and psychologists. I assume that he had a great experience because he was unknown to the counsellor, and his anonymity was secured. I would recommend a helpline and online counselling. Due to COVID-19, the South African government opened a Gender-Based Violence Command Centre (GBVCC). This is a call centre that offers telephonic counselling to victims of gender-based violence (DSD, 2019). Tilbrook et al. (2010) found that dedicated helplines for male victims were useful as they promoted anonymity. These services can validate men's experiences and provide additional information, including referral. Registered counsellors are trained to provide primary psychological counselling at a community level. This would be beneficial to male IPV victims.

Support Group. The participants recommended support group citing that talking to other men who have experienced IPV would be beneficial. This could aid in them leaving abusive relationships earlier rather than later. Hogan (2016) found that male IPV victims reported that sharing their experiences with other men who had been through similar experiences provided a "safe" place to challenge gender norms and reduced feelings of shame and embarrassment surrounding masculinity and victimisation. The importance of a support group helps remove the victim of abuse from isolation and could help them alleviate the negative impact of IPV. Secondly, the group would help leave abusive relationships when one knows other people are going through the same thing.

Practical Support. This form of support is recommended based on the findings of this study. Before popular belief, men also need practical support like accommodation, financial support, and assistance with their children's visitations. It has been assumed that men can easily leave

abusive relationships because they are financially independent. This was not the case with some of the participants in this study.

Fair implementation of the law and legal support. This form of support was one of the most significant issues in this study. Participants reported being unfairly treated by the justice system. These men were very aware of the policies and the law, and they were aware that the system worked against them. They also reported that their female partners, who were the mothers of their children, were privileged within the justice system. Studies have also found that the justice system is oriented towards traditional gendered beliefs about IPV (Lien & Lorentzen, 2019). It is recommended that the government invests in assistance for abused men. The court should take the role or importance of a father in a child's life into consideration. Currently, mothers automatically have full parental responsibilities and rights. In contrast, a biological father who is not married to the mother loses his parental responsibilities and rights (DSD, 2009). The child's best interest should be at the forefront of custodial claims.

Recommendations for Training Stakeholders

Based on the participants' perceptions on their needs for empowerment, I concluded that training of health care practitioners, mental healthcare workers (including psychologists and registered counsellors as community workers), police, legal personnel (including people who work in courts) and religious leaders on men's issues is important to help male IPV victims. There is a need to train the law implementors to be sensitive and provide them with knowledge that men can be IPV victims.

From the findings of this study, there is a need to train stakeholders in identifying male IPV victims and recognising when the men need help. Lien and Lorentzen (2019) advocated that these stakeholders should be trained to sensitively ask the men the same questions they would ask women to unearth hidden abuse.

Training of the police. There is a need for education and training relevant to IPV against men and bi-directional IPV amongst couples for professionals and direct service providers like the police. In this study, most of the men who reported IPV were either hospitalised or went to the police station to report the abuse. Frontline service providers like the police officers need to be adequately equipped to handle IPV victims sensitively. The police training should include training in victim empowerment, the Domestic Violence Act and the police's role and responsibility towards a male IPV victim. From the findings of this study, police training should include referring IPV victims to other sectors.

Training of health care practitioners. Davhana-Maselesele (2003), in her study on the psycho-educational programme of support to couples experiencing domestic violence in Limpopo Province, recommended that health care practitioners' curriculum should include IPV research. A detailed understanding of IPV experienced by men will enable health care practitioners to assess and identify risk effectively. Having been trained on the consequences of IPV against men, health care practitioners will be sensitive when taking the patients' history and not further victimising the men.

Training of legal personnel. It is important to train people who work in courts about IPV against men and equip their staff with tools to be empathetic and apply the law without favouritism. Legal personnel should be trained to be sensitive and supportive of fathers seeking to have a relationship with their children.

Training of mental health care workers. In the curriculum of mental health care workers, IPV against men and its consequences should be included. The mental health care worker will know that it is important to validate their experience when supporting a male victim of abuse. Furthermore, Espinoza and Warner (2016) suggested that training programmes should be developed based on male and female perpetration; male and female victimisation studies to

address the family relations and psychological dimensions of IPV relevant to treatment and prevention.

Training of religious leaders. Based on this study's findings, religious leaders need the training to deal with IPV victims and training in counselling these men who have experienced IPV. Abused men must be equipped with different adaptive coping strategies. These stakeholders need to be trained to validate the experiences and feelings of IPV victims.

