

**THE INFLUENCE OF INITIATION ON MALE LEARNERS' BEHAVIOUR IN THE  
AMATHOLE EAST DISTRICT THE AMATHOLE EAST DISTRICT**

**BY**

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis to my father, the late Mr. H.G Kaseke who always motivated me in my studies. Thank you Mupamombe Ngezi for your encouragement and your commitment to see me educated.

I also dedicate this document to all my family members and friends who stood by me and supported me throughout the research. Thank you, all the support and motivation.

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A special thanks to my supervisors, Dr. L Luvalo and Prof N Madikizela Madiya, for their guidance in writing this research. They challenged me to do more than my best and developed the skills of writing and to do research. Thank you so much Tshezi, Jalamba and Ma Ngutyana, may you continue to do the same for others.

I also want to thank the initiates, educators, the community members who were willing participates in this study and all the AmaXhosa of Amathole East District. Thank you for letting me into your schools, homes and communities. thank you for sharing your beautiful culture and experiences with me. A special thank you to Mr. Zamaxolo Poswa for taking me under your wing and made Transkei as we always, “My home from home”. Thank you Gcwanini, Sbewu.

## Opsomming

Die gebruiklike inisiëring van tienerseuns na manlikheid, wat gewoonlik manlike besnyding behels, word wêreldwyd beoefen vir onder andere, geloofs-, gesondheids- en kulturele redes.

Die studie het 12 deelnemers se perspektiewe op die invloed van inisiasierites op die gedrag van manlike leerders in die Amatole-Oos Distrik van die Oos-Kaap, Suid-Afrika, ondersoek. Inisiasierites verskil van een etno-ras- en kulturele groepering tot die volgende, maar die fokus was op Xhosa-inisiëring en hoe hul inisiëring hul gedrag beïnvloed het toe hulle terugkeer het skool toe.

Die navorser het 'n kwalitatiewe studie onderneem wat op vier sekondêre skole in Duitjies gefokus het, met die deelnemers wat doelbewus gekies is vir die diverse en ryk data wat hulle kan voorsien: vier leerders wat inisiëring ondergaan het, vier opvoeders en vier tradisionele leiers, almal uit die Xhosa-gemeenskap. Die navorser het die interpretivistiese benadering gebruik om met verskeie aspekte van die studie om te gaan. Diepgaande onderhoude is gevoer waarna die data tematies ontleed is. Verantwoordelike burgerskap, eerbiedigheid, die oorgang na volwassenheid en die behoud van kulturele tradisies het as temas na vore gekom wat die verwagte opvoedkundige gedraguitkomstes van die geïnisieerde seuns geleidelik het.

Die bevindings het getoon dat die persepsies van die drie kategorieë van die studiedeelnemers verskil oor of die inisiëring die manlike leerders se gedrag beïnvloed het. Ondanks die algemene reaksies oor die doel daarvan om aan sulke rites deel te neem – naamlik om seuns in manlikheid te laat gradueer – het opvoeders/onderwysers ongewensde gedragsveranderinge in die geïnisieerdes opgemerk. Die studie beveel aan dat personeel wat medies opgelei is in besnydenis, wat 'n sleutelrol in Xhosa-inisiëringsrites speel, aan die rites deelneem.

### Sleutelwoorde

Adolesensie, Inisiëring, Manlike besnyding, Oorgangsrites; Xhosa

## Isishwankathelo

Isiko lokungeniswa kwamakhwenkwe afikisayo ebudodeni elidla ngokubandakanya ulwaluko lwamakhwenkwe lenziwa ngokubanzi kwihlabathi liphela. Eli siko lidla ngokwenzelwa phantsi kwezizathu zonqulo, ezinxulemene nezempilo, kunye nezenkcubeko.

Olu phando luphande izimvo zabathathinxaxheba abali12 kwiziphumo zemicimbi yesiko lolwaluko ezithe zakho kwindlela yokuziphatha kwabafundi abangamakhwenkwe kwiMpuma yeSithili iAmathole sePhondo leMpuma Koloni, eMzantsi Afrika. Imicimbi yesiko lolwaluko yahlukile kuleyo yohlanga neyenkcubeko. Nangona kunjalo, olu phando belugxile kumakhwenkwe olukileyo angamaXhosa nokuba ukungeniswa kwawo kubeneziphumo ezinjani kwindlela yokuziphatha xa ebuyele esikolweni.

Umphandi wenze uphandontyilazwi obelugxile kwizikolo ezine zamabanga aphezulu, eDutywa. Kolu phando kukhethwe abathathinxaxheba ngendlela yovandlakanyo olunenjongo ukubonelela idatha eyahlukileyo neninzi: abafundi abane abaye bangeniswa, ootitshala abane kunye neenkokheli zemveli ezine, kwaye bonke bathathwe kuluntu lwamaXhosa. Umphandi uye wajongana nemiba eyahlukileyo kolu phando ngokukhokelwe yindlela yokufumana ubunzulu obungakumbi ngokukhangela amava neengcamango zomxholo othile wezentlalo (interpretivist approach). Idatha ihlalutywe ngokohlalutyontyilazwi lomongo emva kokuba kwenziwe udliwanondlebe olunzulu nabathathinxaxheba. Kuye kwavela imixholo ekhokela iziphumo ezilindelekileyo zokuziphatha kwamakhwenkwe angenisiweyo kwezemfundo, efana nobumi obunoxanduva okanye obulawulekayo, ukuba nentlonipho, ukukhula, kunye nokulondolozwa kwamasiko nezithethe zenkcubeko.

Iziphumo zibonise ukuba izimvo zala maqela mathathu athathe inxaxheba kuphando zahlukile ekubeni ukungeniswa kubeneziphumo kwindlela yokuziphatha kwabafundi abangamakhwenkwe. Nangona kukho iimpendulo eziqhelekileyo ngokubhekiselele kwinjongo yokwenza okanye ukuthatha inxaxheba kwimicimbi enjalo yesiko neyezithethe - oko kukuthi ukuphumelelisa amakhwenkwe ebudodeni - abafundisintsapho/ootitshala babike utshintsho olungafunekiyo kwindlela yokuziphatha kwicala lamakhwenkwe angenisiweyo okanye olukileyo. Olu phando lucebisa ukuba abasebenzi abaqeqeshwe kwezonyango bathathe inxaxheba kulwaluko noluyinxalenye ephambili kwimicimbi yesiko lokungeniswa okanye lolwaluko kumaXhosa.

Amagama angundoqo

Umntwana ofikisayo; Ukungeniswa; Ulwaluko lwamakhwenkwe; Isigaba sobomi; amaXhosa

## **Abstract**

The customary initiation of adolescent boys into manhood, which usually involves male circumcision, is widely practised around the world, amongst others for religious, health-related, and cultural reasons.

This study investigated 12 participants' perspectives on the effects which initiation rites had on the behaviour of male learners in the Amatole East District of the Eastern Cape, South Africa. Initiation rites differ from one ethno-racial and cultural grouping to the next, but here the focus was on Xhosa initiates, and how their initiation influenced their behaviour upon their return to school.

The researcher undertook a qualitative study which focused on four secondary schools in Dutywa, with the participants being purposively sampled for the diverse and rich data they could supply: four learners who had undergone initiation, four educators and four tradition leaders, all drawn from the Xhosa community. Guided by the interpretivist approach, the researcher actively interacted with various aspects of the study. In-depth interviews were conducted, after which the data were analysed thematically. Responsible citizenship, respectfulness, the transition to maturity, and the preservation of cultural traditions emerged as themes guiding the expected educational behavioural outcomes of the initiated boys.

The findings revealed that the perceptions of the three categories of study participants differed on whether initiation influenced the male learners' behaviour. Despite there being common responses in respect of the purpose of conducting or participating in such rites – namely to graduate boys into manhood – the educators/teachers reported undesirable behavioural changes on the part of the initiates. A recommendation stemming from the study, is that medically trained personnel participate in circumcisions, which are a key part of Xhosa initiation rites.

## **Key words**

Adolescent; Initiation; Male circumcision; Rite of passage; Xhosa

## DECLARATION

Name: ABISHA KASEKE

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Exact wording of the title of the dissertation as appearing on the electronic copy submitted for examination:

THE INFLUENCE OF INITIATION ON MALE LEARNERS' BEHAVIOUR IN THE AMATHOLE EAST DISTRICT

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I declare that the above dissertation 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 dissertation 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.

*(The dissertation will not be examined unless this statement has been submitted.)*



14/11/2022

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SIGNATURE

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DATE

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Introduction and Background to the Study

While many societies attach great importance to young men attending traditional schools of initiation, there remain a number of unanswered questions in this regard. There are many ways to discuss critical social challenges, but these may not be used or are not understood due to the secrecy that surrounds these schools. The goal of the study is to explore the influence of initiation rites on male learners' behaviour in the Amatole East District, Eastern Cape. According to Holomisa (2004), traditional leaders are the custodians of the Xhosa rituals for male circumcision. However, since the advent of post-apartheid administration, the circumcision custom has had increasing government meddling in one way or another. This government interference seems to be guided, like in the rest of life, by new challenges or opportunities that arise from social and economic factors, apart from the dynamism of the rituals themselves which continuously change with time.

Previous research has shown that traditional circumcision can be seen as a holy religious ritual, has been rationalized as a social order preservation method, and is believed to play a role in HIV prevention (Mavundla, Netswera, Bottoman & Toth, 2009). The status of manhood acquired after the ritual gives men control and authority over women and uncircumcised men in the group (Carstens, 2018). As such, it is important for Xhosa men to be circumcised. Meel (2005) explains that both failed initiates and uninitiated individuals are associated with severe stigma. To marry, inherit property or engage in cultural events such as offering sacrifices and group discussions, boys need to be successfully initiated (Andersson & Cockcroft, 2012).

VOA (2019), highlighted that despite the cultural value of the initiation of boys, there were however, instances where some boys have died during the initiation processes due to a variety of challenges faced. Thus, for hundreds of years, teenage boys and young men from South Africa's Xhosa and Ndebele groups have followed the sacred, secret coming-of-age ritual that culminates in ritual circumcision by a traditional surgeon. Initiation, as the practice is called, is part of the rich fabric of South African

society. However, in recent years, as dozens of young men have died during the process each year, most from exhaustion and dehydration, but some from botched surgeries, it has also become a legal and cultural minefield. These incidents have marred a wonderful and an important part of a life of a Xhosa man.

In 2019, after reports that more than 25 deaths during their initiation season, South Africa's Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities called for the immediate suspension of initiation schools in the Eastern Cape province, where most of the deaths occurred. Therefore, this study investigated the educational perceptions of participants about the influence of initiation rites on male learners in Amatole district. It is through this study that more insight was gained into what needs to be done to meet the different needs of learners through behavioural understanding regarding their traditional or ethnic groups. Moreover, there is need to ensure that the initiation rites have educational value and protects the boys from unsafe practices.

## **1.2. Rationale for the Study**

The subject of traditional rites amongst South African tribal and ethno-racial groups has been studied by many researchers in South Africa. Therefore, the rationale for the study is highlighted from three perspectives, that is, personal, professional, and conceptual. These spheres of the rationale for undertaking the study are presented hereunder.

### **1.2.1. Personal Rationale**

In many cultures around the world, male circumcision, involving the removal of the foreskin, is performed for ritual, social, medical, and other reasons, such as beliefs that it hardens boys for combat or strengthens male virility (Bottoman, Mavundla & Toth, 2009). Kepe (2010:1) states that "media coverage, scholarly writing, government policy and legislation, and political debates have shown that ritual amaXhosa male circumcision has attracted increasing debate for the past three decades and has been

a source of contention among various stakeholders”. By conducting this research, the researcher generates knowledge on how the initiation rites influence male learners’ behaviour. Having a grounded know-how of the behavioural influence of these initiation rites on male learners plays a major role in developing the Amatole district community through integrating its citizens, promoting social cohesion, and limiting the risks of discrimination against people who do not undergo the cultural initiation rites. This helps in promoting diverse ethno-racial groups to accept each other, respect the different cultures and values of each group, and understand their way of life. The researcher sought personal enrichment with the knowledge about the initiation rites and the circumcision practices as well as their educational contribution.

### **1.2.2. Professional rationale**

As an educator at a high school, the researcher noticed that the behaviour of the male learners changes after going through the initiation rites. Therefore, the rationale for undertaking the study was to ascertain the effects of the initiation education curriculum and associated processes on the development of the initiates. It appears from being circumcised, for instance, offers automatic respect to initiates from others sharing a similar culture and beliefs but who are yet to undergo the procedure. It is also clear that respect is an important outcome in social life that people wish others to extend to them. More significantly, respect implies full acceptance as a person who feels that dignity provides acknowledgement of the status, integrity and feeling of being accepted in society by others (Tyler & De Cremer 2005; De Cremer & Tyler, 2011). Respect amongst members of the society therefore implies that as a person, one is no lesser or greater than others (Simon, Lucken & Stürmer, 2006). Consequently, respected learners reciprocate to those who respect them, leading to a society of upraised morals.

Moreover, it is argued that equality in terms of status and belonging also means that learners are regarded with the same integrity and moral importance as every other individual. This relates to the notion of dignity as something to which any human being has a right, as it makes dignified people live in a moral society to learn. It is an obligation to value others as human beings, as Hill (2021) observed, because every human being is equal and should be treated with the worth they deserve. This problem

of feeling recognized as a feature of respect, based on the above, can therefore be seen as representing two views of respect that indicate why respect is valued. Therefore, respect is a concept capable of satisfying the reputational and belongingness needs of the individual in his or her social life, as well as affirming the moral principles that a person wants to live by and that make up for the moral community. Thus, respect can be viewed as a means to an end, as well as an end in itself.

### **1.2.3. Conceptual rationale**

As showcased above, for some, circumcision and the associated rites is a religious or cultural act, whilst for others, it's a health decision. Yet even among medical experts, not everyone agrees on whether removing the foreskin of a male person has any real clinical benefits. There is also debate between proponents of medical circumcision and traditionalists who advocate for ritual circumcision. Therefore, the study sought to advance knowledge on the educational concept of circumcision and associated traditional rites in order to understand and contribute to the discourse.

It is acknowledged that there is much research already carried out on the need for intervention strategies to cope with childhood to adulthood transitions, little has been said about the role of cultural rites regarding developmental change in identity and behaviour from adolescence to adulthood (Anike, Govender, Ndimade & Tumbo, 2013). This triggered the need for investigating the rite of initiation in depth in order to establish its implication for the Xhosa culture as both a means of preparing the male child for adult life as well as cultural preservation. This research may therefore help to gain greater insight into the way in which initiation works or fails to function in communities by studying the formative practices established in the Xhosa tradition. This is with reference to schools, which has been the setting within which the researcher observed the challenge and decided to research the issue.

### **1.3. Statement of the Problem**

Societies that practice initiation rites have advocated several diverse arguments, often conflicting, for male circumcision. Some practice circumcision for religious purposes,

whilst others interpret circumcision as being for reasons of hygiene and health. In South Africa, as part of the socialization and incorporation of boys into their societies, and as part of ethnic identification, traditional male circumcision is performed primarily for socio-cultural reasons (Kepe, 2010).

Apparently, in justification of traditional male circumcision, the idea of culture and tradition is frequently used, although on the other hand, the same concept, along with the need to modernise, is also often quoted in the criticism of traditional male circumcision. As submitted by Meissner and Buso (2007), traditional male circumcision and initiation rites adherents assert the right to practice their custom, cultural legitimacy. They view tradition as having inherent authority over other factors, and they also encourage rejection of any interference or intrusion in cultural practices. Therefore, tradition and modernity are frequently viewed as philosophies that are mutually incompatible and fundamentally opposed. Therefore, traditional education is viewed as incompatible with modern/circular education by hardliner adherents of initiation rites and traditional male circumcision.

Accordingly, this research intends to dispel some of these mythological viewpoints and put “tradition”, “culture” and “modernity” in their apposite perspectives. A study to examine the educational expectations from participating in initiation rites by male learners, their families and communities is therefore necessary and relevant. Continued criticism of the customs might deter the positive educational behavioural changes which come through these initiation rites to the community, apart from a mere violation of the constitutional rights of the cultural groups involved. Conversely, if the cause of the unwanted behavioural changes that emanate from initiation rites are not ascertained, these may continue or escalate, affecting teaching and learning in the conventional school. Hence, this research seeks to explore the expectations by different stakeholders for change in learners’ behaviour in the selected schools after initiation against what transpires. The study also examines ways educational contributions from the initiation processes may be incorporated into or incorporate conventional educational training to mould better citizens for South Africa.

#### **1.4. The Research Questions**



Guided by the research problem statement, the following research questions were developed:

#### **1.4.1. Main research question**

What are the expected learners' behavioural changes after initiation?

#### **1.4.2. Research sub-question**

- What are traditional leaders' perspectives on the changes in learners' behaviour?
- What are learners' perspectives on the changes in learners' behaviour?
- What are educators' perspectives on the changes in learners' behaviour after the initiation ritual?
- What interventions can be employed to improve/uphold behavioural changes by male learners after the initiation ritual?

#### **1.5. Aim of the study**

The aim of this proposed study is to understand why learners' behaviour in the selected schools changed after initiation.

#### **1.6. Objectives of the study**

To address the problems identified in the problem statement, the following objectives were developed:

- To determine traditional leaders' perspectives on the changes in learners' behaviour at a selected school in the Amatole East District;
- To establish learners' perspectives on the changes in learners' behaviour at a selected school in the Amatole East District;
- To establish educators' perspectives on the changes in learners' behaviour at a selected school in the Amatole East District; and

- To ascertain possible interventions for the improvement/upholding of behavioural changes by male learners after the initiation ritual.

### **1.7. Limitations and Delimitations of the Study**

The potential drawbacks of this study were time limitations and possible discomfort of participants sharing their ritual secrets which had the potential to influence the extent of detail provided. Regarding delimitations, the study was confined to Amatole East District, Eastern Cape. Participants in the study were drawn from the vicinity of the study area specified in this section only.

### **1.8. Definition of Key Concepts and Terms**

**Circumcision:** According to Nqeketho (2008), circumcision is the removal of any or more of the foreskin from the penis. It is also possible to detach the frenulum simultaneously.

**Initiation** - It is the mechanism by which young males amongst some African cultural groups are formally transformed from boyhood to manhood (Nqeketho, 2008).

**Rituals** - A ritual is a series of acts that are carried out primarily because of their symbolic meaning, which is prescribed by a community's religion or customs (Cowie, 1998).

### **1.9. Chapter Outline**

#### **Chapter One: Introduction**

The initial chapter provided the study's introduction and overview. Before highlighting the research questions and goals, the chapter also presented the rationale of the analysis and the problem statement.

#### **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

Chapter Two reviews extant literature and studies with respect to the study variables. Theoretical frameworks of the subject field are also articulated in the literature review.

#### **Chapter Three: Research Methodology and Design**

The research methodology provides details of the methodology, design, sampling, population, and data collection tools with which the study is conducted.

#### **Chapter Four: Findings and Discussion**

In order to provide an in-depth understanding of the solution to the problem, this chapter outlines the research results as well as the interpretation of the collected data.

### **Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations**

The entire study outcome is concluded in this chapter and recommendations are made. The aim of this chapter is to provide an overall discussion of the study's findings and make specific recommendations to resolve the issue.

#### **1.10. Conclusion**

This chapter introduced the study by documenting the background information aligned to the study regarding the influence of initiation rites on male learners at a selected school in the Amatole East District. The chapter thus presented the background leading to the study and developed the problem statement followed by the objectives and research questions as a tool to ensure that the study problem is solved. A brief research design and methodology were also outlined.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews extant literature in the field of male initiation rites. A comprehensive, in-depth, methodical review of the literature is a prerequisite for conducting fruitful research. The goodness of research is beneficial because it improves mutual knowledge by building on previous work, exploring existing studies' strengths and limitations, as well as what they could mean. The review of literature was guided by the research objectives, hence issues to be discussed include the South African perspective on initiation rites; initiation schools; the role of traditional leaders; the meaning and need for initiation amongst different cultures; types of circumcision, as well as the theoretical frameworks underpinning the study.

Ntombana (2011) described initiation as a rite of passage marking entrance or acceptance into a community or society. In a group, or one of its formal elements, it may also be a formal admission to adulthood. Xhosa male initiation is considered a rite of passage and a time when they graduate to manhood. Historically, it is understood to have a role in building up the morality of boys (Ratele, 2010).

A change in the character of the newly graduated initiates characterizes the psychological importance of the male initiation tradition (Papu and Verster, 2006). As social norms are versatile enough to tolerate boyish pranks, Mtuze (2004) defines boyhood as boys' freedom to do as they please, and no one takes them seriously as they are considered immature. The shift in character suggests that more mature and responsible behaviour should be exhibited by initiated men. This shift in character is entirely different from the anti-social and reckless conduct of boys, which is easy to handle. The goal of having new initiates being anointed by a responsible individual in the community is to pass the good characteristics of the anointer to the newly graduated initiate (Mtuze, 2004).

During the transition by children from young adults to adulthood, the significance of identity formation in the process of initiation has been established (Vincent, 2008). This identity transition is recognized within both contemporary modes of thought and indigenous cultures. However, the current marginalization of cultural traditions can underplay the centrality of traditional passage rites and the values, beliefs and practices associated therewith (Papu & Verster, 2006). The potential consequence of this may be that young men are socialized into two opposing belief structures that value and identify various cultural standards that can generate confusion, anxiety, and conformity pressure, combined with ambiguity on what to comply with (Anike et al., 2013).

The role played by black masculinity is often challenged and blamed for being a major contributor to cycles of violence in South Africa. Ratele (2010) describes the key reasons behind the high rate of interpersonal violence amongst young black men as being perpetrated by men who can disregard pain, who are not fearful and who are always ready to fight. The depiction of a good male as fearless gives men the common cultural indicators to gain social status, thus raising the likelihood of victimization at the same time (Ratele, 2010). However, Miedzian (2002) views masculinity as coming along with manhood, ushering proportionate responsibility and gender roles if perceived differently, as in the context of initiation rites.

## **2.2. South African Perspective of Initiation Rites**

The term "initiation" in the most general sense denotes a body of rites and oral teachings whose purpose is to produce a decisive alteration in the social status of the candidate to be initiated (Snoek 1987:101). Snoek elaborates by saying that, in philosophical terms, initiation is equivalent to a basic change in one's existential condition; the initiate emerges from his ordeal a totally different being from the person he was before his initiation; he has now become another. Therefore, initiation rites are defined as "the various rites by means of which societies effect transitions in the life of an individual from one social identity to another including celebrations of crises in the life cycle" (Berry, 1984:2-3). Arnold van Gennep's concept of the rite of passage (Cheal, 1988; Van Gennep, 1960) was developed with the aim of systematizing the rituals and rites connected with change in the status of the individual in homogeneous primitive societies (Janusz & Walkiewicz, 2018).

In South Africa, various ethnic groups practice the initiation of boys, including Sotho-speaking people, Sepedi, Xhosas, and the Tswana, amongst others. In the Xhosa culture, the initiation of male adolescents is still a very significant and esteemed tradition which denotes the ritual of graduating into manhood, coupled with the assumption of the duties and responsibilities associated with adulthood. Practicing the initiation rites ensures that cherished Xhosa values which are central and valuable to the reverence of ancestors are perpetuated (Nqeketho, 2008).

Lemmer and Van Wyk (2010) argue that African children are raised by the community and taught through their people's culture and traditions. This traditional mode of education is formally conveyed through parents and elders through initiation ceremonies. The initiation ritual marks the transition and sometimes the circumcision of boys from adolescent to adulthood. Mohlaloka, Jacobs and De Wet (2016) view this African philosophy as seeking to respond to the problems of Africa. Therefore, initiations are an ethnic philosophy and are special and consist of the African continent's religious and moral values.

According to Mbiti (2017), life force comes from the Supreme Being who is God (uQamata) in the traditional cosmology of Xhosa-speaking peoples. Xhosa people believe that uQamata is far from living, the highest Supreme Being. It is the departed members of the group (ancestors) who connect the people to uQamata (Mbiti, 2015). Therefore, Xhosa protocols for contact between people and the cosmological universe are their traditions/rituals. Hence, the Xhosa traditional leadership ought to be obliged in passing the tradition from one generation to another through initiating boys into manhood.

### **2.3. Initiation schools in South Africa**

An initiation school, like any other school, is an agency that is formally structured and organised for the purpose of inducting the child into their society. Initiation schools create a setting in which the adolescent can be happy and yet challenged. They are a place to develop optimal personal and interpersonal attributes and, as such, maximise the person's ability to contribute to society. Towles (1993:32) in his study of the Nkumbi initiation says the Nkumbi initiates remain in the circumcision lodge for up to three

months. During this period, they sing songs and are taught certain moral codes articulated as "manly" behaviour and are given the esoteric knowledge of the tribe. Thus, the initiation school has a socialising influence on the adolescent in that it provides the physical environment in which the adolescent meets his peers who could become life-long friends. In this way the adolescent is afforded the opportunity of natural integration into the world. From the information gathered on initiation one can establish that initiation schools are traditional institutions, characterised by oral teachings of esoteric knowledge of the tribe, and by rituals whose functions are to effect the transition from adolescence to adulthood, and are obligatory for all members of a particular society. And, above all, initiation schools are involved with enculturation.

Traditional schools of initiation, *inter alia*, aim to place in the life of a male adolescent a rite of passage in order to bring boys into formal and explicit relationships with their relatives. Traditional initiation schools also allow initiates to manage some of their essential social ties, confirming them and thereby clarifying their impending adult manhood status. The traditional schools of initiation, besides being recognised as institutions playing a constructive role of cultural training, are also part of the systems designed to pass on beliefs using articulated rituals, language, and symbols across generations (Nqeketho, 2008).

Acquiring cultural knowledge is a profound aspect of the traditional initiation school. It is at these initiation schools that young men are instructed in the practice of courtship and marriage. Additionally, cultural expectations are conveyed and initiated concerning social responsibilities and their behaviours as men in the community. It is after the initiation rite that men are given various privileges associated with their status. The behaviours and specific vocabulary learned during the time spent in the bush distinguishes men who have been through initiation and those who have not (Stinson & Paterson, 2018). In all these processes of the initiation rites, traditional leaders should preside over as they are considered the custodians of the knowledge repository for passing on to the upcoming generation of initiates. Accordingly, the next section reviews the role of traditional leaders in the initiation rites.

### **2.3.1. The Role of Traditional Leaders in the Initiation Rites**

Traditional leaders regard it as important that the guardianship of language and culture principally remain with them as the cultural leaders. Kepe (2010) asserts that both language and culture components are considered a national treasure for South Africa as a nation. Therefore, cultural leaders are eager and can offer advice to the Department of Education, Arts and Culture on their cultures' principles and values. If both components are cherished and respected, traditional leaders have the capacity to ensure continued enjoyment and preservation of the pride of all tribes that wish to maintain its language and culture (Kepe, 2010). This position confirms that traditional leaders in the various ethnic groups of South Africa play a critical role in preserving culture and language. This current study seeks to explore the influence of initiation rites on behavioural change by initiates as they come out of the initiation schools and, as a result, the knowledge shared by traditional leaders with the newly initiated is essential.

Historically, young men and women have been taken to traditional initiation schools, in particular as a traditional practice, to upgrade and groom morals (Mfecane, 2016). It is essentially the duty of a man to educate young boys into being great men in the community, and the only institution to carry out such training was the traditional initiation school. Although the options are minimal, traditional leaders still believe in themselves as the best in the organisation and management of such schools. Their role in this respect has been appreciated and traditional leaders still argue that their societies have faith in this form of initiation (Mabutla, 2001). This therefore presents traditional leaders as the bridge linking the boys to manhood, hence the interest of this research to establish the changes in behaviour after the boys' orientation to adulthood through initiation rites. The following section deliberates on the meaning and need for traditional initiations by various cultures.

#### **2.4. Meaning and need for initiation amongst different cultures**

Since an individual has as many social selves as there are distinct groups of people whose opinions s/he cares about, a person's transitory experience of self is dependent on the social context. Self-concepts change depending on context. While the experience of being context-sensitive is universal, the degree and meaning of the context-sensitive self does vary by culture. This section explores the meaning and need for rite initiations amongst different cultures.



### **2.4.1. Initiation and rituals**

Rituals are a sequence of acts carried out solely because of their symbolic significance, as prescribed by religion or by the custom of a culture (Mavundla, Netswera, Bottoman & Toth, 2009). They may be carried out at regular intervals or on occasions, or at the discretion of individuals and/or groups (Mfecane, 2016). The objectives of rituals vary and may include the observance of religious duties or values; fulfilment of practitioners' spiritual or emotional needs; reinforcement of acceptance or approval for some event; or often just for the enjoyment of the ritual itself (Mavundla et al., 2009). Rituals may be carried out in arbitrary places, or in places explicitly reserved for it; either in public, in private or before particular individuals; by single individuals or collectively, or by the entire community.

Ritual initiations are performed in many cultures around the world and is one of the "most resistant in (the) urban industrialized environment of all traditional African practices" (Kepe, 2010). Rituals are a medium for members of society to express beliefs and ways of living through experiences and teaching in psychological, social, and symbolic terms. The literature review indicates that in South Africa, ritual circumcision is not performed solely by one ethnic group (Mfecane, 2013). Sotho-speaking people, once they reach a certain age, have both boys and girls taken to initiation schools. However, boys have traditional leaders of their own who are distinct from girls. The Sepedi, IsiXhosa, and Setswana-speaking people are other groups. All these communities have exactly the same methods of initiation and circumcision, but different ways of celebrating the rite according to their cultures and customs at the end of the process (Kepe, 2010). Consequently, it can be concluded that initiation rituals have significance in the social, moral, and spiritual realms of many ethnic groups in South Africa. However, the meanings and significance may vary from culture to culture.

### **2.4.2. Rite of Passage to Manhood**

Despite societal variation, rites of passage have been at the core and foundation of virtually every educational, social, and spiritual dynamic – pervasively expressed throughout society (Hill & Varone, 2021). This is especially true of Indigenous societies, which represent 99% of human history and today are found world-wide. The

entire lifecycle of an individual, from birth to childhood to old age to death itself, for both men and women, is marked by a series of rites of passage – pervasively expressed throughout the lifecycle of an individual. Therefore, passage rites as processes of development and transition are not universal but culturally unique. These are founded on the multi-cultural idea that before being able to share and accept the differences of others, a community must acknowledge and affirm itself. This approach also acknowledges that the entrance into adult life requires the fulfilment of social duties and the assumption of responsibility (Hill & Varone, 2021). However, nothing is known about what happens when young men are not involved in the process.

In addition to providing self-development and cultural knowledge, Hill and Varone (2021) argue that a rite of passage can promote a sense of belonging, whereby adolescents and adults are part of group life, not individuals alone, lacking sanction, purpose, and support. The rite of passage requires separation, transformation, and integration phases. Additionally, some commonalities exist although ceremonies vary across groups, namely include ritual sacrifice, seclusion, circumcision, and white clay skin painting. After all that has been done, at the end of the seclusion, the burning of the lodge and belongings ensues. Integration of these men into society is followed by celebrations of the improvement of their status (Mfecane, 2016).

In the Eastern Cape, during their teenage years, men speaking the isiXhosa and Hlubi languages customarily undergo the circumcision ritual. A traditional surgeon and attendants oversee this Rite of passage (Ntombana, 2011). Traditional circumcision is a part of Xhosa culture and practice and even if one is a Christian, it is part of what defines an individual (Nqeketho, 2008). A man is perceived as one determined to impart value to the world, whilst contributing positively to everyone around him, whilst at the same time being an effective role-model for the next generation, as well as fearing, respecting, and doing the will of God.

In isiXhosa culture, the tradition of initiating male adolescents is considered valuable and indispensable. It is only after initiation that adolescents are regarded as having achieved manhood, and only thereafter can they be appropriated the duties and responsibilities associated with adults. It is only through such practices that cherished Xhosa values are perpetuated, which are central and valuable to the reverence of ancestors (Nqeketho, 2008). Judging from the literature reviewed above, it can be

safely concluded that the intended influence of initiation rites amongst the amaXhosa is to mould a boy into a relevant and useful man in the society, a full representative of acceptable morals and responsibilities as upheld by previous generations. The intention is to pass on the baton of culture, customs, beliefs, and a sense of responsibility to the upcoming generation of men. It is against this backdrop that the current study seeks to confirm the influence of initiation rites on behavioural changes by the initiates.