This is important to strengthen the competences of mental health care services, police and the legal system in identifying and handling violence against men. Equally, there is a need for increased awareness and knowledge in providing unbiased, gender-inclusive and culturally sensitive services from the medical field and the police stations. In conclusion, Tsui (2010) recommended that all service providers address masculinity and victimisation's internal conflict and adopt a gender-sensitive approach.

The need for a Victim Empowerment Programme specific for men as IPV victims.

Collaboration. This study's findings call for collaborative efforts to help male IPV victims; this means male victims get assistance from health services, RCs, police officers and the courts, being offered counselling and accommodation. An effective VEP can help reduce the negative consequences of IPV and can help the victims, children and perpetrators. In agreement with Machodo et al., (2017), there is a need to develop a specific victim empowerment programme that is specific for abused men; this includes being sensitive to the difficulties that women face and being aware of their unique challenges. Properly implemented programmes could address the uncertainty surrounding where men can find assistance.

Implications for the Victim Empowerment Programme for men. *The study findings revealed the men's lived experiences of IPV, perpetrated by their female partners resulting in different physical and psychological consequences. Addressing these consequences may prevent further*

IPV and further revictimisation. Therefore, the following implications on government departments and further research apply:

Government. Different countries have adopted different VEP approaches based on their relevance to the needs of their countries (Nel, Koortzen & Jacobs, 2017). According to Nel and Kruger (1999 as cited in Nel & Van Wyk 2013) South African VEP is informed by and has adopted aspects of other national victim support schemes, in particular the Victim Support (UK), Slachoffer Hulp (the Netherlands), and NOVA (the USA National Organisation for Victim Assistance). Therefore, South Africa should expand on its VEP approach to include the following:

- Like Norway (Lien & Lorentzen, 2019), South Africa needs to pass a law that makes it mandatory for crisis centres to be made available to men and must be visible.
- It is important to actively disseminate information about the men's shelters or NGOs' services for IPV victims. DSD (2009) emphasises inter-sectoral, interdisciplinary collaborations to make referrals to relevant departments and service providers. However, the information regarding services for abused men is lacking.
- It is vital to advertise shelters or organisations that help abused men. By advertising these services, the Department of Social Development is publicly acknowledging that some men are at risk of IPV. This will help men to come out and talk about their experiences.
- Therapy costs did not come out in this study; however, therapy is expensive. This was one of the practical barriers to accessing support services by Donne et al. (2018). Therefore, I recommend that government hire Registered counsellors to alleviate the psychological burden experienced by IPV victims, at a lower cost. RCs are trained to provide basic primary psychological counselling. It is recommended that RCs be employed in different sectors within VE; to provide training, debriefing, counselling,

psycho-education and psycho-social support to victims and their communities. IPV victims can access empathetic support regardless of their first point of entry, whether at the police station or hospital. RCs can offer culture-sensitive training to all stakeholders, and also provide psycho-education to communities regarding IPV and that men can be IPV victims in the hands of their female partners.

- Gender-specific yet gender-inclusive prevention, education, training and treatment programmes must be developed.
- Pre-marital counselling is vital - before people can get married, they need to produce a letter saying they have attended pre-marital counselling. This counselling should include exploring both partners' upbringing and conflict management skills. The changing gender roles discussion is critical; there is a need to better balance gender roles for more equality.

Areas for Further Studies

Based on the findings of this study, the following are recommended for post-doctorate studies:

i. There is a need for a follow-up study in the form of participatory action research, which is necessary to investigate the relevance and effectiveness of the support guidelines developed in the current study for male IPV victims in Gauteng. This would proceed as follows:

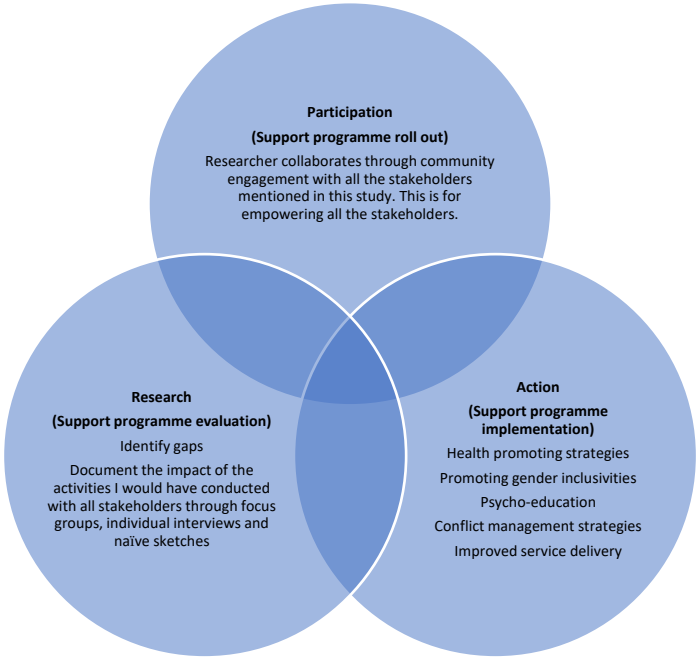
    - **Support programme roll out:** collaborating, through community engagement, with all the stakeholders mentioned in this study to empower them to support male IPV victims following an IPV support programme to be developed through the recommendations of this study;