### **2.4.3. Suitable age groups for circumcision**

Various persons perform circumcision, and their practices and experiences are different. Qualified health professionals perform circumcision in clinics and hospitals, whilst other practitioners include religious and/or conventional practitioners in apt settings. The age at which circumcision is performed also has a large degree of variance. In Kenya, the median circumcision age is 18 years, ranging from 12 years to 22 years, and it appears to be steadily increasing (Gwata, 2009). However, in families and cultures that follow Islam, Judaism and certain Christian sects, the circumcision of boys is done when they are aged between 10 and 20 years (Gwata, 2009).

The transformation from boyhood to manhood reflects the Xhosa-speaking initiation (Mfecane, 2016). Other studies (Westercamp & Bailey, 2007; Weiss et al, 2008; Mark *et al.*, 2012; and Njeuhmeli, 2011) also showed that, relative to men who were uncircumcised, there was a reduced risk of being infected by HIV for certain men who were circumcised before reaching puberty. The reduced risk of HIV is seen primarily in men aged 13-20 years who are circumcised (Gwata, 2009). Relating to the method of obtaining informed consent for the operation, the recommended age of male circumcision has implications. A very young boy cannot grasp the consequences of initiation entirely, depending on age and maturity.

## **2.5. Types of Circumcision**

Circumcision is described as the process through which part, or all of the penile foreskin is removed (Mabutla, 2001). Origins of the word circumcision are from the Latin '*circum*', meaning 'around' and '*caedere*', meaning 'to cut'. Historically,

circumcision has been part of a tradition performed by Jews and Muslims for thousands of years. Furthermore, circumcision was practiced as both a religious sacrifice and a ritual of passage from boyhood into adulthood. It has also been practiced as a form of compassionate charm that ensures virility; it is known to be a suppressor of sexual pleasure; it helps to maintain cleanliness for the boys where it was difficult to bath daily/regularly; it was also a sign used to distinguish the social status of boys, as well as being a distinguishing feature separating circumcised groups from their non-circumcising neighbours (Hill, 2021). Funani (1990) believes that during their seclusion time, the boys receive teachings and training from the group of elderly and experienced men and therefore, circumcision introduces the boys into 'manhood' through the initiation schools. The teachings are meant to prepare the boy for a multiplicity of expected adult roles that include military, political, religious, legal, marital, or sexual and social obligations.

The stage of circumcision, according to Funani (1990), is very challenging, especially during the boys' stay in the forest as they encounter many physical challenges. These struggles are believed to be an integral part of the ceremonies accompanying the initiation process. Some of the physical challenges encountered by the boys include consuming unpleasant foods, going for a few days without water, and/or even getting beaten up for violating some bush rules. In addition, the status acquired during the initiation process accords the young male with privileges such as the authority to attend men's meetings; acceptance to preside over ceremonial rituals; the capacity to inherit the possessions of their fathers, as well as the expectation that they can establish their own families. In order to get married, a circumcision procedure might be required. Additionally, it cements mutual respect between men, and it wards off evil or appeases supernatural forces.

Male circumcision was also considered by some cultures as a protective measure against masturbation. Mohlaloka, Jacobs and De Wet (2016) further suggest that for different reasons, circumcision may have evolved independently in different cultures. Over time, circumcision has also been considered a treatment for venereal diseases such as syphilis and gonorrhoea, a distinct but similarly polluting set of conditions.

### **2.5.1. Traditional Circumcision**

Circumcision is a ritual amongst African cultural groups that acts as a transition from boyhood to manhood. The Assegai was traditionally the only method used to circumcise boys, and one was used to circumcise more than one child. The rite was conducted at initiation schools by a traditional surgeon known as *ingcibi*. Traditionally, the school for initiation was considered to be an educational institution where initiates were trained on a variety of life skills such as marriage, negotiations for courtship, as well as both social roles and actions (Nqeketho, 2008). Ritual initiation is performed by isiXhosa-speaking people as a cultural tradition, whereby initiation is seen as the formal way of integrating their religious and tribal lives (Mfecane, 2013).

Participation in circumcision was historically not seen to be associated with one's physical growth and/or level of maturity, but rather as a socially indispensable act meant to establish group cohesion and a mechanism to ensure that initiates are accepted and appreciated by others from their community (Stinson & Paterson, 2018). According to the traditions of amaXhosa, amaHlubi, amaSotho, amaPedi and amaTswana, a male cannot marry or start a family or inherit possessions before attending initiation school, nor can he officiate in any ritual ceremonies.

### **2.5.2. Circumcision for Religious purposes**

As stated earlier, circumcision is mainly practiced for three reasons, namely, religious, cultural, and medical reasons. The custom amongst Jewish communities is to circumcise every boy 8 days after they are born. In the polarity of self and others, Christians' and Jews' attitudes towards circumcision vary significantly. It is known that for Jews, circumcision was considered the most important mark of identification because it was used to distinguish Jews from other nationalities, a demand for a covenant, which God requested for all. Within the Jewish community, circumcision was highly regarded for Jews because it was painful (Mohlaloka et al., 2016). A ritual called a Brit milah, the "covenant of circumcision", was generally carried out in Judaism. A qualified specialist called a "mohel" performed this on the eighth day after the birth of the boy.

To Christians, traditionally, circumcision was foreign and alien. In comparison to Jewish identity, being uncircumcised was a symbol of Christianity. A Christian's pride

was not to sacrifice the identification mark given by circumcision. Amongst the Jews, ten individuals constitute a “minyah” for the purposes of holding worship services. During circumcision, the mother of the child hands their child to the godmother who conducts the milah (cutting practice). The ritual expert conducts the procedure and recites the prescribed prayers (Mohlaloka et al., 2016).

As a matter of religious duty, Muslims also circumcise boys. As long as the procedure happens by the time the boy reaches maturity, there is no fixed time for circumcision in Islamic societies. The operation was followed by eight days of feasting by the whole group. Everyone dressed up and joined in rejoicing and merry making. Islam emphasizes purity and considers circumcision to be a form of natural hygiene (Ntombana, 2011). It is customary or compulsory in certain parts of the world for minors to be circumcised for religious or cultural purposes. Some are of the view that the concept of freedom of faith protects this activity. Others disagree, in that no right takes priority over a child's rights (Mohlaloka et al., 2016). However, this researcher concludes that circumcision can be done for various reasons by different groups at varied timing. Some groups circumcise for religious purposes, some for cultural purposes and some for clinical purposes, while some do it for hygiene purposes.

### **2.5.3. Clinical Circumcision**

Medically circumcisions are carried out by healthcare practitioners instead of traditional practitioners, and they use medical instruments and wounds are dressed using medical instruments (Stinson & Paterson, 2018). The polarity between health and illness has also been discussed by circumcision advocates. They concluded that, if not an illness itself, the absence of circumcision was at least a prerequisite and fertile state for developing a disease. Ntombana (2011) suggests that not only did certain societies consider the absence of circumcision encouraging to masturbation as well as spermatorrhoea, but it often triggers several diseases such as cancer, nervous conditions, joint-related sicknesses, and many others. A study in Kenya found that uncircumcised men were more prone to HIV as well as developing several other diseases that are transmitted sexually in high-risk commercial sex environments than circumcised men (Ntombana, 2011).

## 2.6. Male Circumcision Procedure

Mehlomakulu (2000) states that it is normally the choice of the boy to be circumcised in the isiXhosa culture, but the procedure must be approved by the boy's father or any other male relative in the absence of the father. Due to an increase in single parenting, with no father involved in the boys' upbringing, upon reaching the initiation age, the mother has the onus to consult with males in the clan and be guided accordingly. The responsibility to take initiation matters forward lies with the senior male relative.

According to Mavundla et al. (2010), circumcision preparations start with the selection of a host known as *usosuthu*. Thereafter, there is need to construct a lodge known as *ithonto*, then selection takes place of one trustworthy person to act as the surgeon to undertake the circumcision procedures known as *ingcibi*, as well as the nomination of a traditional nurse known as an *ikhankatha* who charged with the responsibility to monitor the circumcision wounds until the initiates are healed. Conventionally, the nurse is concerned with keeping the wound clean and ensuring constant dressing of the wounds. The boy's peers, including girls, may be allowed to spend the night before circumcision for purposes of celebrating (*umguyo*), offering moral support and counselling him not to be worried about the impending surgery, depending on his tribe. In addition, the boy about to undergo the initiation process coupled with the circumcision procedures may undergo the tasting of meat ritual (*umngcamo*), which is meant to allow the boy to taste meat before undergoing the initiation procedures, which lasts for a while.

Using a special knife known as *umdlanga*, a traditional surgeon (*ingcibi*) usually performs the actual operation. However, the conventional surgeon nowadays uses a plain sharp knife or a surgical scalpel instead (Mavundla et al., 2010). The boy being circumcised, must sit still with his legs wide open. Then with his hand, the *ingcibi* takes the prepuce (foreskin) of the boy and amputates it with the knife, using a sawing motion. Any movement, showing of fear or noticeable response to pain, including cowardice, results in long-term mockery from other men. The boy has to yell 'ndiyindoda' upon being circumcised and in extreme pain. This is symbolically an announcement and expression of his acknowledgement of his new status (Mohlaloka,

Jacobs & De Wet, 2016). The conventional nurse then oversees wound care. Plant leaves, such as *isicwe* or *isigqutsu* (*Helichrysum pedunculare*), are traditionally used as wound bandages (VanVuuren & DeJongh, 1999). To treat the wound, a combination of leaves and other modern ointments are used nowadays. Wound treatment is intense, with regular changes in dressing many times a day (Meintjies, 1998b). This is repeated less often as the wound heals. Some initiates are also known for either assist each other to dress their wound or even dress it themselves.

The initiates (*abakhwetha*) are confined to their *ibhoma* (temporary dwelling) for the first eight days and are subject to dietary and fluid constraints. Initiates are usually not permitted to eat anything but parboiled maize during the first week of circumcision, according to Zulu (2016), and only samp mealies without salt or samp brought from his home every day. Depending on areas and modernization within the society, these diets can differ. For at least the first eight days, they even abstain from drinking water. It is suspected that failure to adhere to these guidelines contributes to excessive wound wetness. This is a complication, since a dry wound is often known to heal faster (Zulu, 2016). In most Xhosa clans, an animal, usually animals such as a goat or sheep, is killed for purposes of the initiation rituals after approximately eight days. This ritual is referred to as *ukojiswa*, meaning 'to roast for', and implies an end to the initiation procedures' taboo of the food. This feasting ritual is a preserve for males only and marks the first day without limitation of the full meal of an initiate. After this, anything he wants can be eaten by an initiate (Ndangam, 2008)

In addition to the dietary limits, initiates are restricted in many other areas. For instance, they should not have contact with married women (VanVuuren & DeJongh, 1999). The faith surrounding that thinking is that bad luck is correlated with any interaction with women during this time. No married women are therefore willing to approach the initiates or go anywhere near the seclusion lodge. The prevention of women is also to avoid the slightest sort of sexual stimulation that can trigger the circumcised skin to expand, potentially causing discomfort and slowing the healing process. Therefore, if any troubling thoughts cross their minds, initiates often bring a stick to hit the ground hard (Funani, 1990, cited in Van Vuuren and De Jongh, 1999). Hitting the ground is thought to distract the mind from thinking about sex. In the process of circumcision, there are also cultural beliefs which affect the exclusion of women. Fear by initiates of being bewitched, for instance, is one of them.



The initiate leaves for home at the end of the seclusion time, upon which the bush lodge is burnt to ashes to symbolize a new beginning (Mehlomakulu, 2000). It is not appropriate for the initiate to look back at the burning lodge, as this is to prove that he abandons his former ways and adopts new habits that suit his new role as an adult. A new blanket is obtained by an initiate, who is now named *ikrwala* or 'new man' (Van Vuuren and De Jongh, 1999). The new man's return home marks a coming-out ceremony, complete with festivities. The ceremony is called *umgidi*. In addition, new clothing is given to the new man to signify his new beginning of life as a man (Mavundla et al. 2010).

This whole initiation rite process highlighted above clearly presents a picture that by the scope and context of traditional male circumcision, the Xhosa culture aims to groom the young man into adulthood with responsibility, and to make him brave enough to face and solve real-life challenges. However, like in any other society and grouping, application of the knowledge acquired rests with the individuals trained. As is always the case with any undertaking, the tradition of male circumcision procedures does not come without own hindrances. Below are some of the factors regarded as affecting the Xhosa male circumcision ritual.

## **2.7. Factors affecting the Xhosa Male Circumcision Ritual**

Recently, several factors have undermined male circumcision amongst indigenous communities in South Africa. These factors can be attributed to shifts in value structures, urbanization, the proclivity to commercialise some cultural events/happenings and the development of novel diseases. A combination of these common variables has become a major hindrance in the preservation of the circumcision rituals, including endangering the life of the initiates. Some challenge the ritual from both medical and cultural fronts, questioning whether it should be investigated in line with changing times (Nqeketo, 2008). The preference for medical circumcision has also been challenged as some with cultural concerns argue that this medical practice is not culturally appropriate since it eliminates the importance of circumcision as an indicator of the value of a man throughout the culture (Funani, 1990). Discussed below are some of the key factors currently challenging the practice of male circumcision:

### **2.7.1. Education**

There has been no record of studies about how the male youth circumcision rituals have been impacted by the education system in South Africa, but conclusions are drawn from demands from the school calendar that imply an unfavourable impact on circumcision (Nqeketo, 2008). In its original form, the seclusion period of the circumcision rituals would last for periods ranging between three to six months, a period which has been significantly revised to between two and three weeks in order to be compatible with the schooling calendar. However, the reduced period of two to three weeks is not sufficient to allow for the healing of the circumcision wounds. Moreover, education has become the major focus point for school-going youth, resulting in competing demands between traditional rituals and westernised educational demands. In 2001, a Council of Education Ministers' meeting resolved to convene a meeting with traditional leaders in an attempt to resolve and reconcile differences between the interests of traditional initiation schools with those of formal educational institutes/schools. The focus was meant to be on a synchronisation of calendars for the two stakeholders in the lives of youths so that there is no competition for the attention of the learners (Siswana, 2016).

### **2.7.2. Urbanization**

It has been observed that practicing the circumcision ritual is affected by the localities where the supremacy of chiefs is regarded, seasons of the year are observed and respected, as well as strong tribal connections being recognised (Mehlomakulu, 2000). Therefore, this section attempts to showcase how the circumcision rite is threatened by the urbanization of the African people, cultures, and practices. Ntombana (2009) observes that the form and purpose of the circumcision ritual have been changed due to the movements of people from rural areas to urban areas. Firstly, the custodians of the traditional rites, values, and cultures, namely the fathers and other senior males who are an integral part of the initiation process have been forced to migrate to industrialised urban areas as migrant labourers, thereby negatively impacting the fluidity of the circumcision ritual (Meintjies, 1998a). The men of the households spend most of their time away from the rural areas and as a result, they cannot supervise initiates during the circumcision process as expected of them according to the ritual

practices. These older men were expected by the practice to visit the bush daily and oversee as well as advise the initiates on how they should care for the wounds and in the process augment the work of the ikhankatha (traditional nurse). Due to this absenteeism, this task has been left to some young amakhankatha to do it alone (Meintjies, 1998a). In addition, the absence of the male figures in the rural areas significantly compromises the transmission of values, family cohesion as well as the sense of morality in the families (Ndangam, 2008).

Secondly, urbanisation, through the migration of families to urban areas, has destroyed some of the traditional and inherited safety mechanisms, precautions and control mechanisms that are available in rural areas due to the existence of extended families (Ntombana, 2009). Traditionally, people in rural areas are in comfort zones that are all-encompassing and sheltering, derived from the influence of living with their tribal kinsmen, which is replaced by townships where lineage systems are de-emphasized, hence the safety nets are removed (Ndangam, 2008). Meintjies (1998a) notes that urbanization has been observed as a major reason for the high incidences of injuries or deaths of initiates in urban and suburban areas. Meintjies (1998a) further contends that differences in social dynamics and practices between practitioners operating in urban areas and those in rural areas are a major factor in this predicament.

Practitioners in urban areas have adopted novel practices or modified the rites to match the urban environmental dynamics. As observed by Mehlomakulu (2000), the dynamics usually dictate specifications about when, how, why, who and where the circumcision rite can be performed. It has also been observed that practicing the ritual in urban areas is constrained by space limitations and other urban demands which may be regulatory, for example, the difference in building materials for ritual lodges compromises the process. It is known that in rural areas, the lodges are made of thatch grass, whilst those in urban areas are built using plastic, cardboard, or corrugated iron (Funani, 1990). The nature of the materials used to construct the lodges in urban areas is likely to compromise or delay the healing process for the wounds due to differences in aeration in the lodges. Due to the proximity of the ritual lodges in urban areas to residential areas and public roads, the initiates are likely to be aroused if they meet females, which negatively affects the healing process. Moreover, the location of ritual

lodges in urban areas makes it difficult for the initiates to be secluded and this exposes the initiates to activities such as drinking and drug use, which negatively affects their healing process.

### **2.7.3. Commercialization of culture**

There has been a notable prevalence by some trying to commercialise the circumcision ritual, which is a major challenge affecting the practice in modern days. The modernisation of African economies, especially the introduction of monetary economies, did not leave out the introduction of traditional rites such as circumcision in the commercial world, which is an abuse by certain personalities (Erlank, 2017). Due to the introduction of financial gain to the performance of circumcision, instead of the practice being done by elders from the community, younger men are now taking over this delicate procedure without a proper understanding of the requirements and standards, such as cleanliness and the proper dressing of the wounds (Meintjies, 1998b). Thus, the ritual has lost reverence because the elderly community leaders who used to perform the circumcision have often been replaced by young unemployed men who are only motivated by the financial gain without knowledge about the essence of the practice (Ntombana, 2009). Furthermore, the surgeons and nurses that perform the circumcision require payment for their duties rather than performing the procedure as a community service for which they would not receive anything or get appreciated in kind through getting some meat slaughtered for the initiation as gifts of appreciation. It can also be seen that traditional surgeons and nurses do not know how the practice was done in the past where these people would perform the procedure as an obligation towards a traditional contribution to their society.

It has been observed that traditional surgeons and nurses charge between fifty and eighty rand for circumcising each initiate in rural areas, such as Flagstaff in Pondoland (Nqeketho, 2008). Nqeketho (2008) further indicates that the charges are even higher in urban areas where parents must pay between fifty and a hundred rand for the services of the surgeons, which is also however affected by the relationship between the initiates or their clans to the surgeons. Moreover, the introduction and acceptance of payment for the services of traditional surgeons and nurses has led to some of these

practitioners' compromising quality in the performance of their duties (Nqeketho, 2008). As a result, the safety and care of the initiates has been highly neglected. In addition to the above stated challenges related to the commercialisation of the rituals, some even go the extent of committing crimes such as kidnapping younger boys below the traditionally accepted ages in order to boost numbers at the initiation schools (Erlank, 2017). Any efforts by the younger boys to resist attending the circumcision schools has been reported in that the young boys are assaulted (Rankhotha, 2004).

#### **2.7.4. Sexually transmitted diseases**

There has been an increase in sexually transmitted diseases, which has turned out to be a huge challenge to the practicing of the rite of circumcision due to the fear for spreading such diseases. Unlike in the olden days where sex before marriage was strictly forbidden, nowadays some boys who attend the circumcision rituals were affected by sexually transmitted diseases (Funani, 1990). The major sexually transmitted disease with the highest mortality for South African youths is HIV/AIDS (Groenewald et al., 2020). HIV/AIDS has negatively affected the practices of the male circumcision rite broadly in two ways. Firstly, the use of one traditional circumcision knife on many initiates has been cited as having a high potential to spread HIV/AIDS since there are no sterilisation facilities for the knives before being used on multiple initiates (Shisana & Simbayi, 2005). The circumcision is usually undertaken by many boys at the same time, by the same surgeon, usually using the same knife. Secondly, HIV/AIDS-positive initiates usually have challenges in the healing of their wounds since their immunity is very weak. These factors have resulted in increases in initiates who get admitted at hospitals for procedures such as skin grafting, deceased initiates, as well as the commission of suicides by initiates.

A variety of literature on male circumcision has been written by scholars from both traditional societies as well as from the western perspective/world, presenting opposite perspectives regarding how circumcision affects the sexuality for circumcised men (Krieger, Mehta & Bailey, 2008). A study by Taylor, Lockwood & Taylor (1996) on the effects of losing the specialised mucosa of the penis during circumcision found that the 50% of foreskin and mucosa loss negatively affects penis enlargement during erection. The loss of the mucosa affects the enlargement of the penis during erection,

resulting in painful erections as the residual mucosal and foreskin is stretched beyond its capacity (Shisana & Simbayi, 2005).

Magodyo, Andipatin & Jackson (2017) conducted a poll of men who had been circumcised during their childhood and found that their adult behaviour is negatively influenced upon their realisation that they had lost an important functional part of their penis. Some of the effects of childhood circumcision includes low self-esteem, resentment, avoidance of intimacy, and sometimes manifests in the form of pangs of depression (Kigozi, Watya & Polis, 2008).

For traditional circumcision, it is acceptable because it leads to one being culturally accepted, improves sexual intercourse, prevents sexually transmitted diseases, and improves penile hygiene (Venter, 2011; Westercamp & Bailey, 2007). In another study of the perceived benefits of traditional circumcision, Bottoman et al. (2009) identified the following:

- (i) Improvement of general body strength and hygiene for men;
- (ii) Prevention of contracting sexually transmitted infections, including HIV;
- (iii) Prevention of contracting other infections;
- (iv) peer enhancement;
- (v) improvement of penile and sexual strength; and
- (vi) cultural acceptance.

Similar findings were also revealed through a survey conducted in Korea, which include the following perceived benefits of male circumcision: perceived improvements in body strength; improvement in hygiene; prevention from contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, as well as the enhancement of penile and sexual effectiveness (Kim and Pang, 2007).

Besides the many perceived benefits of traditional male circumcision, some disadvantages were observed at hospitals in Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa where about 10% of circumcised initiates had amputations of their penises partially or completely, whilst some faced long-term sexual and social problems if their developed conditions failed to be reconstructed through surgery (Magoha, 1999).

## **2.8. Implications of Traditional Male Circumcision (TMC)**

The practice of traditional male circumcision is filled with meanings associated with symbolism, cultural significance, as well as social acceptance in many societies where it is practiced. In the historical rationalizations of the practice, the supposed medical or health advantages of male circumcision do not appear. Wilkin (2018) identified the meanings given to the TMC ritual by societies that practice it in a research paper discussing diverse facets of TMC. Wilkin (2018) submits that the continuation of the practice of TMC is strongly anchored on the associated cultural identity and the desire to perpetuate ethnic practices. Wilken and Dick (2009) also note that practicing TMC is usually not an option to be determined individually but is communally determined as has been practiced culturally amongst communal groupings.

Wilkin (2018) states that the TMC ritual has significance ascribed to it by both individuals and socio-cultural groupings. For individuals, the benefits of TMC include improved cleanliness and prevention from contracting sexually transmitted infections; whilst for socio-cultural groups, TMC is accredited for its ability to bring about social status, which is achieved by going through the circumcision ritual and is considered the only qualification for the attainment of manhood in communities that practice traditional circumcision. Wilkin (2018) notes that in South Africa, Xhosa boys usually face considerable social pressure to participate in the circumcision ritual. It is commonly acknowledged that there is high stigmatisation for Xhosa boys who choose not to be circumcised or those who prefer hospital/medical circumcision, thus leaving them with no option on being circumcised or not, the choice of who should circumcise them as well as the timing of being circumcised (Wilken and Dick, 2009). The process and stages involved during circumcision are usually uniform with a few local variations, depending on tribal practices and preferences.

Wilken (2018) attempted to explain the traditional practice of male circumcision in a large geographical region in an article extending beyond the borders of South Africa. Nevertheless, the explanation of the phases of the ritual are largely descriptive of the ritual in South Africa's circumcising cultures. The author highlights the plight of boys who do not go to school for circumcision and those who undergo the operation in hospital. Not only do the unfortunate boys bear the social pressure and discrimination, but it spreads to their families as well. Vincent (2008) posits that this aspect of

traditional male circumcision, social pressure and stigma is often ignored by many researchers in this field. In this sense of social pressure and shame, the phenomenon in which some young boys present themselves without, and even against, parental awareness and consent in circumcision schools must be understood. The definition of informed consent as one knows it in medical ethics is certainly complicated by this, considering that some of the initiates might be as young as 12 years of age (Ntombana, 2011).

A study by Vincent (2008) examines the definitional changes that have taken place regarding perspectives and positions of circumcision schools in the sexual socialisation of Xhosa youths from both cultural and social viewpoints. The study used data collected from documentary sources, interviews as well as news accounts. However, findings by Vincent (2008) posit that TMC still has symbolic importance towards the enrichment of virility for men; the distinction of performance between men and women; preparing boys for marriage and adult sexuality; and the preparation of boys for warfare as they mature. According to Vincent (2008), the circumcision rite can be understood as a process that separates sons from mothers, at the same time integrating the boys into the men of the community. Vincent (2008) also explains the various stages undergone during the circumcision ritual in a fashion similar to that given by Wilken and Dick (2009).

Vincent (2008) also outlines the educative process following circumcision as being made up of three distinct features. Firstly, initiates should be instructed on the applicable bush's code. This is followed by the instruction on development of character qualities which include tolerance, gallantry, resilience, and power. These are usually acquired practically through exposure to adversity and a brutal disciplinary and criticising system. Thirdly, the initiates are taught the fundamentals of adulthood, emphasising the meaning of being a male in the house, their tribal ethnic history, customs, and beliefs. Vincent (2008) further submits the necessity of educating young men and boys as being opportune times to help the initiates understand masculinity differently from the dominant adverse conceptions. On the contrary, Vincent (2008) is concerned that most of the usually desirable educational aspects traditionally associated with TMC continue to fall away, neglecting TMC as focusing on teaching initiates about being violent and brutal, and for some circumcision schools,



emphasising the undesirable characteristics of the South African leading conceptions about masculinity.

Vincent (2008) notes that circumcised men are required to assume greater social accountability in their families, to serve as family conflict negotiators and to weigh decisions more closely. Although social structures and institutions promoted the positive contribution of the practice of male circumcision to the socialization of young boys in the past, Vincent's point is based on the fact that these structures have increasingly decayed over time with concurrent negative repercussions for the institution of traditional male circumcision. The researcher considers this to be a true observation, except to say that it is difficult to measure the magnitude of the decay with precision, and that the decay is expected to affect the various circumcising cultures in South Africa to varying degrees.

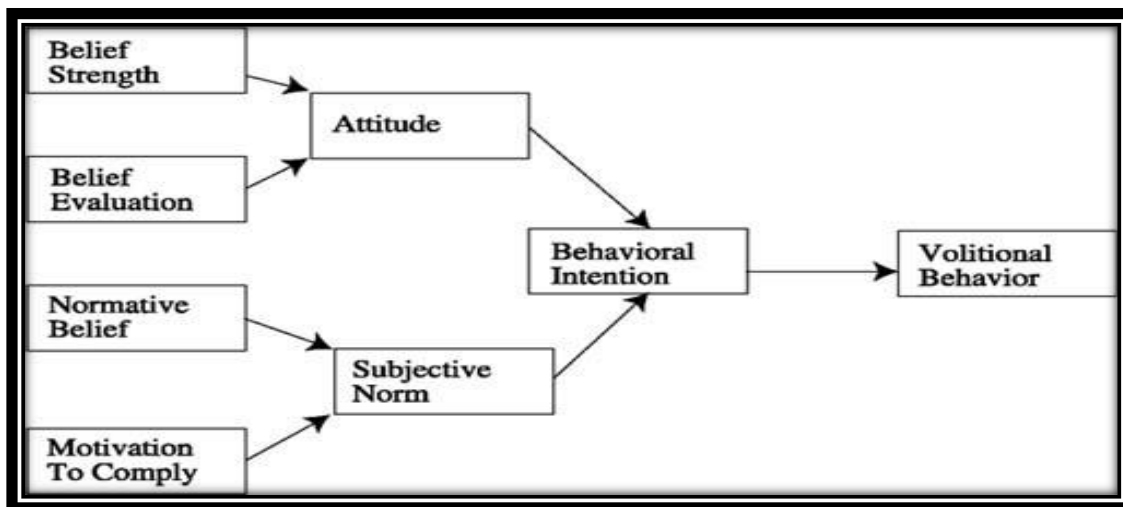
## **2.9. Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework serves as the foundation upon which all knowledge applied in the study was anchored. The theoretical framework gives shape to and supports the motivation for the study, problem statement, study purpose, importance, and research questions addressed by the study. In addition, the theoretical framework provides a base or anchor for the literature reviewed, as well as the methodology used in the study. Therefore, this section outlines the main theories undergirding the study, thus giving the theoretical framework supporting this study.

There are many theories of behavioural change, but the most used theories guiding this study are the Theory of Reasoned Action and Planned Behaviour Theory. Both the Theory of Reasoned Action and the Planned Behaviour Theory originated from a theoretical tradition that regarded attitudes as a significant influence in human behaviour (Stagner, 1942; Thurstone & Chave, 1929). However, other conflicting studies, found that the relationship between attitudes and behaviour was at best tenuous (Corey & Hebets, 2017; La Piere, 1934; Vroom, 1964), with some researchers also calling for the attitude construct to be discarded altogether (Wicker, 1969). These theories, however, rely on Western gender theories to form the research processes, and provide a limited understanding of Xhosa masculinity constructions (Mfecace, 2016).

### 2.9.1. Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

A study by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) tested the attitudes and behaviours of people at similar precision levels and the results showed that there is no consistency between attitudes and behaviours, but these can be improved. In addition, Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) study proposed that an appeal to requisite behavioural motives is the best explanation of the relationship that exists between attitudes and actions. That is, behavioural attitudes about conducting an action predicts behavioural intentions to enforce the conduct, which would in turn predict behaviour.

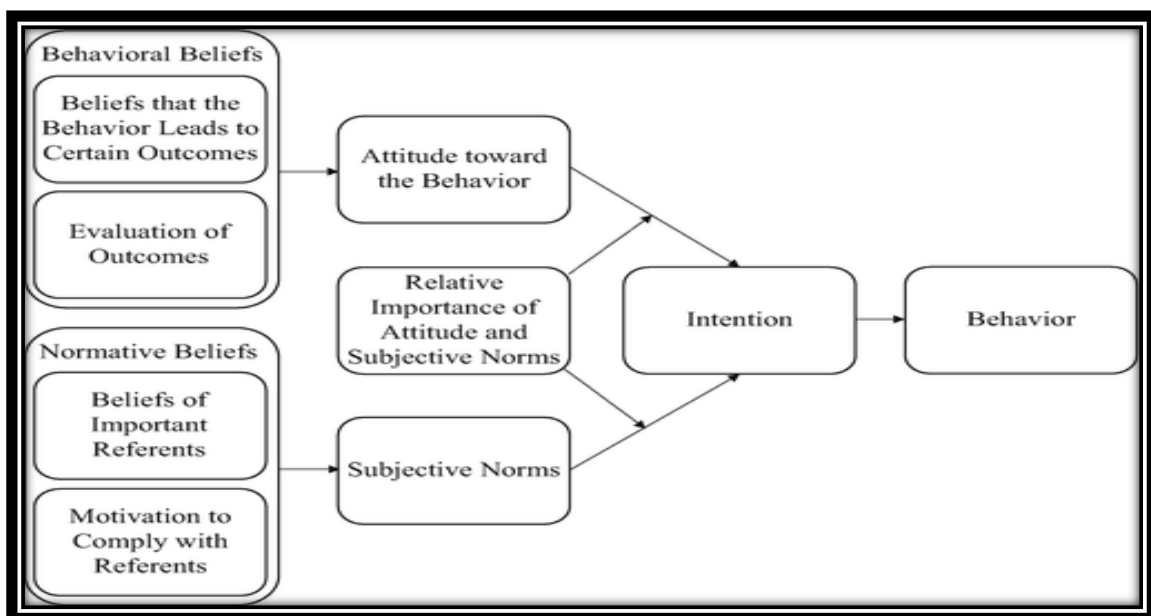


**Figure 2.1: Theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975)**

The model in Figure 2.1 describes behavioural attitudes as an amalgamation of easily available or dominant assumptions about the most likely effects of acting in the target behaviour, whilst subjective norms were described as the perceived social pressure to perform the target behaviour or not, and behavioural intentions were described as the perceived probability of performing the target behaviour. However, the ability to implement the desired behaviour is one aspect that should restrict the conversion of intentions to behaviour. In addition, since one should also consider how others interpret one's actions, subjective expectations on how to behave were also included as a predictor of behavioural intentions. The best predictor of behaviour was then described as behavioural intentions (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975).