- **Support programme implementation:** community implementation of the evaluated, relevant and effective support programme strategies; and
- **Support programme evaluation:** evaluate the support programme to identify gaps and document the impact of the activities in the programme.

Figure 6.2 below indicates how I envision the follow-up study.

Figure 6.2

Evaluation of the Support Guidelines through Participatory Action Research



ii. Since this study focused on male IPV victims in Gauteng, it is also recommended that this research project could be conducted on a national level. I would recommend a mixed-method study. If this study is conducted at a national level, we can discover the prevalence of IPV against men by their female partners.

iii. It would be interesting to investigate the bi-directional relationship of IPV (both male and female partners alternating between being a victim and perpetrator), this research would give us more in-depth understanding of who starts the violence and

how both partners implement it. It would be interesting to talk to both males and females about their relationships to find the triggers and sustainers of IPV.

iv. There is a need for a longitudinal study on IPV perceptions against men, specifically focusing on the following:

- exploring and examining females' perceptions of and responses to male IPV victims. This would explore the question of why female perpetrators abuse, from the perpetrator's perception; and
- understanding a father's roles in a child's life and the impact of IPV against men on children.

Conclusion to the Study

The study focused on exploring the lived experiences of Black men who were abused by their female partners to understand and interpret how these men make sense of their abuse. The study also aimed to develop guidelines for support to male IPV victims perpetrated by their female partners in Gauteng. The study's aim was achieved by applying the IPA guidelines and conducting semi-structured interviews with 14 male IPV victims to interpret their accounts. The study reported that men experience various forms of abuse perpetrated by their female partners in an attempt to control the men. In the men's attempt to make sense of the abuse, they attributed their abuse to multiple factors such as culture, psycho-social and socio-economic factors. The study also reported on a wide range of long-lasting consequences suffered by the male IPV victims such as deteriorating mental health, losing their jobs and putting strain on their relationships with family and friends. The study found that the men had different ways of dealing with the abuse such as adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies. I concluded that the men had different reasons for staying in the abusive relationships. Emanating from their subjective interpretations of IPV experiences and encounters with the psycho-social support services, the men expressed their need for empowerment and support.

The recommendations in this study have implications for the South African communities and government at large, including the VEP stakeholders. These recommendations were drawn from the following findings: IPV as controlling behaviour, origins and consequences of IPV, victims' reactions to IPV and victim empowerment and support needs. The study recommends appropriate socialisation for both girls and boys; psycho-social support; training of stakeholders in order to equip them to offer sensitive support to abused men; and finally, the men suggested a VEP that is specific to men.

Reflections

I wrote this chapter during the lockdown period levels three to five in South Africa. IPV incidents were being reported as skyrocketing during this period. It was reported in the news that 21 women were killed by their male intimate partners. Of the 21 women, one of them was 8 months pregnant, and her murder was so gruesome as she was found hanged in the field. Just as I questioned myself regarding this study's significance when I started with data collection, I was again questioning why I was conducting this study on abused men. Even though I had heard on the radio of several incidents of men being abused by their female partners and there was a video going around of a terrible incident of a man whom his wife poured him with hot oil, I still felt like I was betraying the women, that the study was supposed to be about abused women. This was my opinion until today's (22/06/2020) news, whereby a 22-year-old woman was arrested for killing her boyfriend and hiding his body under their bed. According to eNews Channel Africa (eNCA, 22/06/2020) news, they further stated that this woman was arrested a few weeks before killing her boyfriend for assaulting him. She was given a warning and sent home to her boyfriend. An abusive woman was just told to stop assaulting her boyfriend, and no further recourse was taken shows how society and the police perceive IPV against men. This is happening when IPV is taken as a serious crime. The president of South Africa, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, condemned it in the strongest sense, yet a woman was set free with just a

warning. I realised that there is a need to demystify IPV against men and change people's perceptions regarding IPV against men. That way, we can develop interventions that will curb this phenomenon.