## 2.9.2. Theory of Planned Behaviours (TPB)

The Planned Behaviour Theory revised the Reasoned Action Theory to include a dimension of perceived behavioural regulation that defines the perceived capacity of one to implement the target behaviour (Stagner, 1942). In reality, to expand its applicability beyond merely voluntary activities, perceived behavioural regulation was applied to the model. The model was reasonably ineffective in predicting actions not primarily under voluntary regulation prior to this addition. The Theory of Planned Behaviour therefore suggested that the primary determinants of actions are the behavioural intent and perceived behavioural control of a person, as shown in Figure 2.2 below.



**Figure 2.2: Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991)**

As such, the Planned Behaviour Theory notes that behavioural intentions are framed as the model's motivational aspect, or one's deliberate strategy or decision to make an effort to carry out the desired behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Behavioural intentions are influenced by behavioural attitudes, subjective behavioural norms, and perceived behavioural influence. In this context, perceived behavioural influence represents both external factors and internal factors.

In other words, there is poor perceived behavioural regulation in cases where the success of the desired behaviour depends on a variety of other variables that may or may not be under the control of a person (Venter, 2011). For instance, the existence

of constraints including time, availability, access and temptation are known to hinder engagement in the behaviour in spite of high intentions, which may result in low apparent control for the target behaviour of eating healthy. Consequently, the greater the perceived control of behaviour for a desired behaviour, the greater the predictive power of behavioural intentions for that behaviour.

### **2.9.3. Social Constructionism**

Social Constructionism (SC) refers to the theoretical perspective that human life exists because of social and interpersonal forces (Gergen, 1985). The theory acknowledges the contribution of genetically inherited attributes, but emphasis is on the exploration of social impacts on culture and individual lives. The focus of Social Constructionism is on what anthropologists call 'community', whilst sociologists call it 'society': all that is psychological is mutual social aspects. The Social Constructionism theory has numerous differences, with diverse scholars stressing differing emphases. Two outstanding features are exhibited by SC, that is, it rejects assumptions about the nature of the mind and conceptions of connectedness, and focus is placed on the intricacy and interrelation of many facets concerning individuals and their communities. Causality can occur within specific cultures, but a lot of work needs to be done before these relationships can be established with any certainty.

In particular times and locations, SC regards people in their individual capacities as important for the evolution of cultures, politics and histories and therefore, re-situates cultural, social and temporal psychological processes (Ntozini & Ngqangweni, 2017). Social Constructionism assumes relationships between people over time, excluding inherited and developmental aspects that have the capacity to form, preserve and/or destroy all other facets of humanity. All life's social practices start, are recreated in the present and finally end (Mavundla et al., 2010). This perspective emphasises the importance of acquiring, developing, and modifying emotional behaviour, therapeutic capacity and ways of understanding things and individuals for psychotherapy. As each race and region's genetic material is different, so is their culture, there is no uniform human existence. The forms in which socialization and enculturation are the most involved in shaping the shared life of people with others amongst the people who have been known, plus the present impact of those who are now known, are what Social Constructionism shows to be significant (Mavundla et al., 2009).

Social Constructionism is very much in line with the views of Mfecane (2013), who argues that in any given cultural context, various forms of masculinity exist. Mfecane (2013) argues that while it is necessary to consider how a system of inequality is replicated by 'studying' those in the dominant group, there is little hope of ever dismantling the existing gender order without knowing its inconsistencies and limitations. Not all of the various uses of the definition have been consistent (Connell, 2013), as Connell has noted. While some empirical masculinity studies analyse non-hegemonic modes of masculinity in comparison to hegemonic modes, others do not (Frosh et al., 2002; Venter 2013). In comparison to Connell's initial definition, which is strongly anchored at the top of a hierarchy of historically specific masculinities, hegemonic masculinity is often used as a free-floating definition. In order to prevent the identification of multiple masculinities from collapsing into a character typology, this emphasis on gender relations between men is important to keep the research dynamic (Connell, 1985).

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) posit that hegemonic masculinity is indisputably the most popular and renowned facet of the Masculinity theory, which has however been heavily criticised. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) defend the central belief underlying masculinity, but they advocate the principle to be re-formulated in four areas. For South African research on men and manliness, the significance of this discussion is that it contrasts with the issue of academic dependence, defined by Alatas (2014) as a main Third World scholarship feature. The author describes it as "a situation under which the creation and growth of the social sciences of other countries to which the former is subjected are influenced by the social sciences of some countries" (Alatas, 2014). South African male and female studies have been characterized by West-oriented scholarly reliance to provide explanations of masculinity based on research and empirical research issues (Ntozini & Ngqangweni, 2017).

Contemporary masculinity theories describe this erasure of the perspective of most men from their roots. Theories of masculinity formed in the West usually reflect the experiences and concerns of their cultures (Kimmel & Messner, 2001; Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 1985; Connell, 2013; Ntozini & Ngqangweni, 2017). The ideas have arisen from dialogues in Western culture between scholars of masculinity, feminists, and gay rights movements (Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 1985). The debates were the

product of concerns about the oppression of women and gay men by heterosexual men, and the evolving social roles of men and women (Carrigan et al., 1985).

While these problems resonate with other societies around the world, it is not possible to consider the ideas developed to solve them to be universally applicable. Social life varies according to different cultural beliefs, class, race, and other factors. This gives rise to the need to construct masculinity theories that represent diverse experiences of life. To this end, this study adopted the use of Social Constructionism as the meter theory. The researcher chose to adopt Social Constructionism theory because of its ability to create a jointly constructed understanding of the world that forms the basis for shared beliefs about reality. Therefore, this theory guided my study by giving the understanding that as adolescent boys undergo initiation training in the traditional schools they develop expected social attitudes which are anticipated by different societal players. These expected social features are evaluated from the perspectives of various stakeholders.

## **2.10. Chapter Summary**

The literature reviewed in the chapter provided a background on the history of South African traditional authorities, focusing on the Eastern Cape Province. Thereafter, the review closely examined the traditional authorities' perspectives of initiation rituals, initiation schools, roles played by traditional leaders, importance as well as the necessity for conducting initiation rituals in various cultures. In addition, the review outlined types of circumcision; the procedures involved in male circumcision including traditional male circumcision; focused on factors affecting the practices related to circumcision rituals in Xhosa communities and presented the theoretical framework underpinning the study. The following chapter presents the research design and methodology used to conduct the study.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

### 3.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to deliberate on and present the choice of methodology and research design used in conducting the study in greater depth. The aim of the study was to examine how male youths' behaviour is influenced by attending initiation schools during the initiation rituals. Therefore, the chapter outlines the research methods used in conducting the study focusing on the design of the research, describing the sampling techniques used and sample size, as well as the process of collecting data, tools used to collect data and techniques used for analysing data in the study. The chapter also presents the ethical protocols observed in the study.

### 3.2. Research Paradigm

Lather (2016) postulates that the selection of the research paradigms used in research innately reflects the researcher's beliefs and perspectives regarding the world they live in or the world they desire to live in. Guided by this understanding of what makes up research paradigms, Guba and Lincoln (2014) distinguish between three basic research paradigms, namely positivism, post-positivism and post-modernism and further group the post-modernism and post-structuralism paradigms within Critical Theory. Positivists assume and believe in the existence of a reality. This is contrasted with a post-positivism paradigm whereby reality is assumed to be only 'imperfectly and probabilistically apprehendable' (Guba and Lincoln, 2014). The post-positivism paradigm is perceived to be a modification of the positivism paradigm, and both paradigms are regarded to be objectivist. On the other hand, Critical Theory is more inclined towards the transactional and subjectivist epistemological view where 'the researcher and the investigated objects are presumed to be interlinked in their actions, whereby the outcome of any research is to the greater extent influenced by the personal values of the researcher' (Guba and Lincoln, 2017). Although the purpose of positivism and post-positivism paradigms is to explain, predict and control, on the other hand, Critical Theory mainly aims to critique and emancipate (Willmott, 2016).

Another author, Gephart (2019), submits three classifications of research philosophy as positivism, interpretivism and critical post-modernism. This study adopts this three-fold classification of research philosophy as the three classifications are identifiable and are useful for the purposes of the placement of very specific psychological and

sociological theories that are applicable to studies in the social sciences. Furthermore, the three philosophical viewpoints are commonly used during modern-day research in social, organizational and management studies. The main characteristics of the three philosophical research perspectives: the worldview, the nature of knowledge under study, and the differences in the ways through which knowledge is produced and assessed in each paradigm or worldview, are outlined in the following discussion. It is notable that there is no agreement in the proposed research paradigms about the perspective that may contribute differently to a similar study.

### **3.2.1. Interpretivism**

The most suitable paradigm for the case study at hand is interpretivism. Interpretive researchers believe that reality consists of people's subjective experiences of the external world (Guba and Lincoln, 2017). Thus, they may adopt an inter-subjective epistemology and the ontological belief that reality is socially constructed. According to Willis (2015), interpretivists are anti-foundationalists who believe that there is no single correct route or particular method to knowledge. Walsham (2013) argues that in the interpretive tradition, there are no 'correct' or 'incorrect' theories. Instead, they should be judged according to how 'interesting' they are to the researcher as well as those involved in the same areas. Interpretivists attempt to derive their constructs from the field by an in-depth examination of the phenomenon of interest.

Gephart (2019) argues that interpretivists assume that knowledge and meaning are acts of interpretation, hence there is no objective knowledge which is independent of thinking, reasoning humans. Myers (2009) argues that the premise of interpretive researchers is that access to reality (whether given or socially constructed) is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, and shared meanings. The interpretive paradigm is underpinned by observation and interpretation. Thus, to observe is to collect information about events, while to interpret is to make meaning of that information by drawing inferences or by judging the match between the information and some abstract pattern (Aikenhead, 2017). The theory attempts to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them (Deetz, 2016).

Reeves and Hedberg (2003) note that the "interpretivist" paradigm stresses the need to put analysis in context. The interpretive paradigm is concerned with understanding



the world as it is from the subjective experiences of individuals. They use meaning (versus measurement) oriented methodologies, such as interviewing or participant observation, that rely on a subjective relationship between the researcher and subjects. Interpretive research does not predefine dependent and independent variables but focuses on the full complexity of human sense-making as the situation emerges (Kaplan & Maxwell, 2014). This is the interpretive approach, which aims to explain the subjective reasons and meanings that lie behind social action. In this case, the perceived change in behaviour by initiates. As a mode of analysis, the interpretivism paradigm suggests a way of understanding the meaning or trying to make sense of textual data which may be unclear in one way or another.

The interest of interpretivists is not the generation of a new theory, but to judge or evaluate and refine interpretive theories. Walsham (2015) presents three different uses of theory in interpretive case studies, namely theory guiding the design and collection of data; theory as an iterative process of data collection and analysis; and theory as an outcome of a case study. The use of theory as an iterative process between data collection and analysis has been applied in this research study.

The most fundamental principle of hermeneutics is that all human understanding is achieved by iterating between considering the interdependent meaning of parts and the whole that they form. Modern hermeneutics encompasses not only issues involving the written text, but everything in the interpretative process that includes verbal and non-verbal forms of communication, as well as prior aspects that affect communication, such as pre-suppositions and pre-understandings. The movement of understanding "is constantly from the whole to the part and back to the whole" (Gadamer, 2017). According to Gadamer (2017), it is a circular relationship. It attempts to understand human beings in a social context. This principle is foundational to all interpretive work that is hermeneutic in nature.

Creswell (2018) contends that a phenomenological study describes the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or the phenomenon. In the human sphere, this normally translates into gathering "deep" information and perceptions through inductive qualitative research methods such as interviews and observation and representing this information and these perceptions from the

perspective of the research participants (Lester, 2019). Observation and interviews are the key data collection methods within phenomenologies (Aspers, 2004). Phenomenological strategies are particularly effective at bringing to the fore the experiences and perceptions of individuals from their own perspectives, thereby challenging structural or normative assumptions (Lester, 2013).

### **3.3. Research Approach**

On the basis of the different world paradigms discussed above, there are basically three approaches to conducting research, namely:

- i) Quantitative (Positivism and Post-positivism): an approach of measurements and numbers;
- ii) Qualitative (Constructivism and Transformative): an approach of words and images; and
- iii) Mixed Methods (Pragmatism): an approach of measurements, numbers, words and images.

A subject that deserves to be treated with the quantitative approach has little possibility of the application of a qualitative approach, and vice-versa. Newman and Benz (2018) state that 'qualitative and quantitative approaches should not be viewed as rigid, distinct categories, polar opposites or dichotomies. Instead, they represent different ends on a continuum'. According to Bradley and Harrel (2009), quantitative techniques are mainly used to obtain or create numerical data in an exploratory study. The effects of the quantitative method are statistical in nature. On the other hand, Dźwigoł and Dźwigoł-Barosz (2018) claim that, while so little is understood about the topic, qualitative research seeks to investigate and uncover concerns about the issue at hand. When there is a research problem which cannot be handled by a single approach, both the approaches should be used in combination, hence termed the mixed methods approach (Attia & Edge, 2017).

For the purpose of this study, the qualitative approach is chosen as the study focused on the influence of initiation rites on male learners at a selected school in the Amatole East District, using an interpretivism paradigm. Qualitative research comprises of the following methods: logic, ethnography, discourse analysis, case study, open-ended interview, participant observation, counselling, therapy, grounded theory, biography, comparative method, introspection, casuistry, focus group, literary criticism,

meditation practice, historical research, etc. (Cibangu, 2012). Qualitative research is a form of social action that stresses on the way of people interpret and make sense of their experiences to understand the social reality of individuals. It makes the use of interviews, diaries, journals, classroom observations and immersions; and open-ended questionnaires to obtain, analyse, and interpret the data content analysis of visual and textual materials, and oral history (Zohrabi, 2013). Accordingly, the authors conducted a case study of one school in Amatole district of the Eastern Cape.

Qualitative research is usually exploratory and seeks to explain 'how' and 'why' a particular social phenomenon, or program, operates as it does in a particular context. It tries to help us to understand the social world in which we live, and why things are the way they are (Polkinghorne, 2005). Accordingly, the authors sought to understand the how and why of the initiation rites conduct by the AmaXhosa people. Qualitative research has gained more and more area in the social domain. It aims to provide a detail understanding into human behaviour, emotion, attitudes, and experiences (Tong et al., 2012). The main paradigms within the qualitative research are positivist, interpretivist, and critical paradigms (Punch, 2013). It is used to explore the behaviour, perspectives, feelings, and experiences of people, and what lies at the core of their lives. Similarly, the author sought to understand perspectives and expectations of educators, learners, and traditional leaders regarding the pedagogical value of the initiation and passage rites of boys into men by the Xhosa communities.

The basis of it lies in the interpretive approach to social reality, and in the description of the lived experience of human beings (Atkinson et al., 2001). It has a profound impact on the research area of education, health care, nursing, sociology, anthropology, psychology, management, information systems, etc. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Qualitative researchers are interested in people's belief, experience, and meaning systems from the perspective of the people. Qualitative research does not include statistical analysis and empirical calculation (Brink, 1993). The roots of qualitative research lie in social and cultural anthropology, philosophy, psychology, history, and sociology. The goal of the qualitative tradition is a 'deep understanding of the particular' (Domholdt, 1993). The purpose of qualitative research is to describe and interpret issues or phenomena systematically from the point of view of the individual or population being studied, and to generate new concepts and theories.

The choice of methodology is directed by the questions being raised (Viswambharan & Priya, 2016). Similarly, choice of a qualitative exploratory study by the author was to effectively address the research questions.

### **3.4. Research Design**

Leedy (2017) defines a research design as “a plan for a study, providing the overall framework for collecting data”. MacMillan and Schumacher (2001) define it as “a plan for selecting subjects, research sites and data collection procedures to answer the research question(s)”. They further indicate that the goal of a sound research design is to provide results that are judged to be credible. For Durrheim (2004:29), “research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research strategy”.

The number of qualitative designs available to the researcher is extensive. Creswell (2007) has identified some types of qualitative designs as narrative research, participatory action research, grounded theory, case study, and phenomenology. This study makes use of the phenomenology design in order to collect the views of a number of participants. This design is more suitable for this research because, instead of theorizing from the participants’ views and generating a theoretical model, phenomenologists describe what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). In this way, phenomenologists work much more from the participants’ specific statements and experiences rather than abstracting from their statements to construct a model from the researcher’s interpretations, as in Grounded Theory. The basic purpose of phenomenology is to reduce the experiences of persons with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence. To this end, qualitative researchers identify a phenomenon, and the inquirer then collects data from persons who have experienced the phenomenon and develops a composite description of the essence of the experience for all the individuals, what they experienced and how they experienced it (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

### **3.5. Research Methods**

The research methods that I used in the study are presented in the following sections.

#### **3.5.1. Sampling**

The study site for this research is the Ngqamakwe sub-district in the Amathole East region. The Ngqamakwe sub-district in the Amathole East region consists of two main

circuits, each with about 25 schools. Only 4 of the 50 schools in these two circuits are secondary schools. These schools are widely dispersed and for the purposes of this research, only one out of the four secondary schools were conveniently chosen as the study site. Selection of the secondary school was for purposes of having the right candidates for the study since most boys attend the initiation and passage rites when they are in secondary level of education around grade 12 level.

The sample size is the number of participants chosen from the total population used in the analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Probability sampling requires an aspect of random respondent selection, while non-probability sampling selects respondents in a non-random way. Non-probability sampling was utilised to select a sample of 12 participants for the study population. The 12 participants were grouped into three categories (educators, traditional leaders, and initiates). The purposeful selection sample includes a combination of the people who work with the newly initiated males in the Eastern Cape schools (4 educators), the supervisors (4 traditional leaders) and the four initiates. For the initiates, focus was on Grade 12 male learners because this is the level with most initiates. As a result, it therefore follows that the educators chosen were those teaching the same grades as they tend to have more time interacting with the initiates. For the learners, only one initiate was identified and the other three were attained by snowballing. The same approach applied for the initiation supervisors (traditional leaders). Purposive sampling is undertaken when a researcher has a target group in mind from which they have reasonable assurance that they got adequate and relevant information (Creswell, 2014).

Purposive sampling is a method generally used for the detection and collection of information-rich cases for the most efficient use of limited resources in qualitative research. This includes the identification and selection of individuals or groups of individuals who are highly informed about a phenomenon of interest, or they are familiar with it (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Accordingly, the purposive selection of educators and traditional leaders was for person with significant experience in the passage rites and their experience was considered important for purposes of giving in-depth knowledge of the subject matter under study.

### **3.5.2. Data Collection**

There are three fundamental types of research interviews, namely structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003). Structured interviews are essentially verbally administered questionnaires in which a list of predetermined questions asked, with little or no variation and with no scope for follow-up questions to responses that warrant further elaboration (May, 2015). Consequently, they are relatively quick and easy to administer and may be of particular use if clarification of certain questions is required or if there are likely to be literacy or numeracy problems with the respondents. However, by their very nature, they only allow for limited participant responses and are therefore of little use if 'depth' is required.

Conversely, unstructured interviews do not reflect any preconceived theories or ideas and are performed with little or no organisation. Such an interview may simply start with an opening question and then progresses based primarily upon the initial response (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003). Unstructured interviews are usually very time-consuming and can be difficult to manage and to participate in, as the lack of predetermined interview questions provides little guidance on what to talk about (Kvale, 2016). Their use is therefore generally only considered where significant 'depth' is required, or where virtually nothing is known about the subject area (or a different perspective of a known subject area is required).

Semi-structured interviews consist of several key questions that help to define the areas to be explored, and also allows the interviewer or interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail (Creswell, 2014). This interview format is used most frequently as it provides participants with some guidance on what to talk about, which many find helpful. The flexibility of this approach, particularly compared to structured interviews, also allows for the discovery or elaboration of information that is important to participants, but which may not have previously been thought of as pertinent by the research team.

The purpose of the research interview is to explore the views, experiences, beliefs and/or motivations of individuals on specific matters (Kvale, 2016). Qualitative methods, such as interviews, are believed to provide a 'deeper' understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from purely quantitative methods, such as questionnaires. Interviews are therefore most appropriate where little is already known about the study phenomenon or where detailed insights are required from individual

participants. They are also particularly appropriate for exploring sensitive topics, where participants may not want to talk about such issues in a group environment (Shneiderman & Plaisant, 2015).

This study employed semi-structured in-depth interviews in order to get the richness in the information from the chosen sample. The research incorporated a pre-determined set of open questions (questions that prompt discussion) with the ability for the interviewer to further explore specific topics or answers. Semi-structured interviews are used to encourage respondents to address and raise concerns that may not have been taken into account (Boyce, Jackson & Neal, 2010). According to Bradley and Harrel (2009), in-depth interviews are normally conducted on a one-on-one basis with a participant who is knowledgeable or has insight into the topic.

Bradley and Harrel (2009) elaborate that in-depth interviewing allows questioning and further probing to make participants give detailed explanations of a research topic. An interview guide was compiled to allow participants to explain themselves in their own words. The Interview Guide method is a semi-structured type of qualitative interviewing that lists the topics and problems that the interviewer should discuss in the interview in outline form, but which enables the interviewer to adjust the sequencing and wording of questions to each individual interview (Rubin & Babbie, 2016).

### **3.5.3. Pilot Study**

As in any research, it is often wise to first pilot the interview schedule on several respondents prior to final data collection (Bradley & Harrel, 2009). This allows the researcher to establish if the schedule is clear, understandable, and capable of answering the research questions, and if, therefore, any changes to the interview schedule are required. The length of interviews varies depending on the topic, researcher, and participant. Before an interview takes place, respondents should be informed about the study details and given assurance on ethical principles, such as anonymity and confidentiality (Totemeyer *et al.*, 2014). This gives respondents some idea of what to expect from the interview, increases the likelihood of honesty and is also a fundamental aspect of the informed consent process. Wherever possible, interviews were conducted in areas free from distractions and at times and locations that are most suitable for participants.

Totemeyer, Kirchner and Alexander (2014) highlight that pilot studies detect potential defects in the measurement processes and recognise vague or ambiguously formulated objects, thereby enabling researchers to optimise them before the actual study begins. Accordingly, pilot interviews were conducted with three of the traditional leaders of the amaXosa tribe to prepare and gain confidence for the real interviews. Gaps identified in the pilot interview were addressed before the actual interviews take place.

#### **3.5.4. Data Analysis**

Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) is the range of processes and procedures whereby researchers move from the qualitative data that have been collected into some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation of the people and situations being investigated (Yin, 2013). According to Woods (2014), the analysis of qualitative data includes coding, identifying, and coding themes and patterns contained in the data. Data analysis refers to the manner in which the researcher arranges both the primary and secondary data collected during the research (Bernard, 2010). Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2017) mentioned that qualitative data analysis is the technique whereby data is collected, combined, coded, separated into manageable units, organized, and created into patterns. Data analysis for qualitative research serves the purpose of understanding the participants' experiences and views, as well as to answer the research question. The data analysis approach should guarantee that the objectives of the study are met. Thematic data analysis was used for the purpose of identifying and extracting themes and patterns for the data. Thematic data analysis is a technique mainly used in qualitative research studies (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The technique categorizes data into different themes that are relevant to the subject under investigation.

Attride-Stirling (2001) divided the qualitative analysis procedure into three main stages, including the reduction of the text, the exploration of the text and the integration of the exploration. However, it should be noted that there are varieties of ways through which qualitative analyses can be conducted, not limited to this common three-stage process (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Woods (2014) asserts that the Process of Qualitative data analysis involves organizing the data; identifying a framework; sorting data into the framework; using the framework for descriptive analysis; and second-order analysis.



### **3.6. Trustworthiness**

According to Shenton (2004), for a qualitative study to be deemed trustworthy, four criteria should be met, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

#### **3.6.1. Credibility**

The degree to which the study is useful, reliable, and persuasive refers to credibility. This is achieved using triangulation and member checking. In the analysis of social phenomena, triangulation is characterised as the use of more than one method or source of data so that results can be cross-checked (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The researcher shall use member checking as participants were given a chance to comment on the transcribed data. The researcher also triangulated through different categories of participants.

#### **3.6.2. Transferability**

Transferability refers to the degree to which research outcomes may be applied to a condition or community other than that of the original study (Kumar, 2018). Transferability can be achieved when researchers provide detailed explanations of the context of the research undertaken, such that the readers can assess whether or not the outcomes can be transferred (Shenton, 2004).

In this study, the researcher provided full details of the methods, roles, settings, and participants for readers to transfer findings to similar contexts. This type of information can assist any reader in assessing the relevance of the findings in relation to their own unique conditions (Barnes *et al*, 2012)

#### **3.6.3. Dependability**

Dependability is concerned with the accuracy of the findings for qualitative research, referring to whether the findings would be consistent if, in a similar sense, the research was replicated with the same participants. To indicate that the correct protocol has been followed, the researcher retained the audio recordings, field work notes and transcripts of the data obtained (Shenton, 2004). In this study, the researcher also presented complete details of the research process to ensure dependability.

### **3.6.4. Confirmability**

Confirmability refers to the degree to which the outcomes are purely from respondents and free of the researcher's personal prejudices, motivation, and desires (Bryman & Bell, 2015). In addition, it allows the researcher not to impact the results with their beliefs. In order to increase the confirmability of the findings, the researcher ensured that interruptions with participants are avoided as far as possible during the interviews; the interviews are recorded on a voice recorder and in the form of notes to ensure that key points are not missed; and the research report uses direct quotations of what was actually said by participants in their own choice of words to express their opinions.

### **3.7. Ethics**

Qualitative researchers working in the diverse field of social sciences need to address ethical issues at every stage of the research process (Clegg and Slife, 2009; Kolman, 2004), regardless of the perspective, research design or methods of data collection they opt for. As is widely recognised, ethical thinking in qualitative research goes beyond ethical decisions during data collection and analysis (Kara and Pickering, 2017) and concerns broader issues such as presentation and dissemination of research results, public engagement, or the depositing of data in research databanks in order to make them available for other researchers, which is increasingly required by funding bodies. In the light of the rapidly changing research landscape that has, in many contexts, become subject to stringent formal ethical review and governance and where technological advances have offered new possibilities for research innovation, long standing ethical issues have taken on new meanings and new ethical dilemmas have emerged (Mauthner et al, 2012). For example, visual methods, many of which are innovative and pioneering (Howell et al, 2014), often force researchers to reconsider their responses to a range of crucial ethical issues, which include, but are not limited to, informed consent, confidentiality or ownership, along with questions around data presentation and dissemination (Cox et al, 2014).

Similarly, academics conducting internet research, the context and scope of which have grown exponentially, need to navigate complex ethical terrains. In this context, Birch et al (2012) might indeed be right when they observe that „ethics matter more now than they did a decade ago“. The significance of ethical issues in empirical research, employing both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, is reflected in the plethora of codes of ethics put forward by relevant professional associations (e.g.,

Association of Internet Researchers, British Sociological Association, or its American counterpart) and the growing institutional regulations which increasingly not only seek to guide but more recently also to govern the work of researchers.

Although the importance of ethical guidance and the associated relevant training for researchers is rarely, if ever, disputed, the institutional approach to research ethics, sometimes referred to as ethics (Haggerty, 2004) and 'audit creep' (Stanley and Wise, 2010:25), has come under strong criticism (for a more detailed discussion see e.g. Cannella and Lincoln, 2007; Coupal, 2005; Hammersley, 2009; Hedgecoe, 2008). As authors point out (e.g. Birch et al., 2012; Hammersley and Trainou, 2012; Stanley and Wise, 2010), the idiosyncratic qualities of qualitative research which typically involve a considerable degree of flexibility of the research design, and the collection of (more or less) unstructured data that is typically collected in natural settings are not easily reconciled with the standardised, and largely inflexible external formal ethical regulation that relies on universalist principles and generalist criteria. This recognition notwithstanding, the remit of Research Ethics Committees (RECs) and the associated anticipatory, pre-study ethics regulation (Mautghner et al., 2012) has been expanding.

Accordingly, in the study participants' rights to equality, dignity, privacy (including the right to remain anonymous) and physical and psychological integrity were respected by the researcher. The researcher obtained ethical clearance from UNISA and a gatekeepers' letter from the Department of Education. Only adults above the legal age of 18 years participate except for the four learners who participated in the initiation and passage rites, whose usual average age is 14. The researcher obtained ethical approval from the UNISA Research Ethics Committee before beginning data collection. In addition, informed consent from each of the interview participants obtained, confirming their agreement to participate in the research. The participants were told of the study's intent and the confidentiality of their responses during this phase. This requires briefings to ensure that individual identities are kept private and that they are free of any responsibility or danger resulting from the study or responses.

Only interested participants were surveyed, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time if they find participating to be inconvenient. Moreover, the study gives proper credit to all authors and includes a list of references. Bias,

harassment, misconduct and fraudulent actions and practices are all avoided as far as possible in the report. In summary, after obtaining clearance from the University of South Africa, the researcher requests permission from the district office, then from the principal of the target school, before asking the target sample to participate.

### **3.8. Limitations and Delimitations of the Study**

The potential drawbacks of this study are time limits and discomfort as participants share ritual secrets. Another potential weakness relates to the facilitator's language and translation abilities. Although the researcher knows English and the local language of IsiXhosa well, he is still not a skilled translator. Translations into English in many instances involve awkward terminology and multiple grammatical mistakes, complicating research. Accordingly, the services of a qualified transcriber were obtained for transcription. With regard to delimitations, the study was confined to Amatole East District, Eastern Cape. Since the study site is where the researcher is employed as a teacher, the study is confined to fellow educators, educational managers as well as local community members as research participants.

### **3.9. Chapter Summary**

The chapter laid out a detailed structure for the research's methodological decisions. In order to answer each of the research questions from the problem statement, the chapter discussion followed a research approach as outlined by the research objectives. The qualitative research method was analysed by identifying themes and inferring participant responses, some of which are provided as examples in the review section. The chapter also described the procedural issues that had been introduced, as well as the measures taken to obtain the University's South Africa's ethical clearance and the manner in which the ethical issues were addressed.

## CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

### 4.1. Introduction

Following the presentation of a detailed account of how the researcher generated the data for the study in the previous chapter, herein he presents the findings from the data. The researcher conducted the interviews in accordance with the objectives set out in Chapter One. The research was aimed at exploring why learners' behaviour in the selected schools changed after initiation. The data was gathered through face-to-face interviews and when analysing data, the researcher identified themes which served as a base of engaging with the primary data of the study.

To recap, the researcher intended to address the question of why learners' behaviour in selected schools changed after initiation. This main question was sub-divided into the following sub-questions:

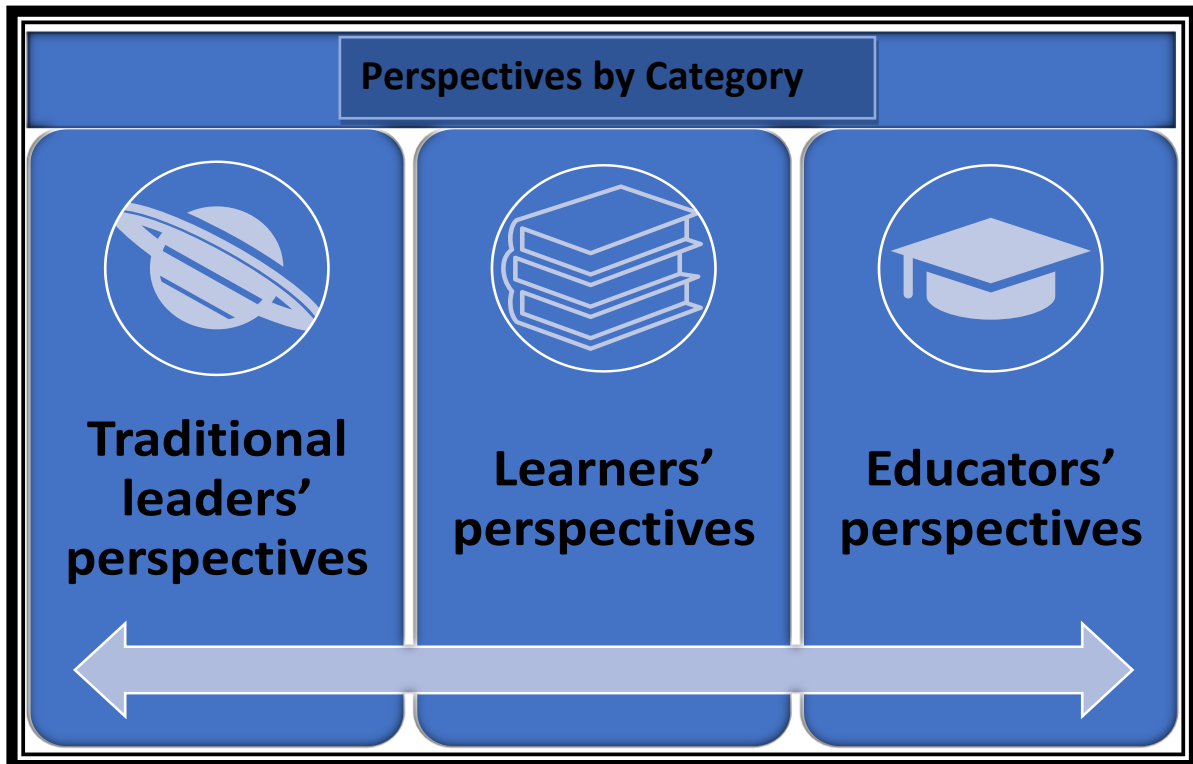
- What are the traditional leaders' perspectives on the changes in male learners' behaviour?
- What are the learners' perspectives on the changes in learners' behaviour?
- What are the educators' perspectives on the changes in learners' behaviour after the initiation ritual?
- What interventions can be employed to improve or uphold behavioural changes by male learners after the initiation ritual?