Chapter Summary

This chapter summarises the significant findings, draws conclusions, and recommends guidelines to support male IPV victims. This was done by introducing the chapter by reminding the reader of the study's purpose, the research question that the study sought to answer, and the methodology that was followed.

This was followed by the summary of the research findings, which addressed the themes that emerged from the data analysis. The limitations inherent in this study were also discussed. Finally, recommendations were made with specific focus being on guidelines for support for male IPV victims; future research focus areas were also recommended. Based on these, it is concluded that the research question of the study was answered, and all the objectives were achieved.

This study may contribute to the empowerment and support of male IPV victims. It will also contribute to the limited body of knowledge on IPV.

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Appendix A

Ethical Clearance

UNISA university of south africa
Department of Psychology

Ethical Clearance for M/D students: Research on human participants

The Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology at Unisa has evaluated this research proposal for a Higher Degree in Psychology in light of appropriate ethical requirements, with special reference to the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Psychologists of the HPCSA and the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics.

Student Name: Vhuhwavho Mufanadzo Nekhavhambe **Student no.** 47210842

Supervisor: Dr Masefako Gumani **Affiliation:** Dept. of Psychology, Unisa

Title of project:

Guidelines for support to male survivors of intimate partner violence in Gauteng: an exploratory study

The proposal was evaluated for adherence to appropriate ethical standards as required by the Psychology Department of Unisa. The application was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology on the understanding that –

- Because of the sensitivity of the information being sought and the fact that the participants come from a traumatised population, it is required that ethical principles related to informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality and the right of participants to withdraw from the research should be clearly explained to the participants and strictly enforced.
- Confidential information should not be used to identify potential participants. The researcher may however use NGOs [such as Moshate] to make the study known and request voluntary participation;
- If further counseling is required in some cases, the participants will be referred to appropriate counseling services.

Signed:

Date: 28 October 2015

Prof P Kruger
[For the Ethics Committee]
[Department of Psychology, Unisa]

Open Rubric

The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:

1) *The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.*
2) *Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the Psychology Department Ethics Review Committee.*
3) *An amended application should be submitted if there are substantial changes from the existing proposal, especially if those changes affect any of the study-related risks for the research participants.*
4) *The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.*

Please note that research where participants are drawn from Unisa staff, students or data bases requires permission from the Senate Research and Innovation Committee (SENRIC) before the research commences.

Appendix B

Requesting Permission to Conduct Research

UNISA university of south africa

Enq: Ms. Vhuhwavho Nekhavhambe
Tel: 012 429 8513
Cell: 0727857714
Email: nekhavm@unisa.ac.za

P.O.Box 737
Fourways
2055
04/01/2017

The Chief Executive Officer of Moshate
0801 The Markade
84 President Street
Johannesburg
2001

Dear Mr Mashilo Mnisi

Requesting permission to conduct a research study

My name is Vhuhwavho Nekhavhambe, I am a doctorate student and currently employed in the Department of Psychology at UNISA. In fulfilment of requirements for the doctoral degree, I have to undertake a research project and the focus is on **guidelines for support to male victims of intimate partner violence perpetrated by their female partners.** I hereby request permission to conduct a research study on men in your organisation who have experienced intimate partner violence in their relationships.

The purpose of this study: To explore men's lived experiences of the abuse perpetrated by their female partners in order to understand and interpret how these men make sense of their experience of abuse. This study will attempt to interpret the problems and concerns expressed from the participants' perspective. Furthermore, it

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will interpret how these concerns relate to the support of service providers who are involved in assisting them to handle the problem of intimate partner violence. This study aims at developing guidelines on how to support these men.

Benefits: The support guidelines to be developed in the study will help in informing policies to be more inclusive of men as victims of intimate partner violence, such as The Domestic Violence Act. This study will inform training programmes on intimate partner violence within the helping service providers. It will also raise awareness on the seriousness of intimate partner violence against men by their female partners; and it will give service providers (Shelters, police, health care workers, and others) guidelines on what kind of support these men need.

Participants' characteristics: The study will include men who have experienced intimate partner violence in the hands of their female partners. The men must be older than 18 years and speak any of the two languages: English and Setswana.