### 4.2. Profiles of participants

For the purpose of presenting the data, the researcher used the following pseudonyms for participants to ensure that their anonymity was preserved: Codes 1-4 were traditional leaders categorised as the chief (TL1-2022), village head (TL2-2022), initiation nurse (TL3-2022) and initiation school owner (TL4-2022) respectively. The learner participants were given pseudonyms as follows: Initiate 1, 2022 (for the 1<sup>st</sup> initiate); Initiate 2, 2022 (for the 2<sup>nd</sup> initiate); Initiate 3, 2022 (for the 3<sup>rd</sup> initiate); and finally Initiate 4, 2022 (for the 4<sup>th</sup> initiate). The educator participants were given pseudonyms as follows: Educator 1, 2022 (for the 1<sup>st</sup> educator); Educator 2, 2022 (for the 2<sup>nd</sup> educator); Educator 3, 2022 (for the 3<sup>rd</sup> educator); and finally, Educator 4, 2022 (for the 4<sup>th</sup> educator).

### 4.3. Participant Grouping

Figure 4.1 shows the categories into which the themes were sub-grouped from the qualitative data collected.



**Figure 4.1: Researcher's Own Categories of Participants**

The researcher used non-probability sampling to select a sample of 12 participants for the study, who were grouped into three categories (traditional leaders, learners/initiates, and educators) as schematically presented in Figure 4.1 above. Using this purposeful selection of the sample, the researcher included a combination of people who work with the newly initiated males in the Eastern Cape schools (4 educators), the supervisors (4 traditional leaders) and the four initiates. For the initiates, the study focused on Grade 12 male learners because this is the level with most initiates. As a result, the researcher selected educators teaching the same grades as they tend to have more time interacting with the initiates. For the learners, only one initiate was identified by the researcher and the other three were identified by snowballing. The same approach applied for the initiation supervisors (traditional leaders). For the snowballing, the researcher identified the first participants based on their availability and proximity during the data collection period.

#### 4.4. Thematic Analysis

The researcher generated the following themes, as shown in Table 4.1, and framed the data analysis based on the aim, objectives, and research questions of this study. The questions regarding what the traditional leaders' perspectives are on the changes in learners' behaviour were answered by interviewing traditional leaders and the question regarding the learners' perspectives on the changes in learners' behaviour was answered by interviewing the learners themselves. The question regarding the educators' perspectives on the changes in learners' behaviour after the initiation ritual was addressed by interviewing educators. As a result, the process of establishing themes serves as a framework for organising and engaging with the data, resulting in the conclusions drawn from the study. The codes, categories and themes were generated per research sub-question, which are accordingly placed as headings. The themes were generated based on the participants' categories identified before data analysis, based on the aim, objectives, and research questions of the study. As a result, the process of establishing themes serves as a framework for organising and engaging with the data, resulting in the study's conclusions. The development of themes is as shown in Table 4.1:

Codes	Categories	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unruly</li> <li>• Attitude</li> <li>• Answering back</li> <li>• No homework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social behaviour</li> <li>• Schooling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behavioural Change as the end goal</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guiding other boys</li> <li>• Respectful</li> <li>• Helping with chores</li> <li>• Responsibility</li> <li>• Keeping other learners quiet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community responsibility</li> <li>• Home responsibility</li> <li>• School responsibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible citizenship</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Viewing all elders as parents</li> <li>• Respecting teachers at school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For the elderly</li> <li>• For community values</li> <li>• Respect for others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respectfulness</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respecting school rules</li> <li>• Greeting all elders</li> <li>• Respecting communal rites</li> <li>• Respecting classmates</li> <li>• Respect colleagues in the community</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ready to work for family</li> <li>• Willingness to acquire survival skills</li> <li>• Not always complaining</li> <li>• Proposing solutions</li> <li>• Being responsible for own actions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dropping childhood behaviour</li> <li>• Adopting adult behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition into Maturity</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being considered wise</li> <li>• Having wide-ranging experience</li> <li>• Being a role model</li> <li>• Not scandalous</li> <li>• Knowledgeable about acceptable practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural group belonging</li> <li>• Moral uprightness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acceptance as a traditional nurse</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach others traditional practices</li> <li>• Language enrichment</li> <li>• Eating traditional foods</li> <li>• Speaking using idioms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share values with others</li> <li>• Practice cultural traditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural traditions preservation</li> </ul>

Table 4.1 shows how related words were combined to form categories which are summaries of the code. When the categories were combined, themes were established. A total of 6 themes were developed and used to analyse the data.



#### 4.5. Research Question 1: What are the traditional leaders' perspectives on the changes in learners' behaviour after the ritual?

The question was meant to establish traditional leaders' perspectives on the changes in the behaviour of initiates after undergoing the initiation process. Traditional leaders are expected to be custodians of the values and ethos of the initiation process and as a result, their perspectives are fundamental to the data analysis that the study undertook. Traditional leaders indicated several issues under this question. Their perspectives were analysed to develop five themes as presented in Figure 4.2 below.



**Figure 4.2: Summary of Traditional Leaders' Perspectives**

The following section presents the themes of findings to illustrate the codes and categories from which the themes were developed.

##### 4.5.1. Behavioural Change as the end goal

I found that the traditional leaders' comments related to behavioural change of learners in different ways. I developed this into a theme which was composed of two categories: social behavioural change and educational behavioural change. Below I present these, with details of what the traditional leaders said.

#### **4.5.1.1. Social behaviour change**

In my analysis I identified words such as unruly, attitude, answering back. These are the words that composed the codes from which the category of social behaviour change developed. The primary research findings confirmed that one of the intended goals of the initiation rites is social behavioural change from childishness to more groomed mature and responsible behaviour. This was echoed by the traditional leaders who had the following to say:

*Behavioural changes need to be the main thing. It is like the final product of the initiation school. One changes to an adult manner and has to act responsibly all the time and think well before they talk out words to people or before they do anything (TL1, 2022).*

According to this participant, initiation schools are regarded as having done their job if there are evident changes in terms of the following social virtues: responsibility, adult character and being considerate. TL2-2022 was of a similar view, saying:

*Initiates need to change their behaviour from boyhood to manhood. They have to stop doing things that they were doing as boys and look at what benefits the family and community (TL2, 2022).*

In addition to what TL1-2022 said, TL2-2022 understood/ was of the view that initiates should behave in a manner which is not self-centric, but rather concerned with the welfare of the family and community at large.

#### **4.5.1.2. Educational behavioural changes**

In addition to the social transformation, traditional leaders expected the initiation process to be educative for the boys that have graduated into manhood. The educational behavioural changes were detailed by all participants. For example, these views were emphasised by TL3-2022 who had the following to say:

*We expect the young men to respect everyone and their cultural practices. They should be responsible and honest men that will work to improve their homes and society as a whole. They must now act as mature adults (TL3, 2022).*

The initiates are expected to learn virtues that teach them good manners, which may be viewed as both educational and social. The initiates are expected to acquire knowledge about their culture, learn responsible behaviour, as well as learn the importance of hard work in improving their families/homes and society at large. This finding concurs with the previous participants, who indicated that a change in the character of the newly graduated initiates characterises the educational importance of the male initiation tradition. The shift in character suggests that more mature and responsible behaviour should be exhibited by the initiated men. This shift in character is entirely different from the anti-social and reckless conduct of boys that is easy to handle. The goal of having new initiates being anointed by a responsible individual in the community is to pass the good characteristics of the anointer to the newly graduated initiate. Similarly, the respected anointer is expected to teach the initiates about society's expectations as well as some of the traditional values that need to be passed to the next generation, which is part of the preservation of traditional culture and practices that have bound together ethical and tribal groups since time immemorial.

#### **4.5.2. Responsible Citizenship**

This sub-theme emanated from participants TL1-2022, TL2-2022 and TL3-2022. The responsibility was sub-categorised into home responsibility, community responsibility and school responsibility. Thus, initiates are expected to exhibit their responsible citizenship starting at their homes, followed by being responsible in their communities as well as being responsible at school. The findings obtained pertaining thereto are presented hereunder.

##### **4.5.2.1. Responsible at Home**

The aim of the initiation process is to transform boys into men, and being a man entails a variety of responsibilities such as fending for the family as well as providing general leadership to their households. This was confirmed by the following verbatim excerpt by a participant amongst the traditional leaders in the study:

*Boys are taught to be responsible, honest and respect people around them. The boys are also taught on the extent of their responsibilities as family heads and how they should treat their*

*wives and children once they get married and they have children. They are oriented to be helpful to other people around them. Boys are not supposed to be taught negative things in and during the process of initiation e.g., being rude, talking back to adults, stealing for survival (TL1, 2022).*

The findings of this research asserts that traditional schools of initiation, inter alia, aim to place in the life of a male adolescent a rite of passage to bring boys into formal and explicit relationships with their relatives. As shown in the initiation process excerpt above, the responsibilities of men must be imparted to the boys as they go through the initiation process. Some of the responsibilities are acquired through the practical training that they undergo during the initiation process. For example, the boys are taught survival skills when they fend for themselves during the initiation process. This empowers the initiates to be able to fend for themselves as well as their families, who are their primary responsibility once they have families. The initiation process also inculcates the need for community responsibility for the initiates.

#### **4.5.2.2. Responsible in the Communities**

The initiates are also taught and expected to be responsible members of societies and communities. This responsibility is extended from the family responsibility and entails the need for initiates to consider their actions towards their neighbours and once one is a responsible family man, it is expected that they extend their respect and responsible attitudes to their surrounding communities. This opinion was supported by traditional leader who had the following to say:

*The initiates are taught among other things: To respect everyone and community values; To reason and act in a mature manner; How to behave in an acceptable manner; How to build their homes; and to contribute to the society (TL2, 2022)*

This response implies that the traditional initiation schools also allow initiates to cope with some of their fundamental social ties, re-affirming them and thus making their future status as adult men clear to them. Respect is a fundamental social virtue that initiates are taught since they must co-exist with the next person who may have different perspectives and opinions about life. Without proper orientation from the initiation schools, this is a potential source of communal and societal conflict.

#### **4.5.2.3. Responsible at School**

An extension of community responsibility is responsibility at their schools. The responses to support this view are similar to the need to adhere to good community survival skills. This entails the older learners not bullying younger learners, as well as guiding the younger learners on the need to safeguard school resources and the equipment used for learning purposes. This position is also in tandem with the second and third traditional leaders who concur on the expectation to be responsible learners at school, saying the following:

*The initiates are taught among other things: To respect everyone and community values; How to behave in an acceptable manner (TL2, 2022).*

The third traditional leader said:

*They are taught the importance of preserving cultural traditions. We teach them to be responsible family members as well as community members. They are also taught to dress and behave as expected from a mature male (TL3, 2022).*

As highlighted by the participants, it is important for learners to respect everyone in the school, both young and old, male and/or female. At the same time, learners should respect the school community's values, which may vary from school to school. Learners are also expected to conform to schools' behaviour to the acceptable standards, and schools are known for their demand for learners to behave in a manner set out in their codes of conduct. For example, punctuality is fundamental for learners, and they are expected to adhere to such an ethos. The traditional schools of initiation, apart from having recognition as having a positive role as cultural teaching institutions, are also seen as a means of passing belief systems through articulated rituals, language and symbols from one generation to the next. These are all important for the

initiates during their schooling, especially after participation in the initiation process. Learners can also impart the acquired traditional schools' values to others and help them live by the expected virtues in the school setup.

#### **4.5.3. Cultural traditions preservation**

This sub-theme emanated from the codes TL1-2022, TL2-2022 and TL3-2022. The response by participants indicates that orientation to cultural traditions preservation is a prime contributory factor to behavioural change by initiates. This was confirmed by one traditional leader who said the following:

*The mindset of knowing or coming out of the initiation school changes the behaviour of the boy. The experience and teaching of the school makes boys behaviour to change (TL1, 2022).*

According to this participant, the traditional male circumcision practice is saturated with the symbolic, cultural, and social meanings attached to it by circumcising societies. In the historical rationalizations for the practice, the supposed medical or health advantages of male circumcision do not appear. It therefore seems that the strongest determinants for continuing TMC are cultural identity and the ability to continue ethnic practices. TMC is generally not an optional method to be determined on an individual basis since it is a strong cultural practice amongst historically circumcising communities. It is these orientations to cultural traditions preservation that are seen as a prime contributing factor to behavioural change in initiates. TL2-2022 was of the similar view by saying the following:

*The experience of the differences between boyhood and adulthood makes them change behaviour. Also, the teachings they get about life during the initiation school also makes them to change (TL2, 2022).*

In addition to what TL1-2022 said, TL2-2022 underscored that initiation schools should aim to influence behavioural change towards being more responsible in life as people grow up. These views were backed by TL3-2022, who had the following to say:

*The initiate changes behaviour because he is now an adult. He also changes behaviour so as to conform with the requirements*

*of the initiation rites. The education given to the initiate may also change is behaviour (TL3, 2022).*

This outcome asserts that as a crucial developmental stage for young adults to make their transition from child to adult status, the significance of identity formation in the process of initiation has been established. Within both contemporary modes of thought and indigenous cultures, this identity transition is recognized. However, the current marginalization of cultural traditions can under-emphasise the significance and importance of traditional passage rites and their associated values, beliefs, and practices.

#### **4.5.4. Acceptance as a traditional nurse**

This sub-theme emanated from the same codes (TL1-2022, TL2-2022 and TL3-2022) and posits that initiation nurses should belong to the cultural group for right content and procedure. This came up in the following quote:

*The nurses should know the language used to teach; have experience (years of practicing as a nurse); and must be mature (TL1, 2022).*

According to this participant, the findings of the research further indicate that circumcision preparations include the appointment of a host (*usosuthu*); the construction of the lodge (*ithonto*); the appointment of a trustworthy man known as *ingcibi* (traditional surgeon) for the performance of the circumcision procedure; and the appointment of an *ikhankatha* (traditional nurse) whose role is to take care of the wound until healing has occurred. The conventional nurse's main concern is to keep the wound clean and to make daily dressings. The following verbatim quote confirms this assertion:

*The “amakhankatha” should be persons who have undergone circumcision themselves. They are people who show interest to maintain the values of the course. They must not be young people; they must be people that understand the aims of the course (TL2, 2022).*

This response implies that the traditional initiation schools become a success in their scope when the initiation procedures are performed by experienced leaders who have

been circumcised themselves. This position is also in tandem with the third traditional leader who said the following:

*They are people who understand the custom and the purpose of the rite of passage. They should be part of our culture group. They should be adults who have a good standing in the community (TL3, 2022).*

This perspective stresses the importance of acquiring and modifying emotional behaviour, therapeutic capacity and ways of understanding things and individuals for psychotherapy. Since each race and region's genetic material is different, as is their culture, there is no uniform human existence. The forms in which socialization and enculturation are the most involved in shaping the shared life of people with others amongst the people who have been known, plus the present impact of those who are now known, are what Social Constructionism shows to be significant.

#### **4.5.5. Collaboration on the appointment of nurses**

This sub-theme emanated yet again from the same codes, namely TL1-2022 TL2-2022 and TL3-2022, who posit that there should be a collaboration of initiates' families and community leaders/Initiate school owners on the appointment of nurses. This is illustrated in the following quote:

*The king / owner of the initiation school is the one who appoints nurses and criterion used to appoint them. The initiate's family may also appoint their preferred nurse (TL1, 2022).*

This theme reveals that traditional leaders regard it as important that the guardianship of language and culture principally remain with them as the cultural leaders. Therefore, cultural leaders are eager and able to advise the Department of Education, Arts and Culture on matters that are relevant to their culture's principles and values. This was supported by the other traditional leader, who had the following to say:

*Old men from the area appoint the nurses. The family of the initiate can also identify someone responsible to train the initiate. The age and experience of the nurses is considered (TL2, 2022).*

This position confirms that traditional leaders in various ethnic groups of South Africa play a critical role in preserving culture and language. The current study found that the influence of initiation rites in behavioural change by initiates as they come out of the



initiation schools, as well as the knowledge shared by the traditional leaders to the newly initiated, make a positive contribution.