Technical aspects of the study: After permission has been received from you, the participants will then be given consent forms and after they have read and understood the contents of the forms, they will be asked to sign the forms as proof that they are willing to take part in the study. Interviews will be conducted at your organisation (Moshate); each session taking between an hour and 1 hour, 30 minutes.

Dissemination of results: Feedback on the results of the study will be submitted to Moshate in a report form to facilitate access to the information that might be useful to the organisation.

Ethical issues: I will adhere to all the ethical principles such as: I will treat the participants with respect, not harm any of them, and not force them to participate. Free psychological assistance will be arranged for any participants who might show signs of distress during the interviews. Anonymity will be maintained throughout the study. Participants will sign consent forms through which they will be informed about the study in detail; they will also be informed that they are free to terminate their participation in the study at any time.

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If there are any concerns or clarity needed regarding any aspects of the study, please feel free to contact me.

Your permission in this regard will be much appreciated.

Yours Faithfully,

V. M Nekhavhambe

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Appendix C

Informed Consent from the Department of Psychology- University of South Africa

Researcher: Vhuhwavho Nekhavhambe

Promoter: Dr. M.A Gumani

Title of Thesis: Guidelines for support to male victims of intimate partner violence in Gauteng.

Purpose of the study: The study aims to develop guidelines for support to male victims of intimate partner violence perpetrated by their female partners in Gauteng. This will be done by exploring the experiences of men who are abused by their female partners to understand and interpret how these men make sense of their abuse. This study will attempt to interpret the problems and concerns expressed from the participants' perspective. Furthermore, it will interpret how these concerns relate to the support of service providers who are involved in assisting them to handle the problem of domestic violence.

Procedures: I will be conducting an interview with the help of an interview schedule. I will also make use of a tape recorder to record the conversation, with your permission. The interviews will not take longer than 2 hours but may end sooner by natural process or on your request.

Risks and discomforts: You may become tired or feel emotional discomfort at which point we can take a break, or the interview may be postponed to a later date or you can terminate the interview. I will make efforts to minimise discomfort. Access to psychological assistance

Benefits: I hope that participation in this study will leave the participants feeling heard. Secondly, the participants will be contributing to solving social problems and also facilitating in giving abused men a voice and also contributing towards more research and eventually policy changes.

Participants' rights: Participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without any negative consequences. All information is treated confidentially and anonymity is assured by the researcher. Hence, I will separate signed informed consent from the interviews immediately.

Vhuhwavho Nekhavhambe and her Promoter (Dr. Gumani) will be the only people who will have access to raw data from interviews, and hereby ensure that the data will be treated as mentioned above.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY

I, the undersigned agree to participate in this study voluntarily without pressure.

Signed at…….on this…….day of……2016

……. ……

Print name Signature

Appendix D
Permission Granted to Conduct a Research Study in Moshate

208-212 Jeppe St | 06A&B Lower ground – Marble Towers Jhb, SA | Tel: 011 050 0943 - Email: request@moshate.org.za |

RE: **DOCTORAL RESEARCH ON MEN ABUSE**

DATE: **January 10, 2017**

Dear Ms Nekhavhambe,

Thanks a lot for your interest in doing research with our organisation looking at the ordeal that a lot of our beneficiaries (males) are facing in their daily lives including being abused by their female counterparts and the authorities.

WE are glad to allow you to explore the subject matter and to give you access to our beneficiaries in this regard, and it's one of our activities to deal with individuals interested in the work we do.

Thank, you so much, and we hope to have a fruitful journey in your research, and also to welcome you being part of the struggle that Moshate has started to strive for gender equality.

Yours sincerely,

Mashilo Mnisi

Executive director

Moshate

Tel: 27 11 050 0943

Cell: 27 82 397 7873

Url: www.moshate.org.za

<><><>

Appendix E

Demographic Questionnaire

Age	
Ethnicity	
Education	None Grade 12 Vocational training Higher certificate Diploma Degree
Occupation	Your occupation Partner's occupation
Area of residence	
Number of children	
Marital status of abusive relationship	Married Cohabiting Co-parenting but living apart
Length of abusive relationship (months)Are you still in the relationship? If no, how long ago was the relationship ended?	
Where was help received?	

Appendix F

Interview Schedule

The researcher welcomes the participant and thanks them for taking part in the study. The interview starts:

I welcome the participant, discuss with the participant briefly about the study and again ask for consent. I will tell him that he is free to withdraw from the study at any time no questions asked.

Could you please share with me your experience of being in an abusive relationship?

A. Individual History

Describe your upbringing

Probe for history of abuse

Briefly describe your partner's upbringing

Probe for history of abuse. Describe your dating history

Do you have children and how did they come about?

Probe: did you both want them?

B. Intimate partner violence

1. What do you consider as intimate partner violence?

2. How is your relationship with your partner?

3. What kind of intimate partner violence are you experiencing?

4. In your own words, describe what happens during intimate partner violence.

5. How often does intimate partner violence occur in your home?

6. What do you think triggers intimate partner violence in your home?

7. How do you act during the incident?

8. What are the results of the incident?

    a. Probe: any injuries

9. What are the reactions of other family members (if they know about the abuse)?

10. What is the impact of these incidents in your life?

11. Why do you stay in an abusive relationship?

C. Coping

1. How do you cope with the situation at home?
2. What kind of support do you need and from whom?

D. Services

1. What kind of support have you received so far?
2. How was the service?
3. Have you ever reported being abused to any helping services?
4. What do you need to happen for you to be empowered?

Appendix G

English Version of "Mapholisa vho sea"

It took a while for me to notice that my friend

had problems and difficulties until

His face turned full of tears

My friend was full of pain

I said it's taboo, for a man to show his weaknesses.

He said that I should know that he spends sleepless nights

My wife is beating me, all the times

I am experiencing what no one else experiences.

I called my aunts five times seeking help but it didn't make any

difference.

I fooled myself, and played myself.

I went to the police station three times

To date I haven't received any help

The police mock me

They say I should have been a woman

Instead of a man since I can't stand my ground.

They even called me a coward.

But now where do I run to?

Oh my friend, what am I to do?

Well part of this is my fault.

I took time to see that my friend also had problems,

Until he turned and his tears started to overflow.

I kept reprimanding him that men do not cry.

Stop embarrassing us. I mean is it that hard.

Things are bad to the core; we aren't even intimate.

I have sleepless nights due to my wife beating me.

I am experiencing what no one else experiences.

I called my aunts five times seeking help but it didn't make any

difference.

I fooled myself, and played myself.

I went to the police station three times

To date I haven't received any help

The police mock me

They say I should have been a woman

Instead of a man since I can't stand my ground.

The police mocked me

They even called me a coward.

But now

I can't even run away where do I run to?

Oh my friend, what am I to do?

The police have mocked me; they even laugh in groups.

They laughed till they gave up and left.

Oh my friend, what am I to do. Where am I to run to?

It took a while for me to come to the realization that my friends also have problems.

In a way, I have helped myself because I saw something wasn't right.

When in drinking sprees, he would drink a bit and keep quiet

He would get excited, dance a bit then sit down and keep quiet

When you ask him what was wrong he would say 'nothing is wrong'.

As he said, my friend, I no longer want to live.

I said my friend a man must never reveal his weakness

I now regret saying that the funeral is next week.

The rope became the solution, what must I do now?

I frequently dream about him; I don't even know how I neglected him?

Appendix H
Turn it in Report

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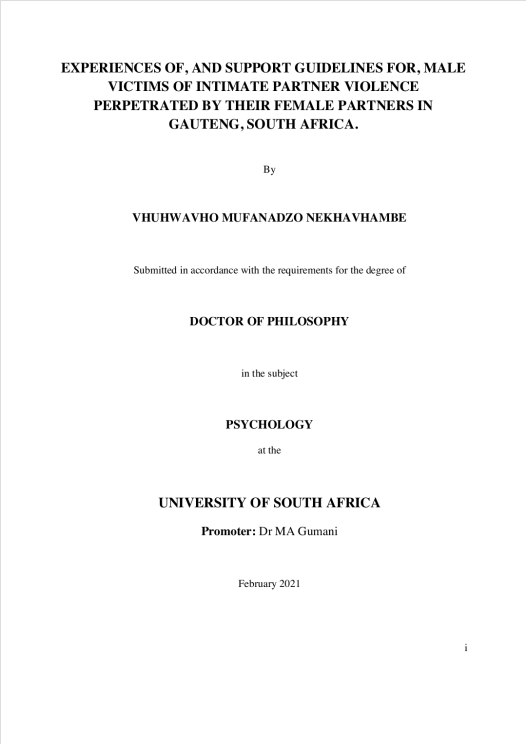

EXPERIENCES OF, AND SUPPORT GUIDELINES FOR, MALE VICTIMS OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE PERPETRATED BY THEIR FEMALE PARTNERS IN GAUTENG, SOUTH AFRICA.

By

VHUHWAVHO MUFANADZO NEKHAVHAMBE

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

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