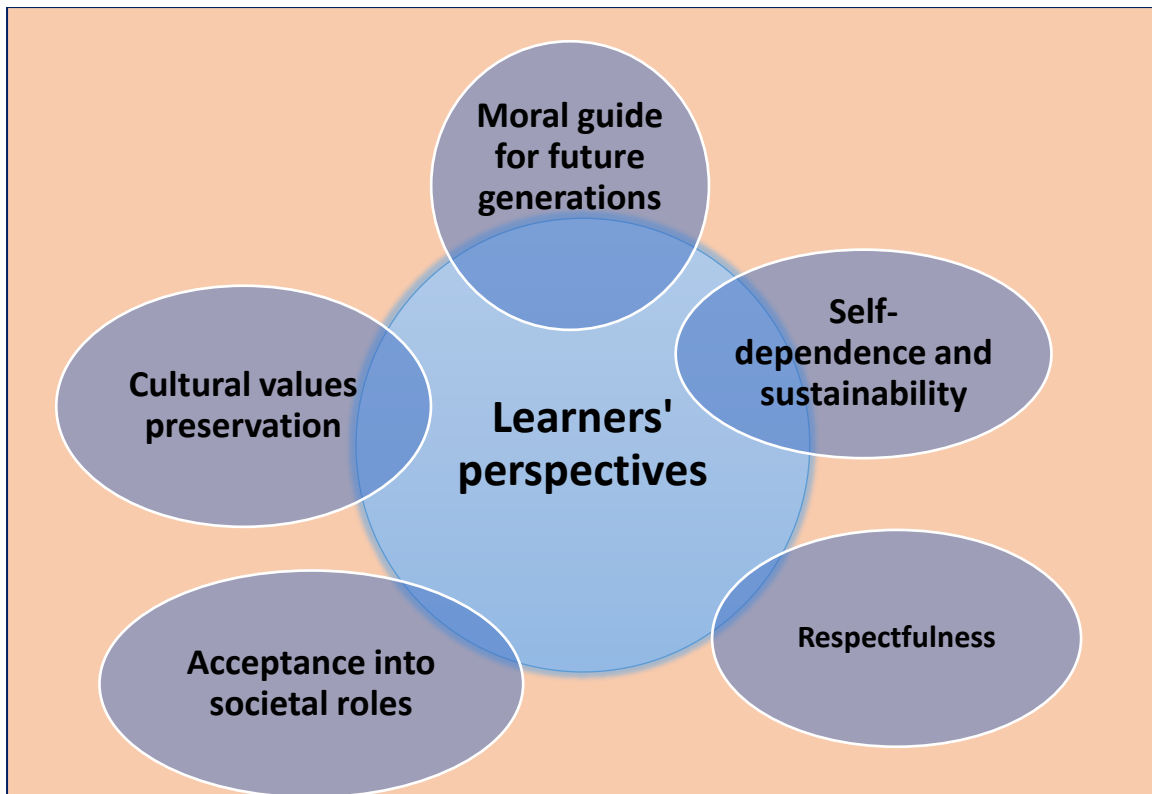
The following quotations affirms this finding:

*The community elders as well as the family of the initiate can chose a nurse of their choice. The owner of the initiation school can also appoint suitable and experienced adults as nurses (TL3, 2022).*

This outcome emphasises that family, society, and traditional leaders are united in purpose and action when it comes to these rituals. This further expands to the fact that both language and culture components are considered a national treasure for South Africa as a nation. If both components can be valued and appreciated, traditional leaders ensure the continued enjoyment and pride of any tribe that seeks to maintain its language.

#### **4.6. Research Question 2: What are the learners' perspectives on the changes in learners' behaviour?**

The perspectives of the learners concerning their expectations of changes in behaviour after the initiation process are summarised in Figure 4.3 below.



**Figure 4.3: Learners' perspectives of expected behaviour changes**

#### **4.6.1. Respectfulness**

This sub-theme emanated from the codes *Initiate 1, 2022*; *Initiate 2, 2022*; *Initiate 3, 2022*; and *Initiate 4, 2022*. Initiates expected to be more respectful to the elderly, cultural traditions, and community values. In addition, initiates expected to be respectful of fellow humanity and the environment.

##### **4.6.1.1. Respect for the elderly, cultural traditions, and community values**

Participants expected that after going through the initiation process, they would have more respect for cultural traditions and respect for the elderly and community values, indicating a prime contributing factor to behavioural change by initiates. This was confirmed by one of the learners, who said the following:

*We were taught to behave in an orderly way. We must respect older people and not talk anyhow to someone who is older than you. Initiates gain new status in life on how to behave (Initiate 1, 2022).*

Based on the verbatim excerpt above, it can be safely concluded that the intended influence of initiation rites amongst the amaXhosa is to mould a boy into a relevant and useful man in the society, a full representative of acceptable morals and responsibilities as upheld by the previous generations. The intention is to pass on the baton of culture, customs, beliefs, and a sense of responsibility to the upcoming generation of men. It is against this backdrop that the current study seeks to confirm the influence of initiation rites on behavioural changes by the initiates. This was supported by the sentiments of another learner who said the following:

*We were taught to respect our elders, culture, and our tradition. We were also taught to contribute to our families, clan, and community. We were taught to look dress and behave appropriately. We learnt how to live as men and should take up roles of adults in family matters as well as traditional ceremonies (Initiate 4, 2022).*

The results therefore indicate that a man is someone who wants to bring value to the world; who makes a positive contribution to the people around him; who is the next generation's successful role-model; someone who fears, respects, and does God's will. In isiXhosa culture, the initiation of male adolescents is still a very significant and valued tradition. It signifies the rite of passage into manhood and the appropriation of an adult's responsibilities and duties. It is a practice that ensures the continuation of cherished Xhosa values, which are central and valuable to the reverence of ancestors. Therefore, initiations are an ethnic philosophy and are special and consist of the African continent's religious and moral values.

#### **4.6.1.2. Respect for fellow humanity and the environment**

The findings from the learner codes indicate that initiation schools pave the way for respect for fellow mankind and the environment. One initiate said the following to confirm this:

*I dress differently than when I was a boy. I did not have as much respect, now am respected. The people now treat me with respect. I am dressed differently. Am treated like an adult (Initiate 3, 2022).*

This means that in addition to providing self-development and cultural knowledge, this study found that the rite of passage can promote a sense of belonging, whereby adolescents and adults are part of group life, not individuals alone who are lacking sanction, purpose, and support. The rite of passage requires separation, transformation, and integration phases. Moreover, some commonalities exist, although ceremonies vary across groups. These include ritual sacrifice, seclusion, circumcision, and white clay skin painting. After all that has been done, at the end of the seclusion, the burning of the lodge and belongings ensues.

The celebration of the improvement in status follows the integration of these men into the society. Another initiate supported this assertion by saying the following:

*I am now consulted during decision making. Am also given important roles during certain ceremonies in the community (Initiate 4, 2022)*

The whole initiation rite process highlighted above clearly presents a picture that by the scope and context of traditional male circumcision, the Xhosa culture aims to groom the young man into adulthood with responsibility and being brave enough to face and solve real-life challenges. However, like in any other society and grouping, the application of the knowledge acquired rests with the individuals trained.

#### **4.6.2. Self-Dependency and Sustainability**

In relation to this sub-theme on the change manifested in self-dependency and sustainability as adults, one of the initiates stated the following:

*Yes, because I now have more responsibility. Am treated with respect and as an adult, we have to stop doing the things we were doing when we were boys. My behaviour has changed from when I was a boy (Initiate 1, 2022).*

The findings of this study revealed that young men and women have been taken to traditional initiation schools in the past as a traditional practice to upgrade and groom morals. It is essentially the duty of a man to educate young boys into great men in the community and the only institution to carry out such training was the traditional initiation school. Although the options are minimal, traditional leaders still believe in themselves as the best in the organisation and management of such schools. Their

role in this respect has been appreciated and they still argue that their societies have faith in this form of initiation. This therefore presents traditional leaders as the bridge linking the boys to manhood, hence the interest of this research in establishing the changes in behaviour after the boys' orientation to adulthood through initiation rites.

#### **4.6.3. Acceptance into Societal roles**

In respect of acceptance by the communities to participate in societal gender-based roles and communal decision-making, it emerged that initiation rites orient the children as they become older. One of the initiates confirmed this assertion by stating the following:

*To behave in a respectable way and respect people that are older. We should not use drugs just because I am a man. I should respect my clan name in whatever I do. I must take actions in my society to show I am a man (Initiate 1, 2022).*

The findings of this research also present that the acquisition of cultural knowledge is a profound aspect of the traditional initiation school. It is at these initiation schools that cultural expectations are conveyed and initiated regarding social responsibilities and their behaviours as men in the community. It is only after the initiation rite that men are given various privileges associated with their status. This stance was supported by another initiate who had the following to say:

*The behaviour you have towards your elders and young must not be the same as young boy's behaviour because a man knows who he is and what he wants and must respect others (Initiate 2, 2022)*

The whole initiation rite process highlighted above clearly presents a picture that by the scope and context of traditional male circumcision, the Xhosa culture aims to groom the young man into adulthood with responsibility and to be brave enough to face and solve real-life challenges. However, like in any other society and grouping, the application of the knowledge acquired rests with the individuals trained. As is always the case with any undertaking, the tradition of male circumcision procedures does not come without hindrances. This was further supported by the third initiate who said the following:

*I should uplift my community. I should not embarrass my clan by behaving childishly. I should perform and contribute towards traditional ceremonies of my family and the society. Perform any other duties assigned to me by elders (Initiate 4, 2022).*

These findings confirm that the symbolic, cultural and social connotations that circumcising nations have attached to the practice of traditional male circumcision are profound. Since TMC is a deeply ingrained cultural practice amongst tribes that have historically practiced circumcision, it is typically not a method that can be decided upon on an individual basis. Male circumcision serves as a metaphor for a number of concepts, including the increase of male virility; the performative enforcement of the division between men and women; the preparation for marriage and adult sexuality; and the hardening of boys for combat. As a result, the ceremony might be interpreted as a representation of the man's assimilation into the community as well as his separation from his mother.

#### **4.6.4. A moral guide for future generations**

With regard to the issue of initiation being a moral guide for upcoming generations, one of the initiates had the following to say:

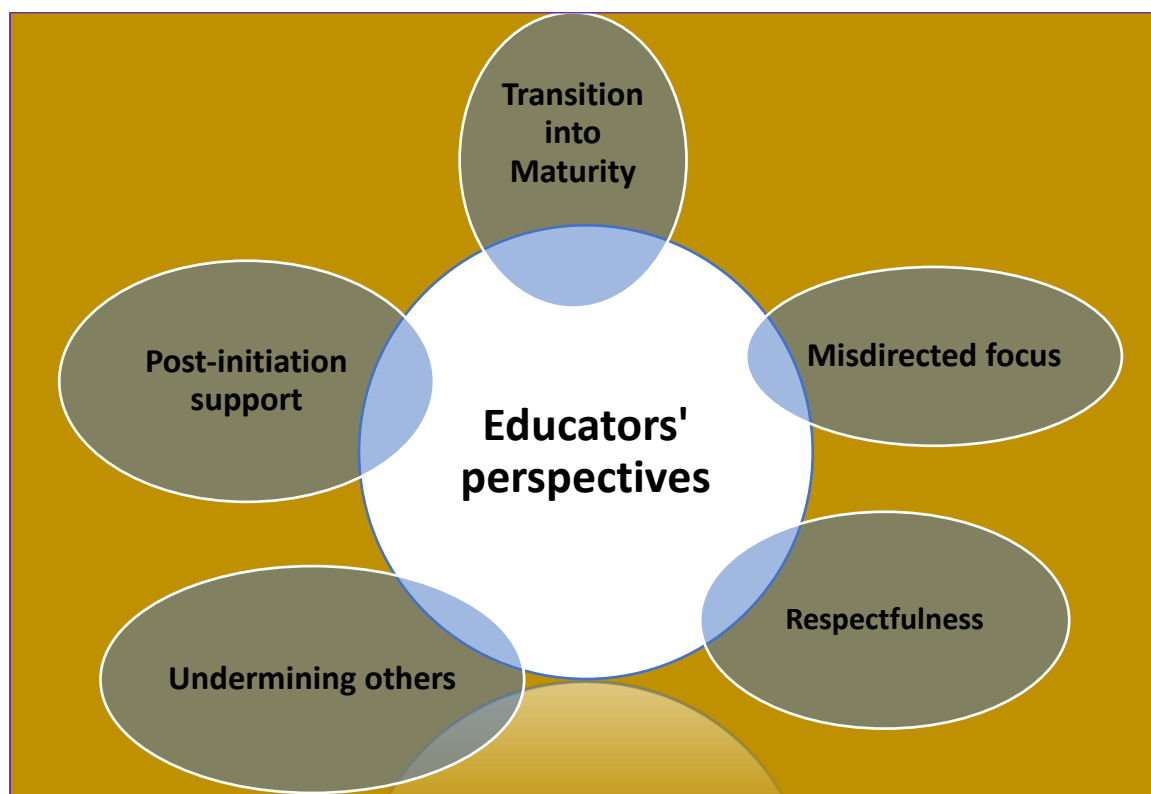
*If one of us behaves badly, other initiates can help to correct the behaviour. Even elders can talk to him. Other older man can call them aside and correct them. At school they should be treated just as any other learners. Adults can still address and correct the young man if he is not behaving appropriately. If at school, teachers should correct the bad behaviour (Initiate 4, 2022).*

The study also found that the passage rites as processes of development and transition are not universal but culturally unique. It is founded on the multi-cultural idea that before being able to share and accept the differences of others, a community must acknowledge and affirm itself. This approach also acknowledges that entrance into adult life requires the fulfilment of social duties and the assumption of responsibility. Nothing is known about what happens when young men are not involved in the process.

#### 4.7. Research Question 3: What are the educators' perspectives on the changes in learners' behaviour after the initiation ritual?

##### 4.7.1. Educators' perspectives

Educators' perspectives on the expected changes in initiates' behaviour are summarised in Figure 4.4 below.



**Figure 4.4: Educators' perspectives on initiates' behavioural changes**

Presented in Figure 4.4 is an overview of the educators' expectations from the boys who have undergone the initiation rites. The educators expect both desirable and undesirable behavioural changes and the details of the findings in relation to each theme are expanded in the following sections.

##### 4.7.2. Mis-directed focus

With regard to the question pertaining to the educators' perspectives on the changes in learners' behaviour after the initiation ritual, the developed codes were Educator 1, 2022 (for the 1<sup>st</sup> educator); Educator 2, 2022 (for

the 2<sup>nd</sup> educator); Educator 3, 2022 (for the 3<sup>rd</sup> educator); and finally, Educator 4, 2022 (for the 4<sup>th</sup> educator). The first sub-theme under this question indicates a shift in focus from schoolwork to newly acquired manhood, as alluded to by the first educator in the following quote:

*There is always a big change in behaviour after the ceremony as some initiated learners tend to demand respect from other learners' contrary, they don't respect even the teachers. They focus much on being called "man" at the expense of their schoolwork. They abscond or bunk classes as they gather in their groups of initiates. They also segregate other learners who have not yet undergone the same ceremony. Some are even bully to other learners. They don't listen or pay attention at school (Educator 1, 2022).*

In the opinion of this educator, the initiates had some observable change when comparing "before" and "after" the initiation rite ceremony. This change is a shift of focus from schoolwork towards newly acquired manhood. This view was supported by another educator who indicated the observation of notable change, as confirmed by the following verbatim excerpt:

*At school most of the initiates want to be respected. They tend to group themselves as initiates. There is also that tendency to undermine those who have not been initiated. Some of them start indulging in alcohol and drug abuse (Educator 2, 2022).*

The view of this educator points to the fact that there is a tendency towards grouping by new initiates. This could be because of the commonalities and new friendships developed in the initiation schools, as well as common interests based on what they would have learned generally. However, some initiates were reported to be indulging in alcohol, which could be a choice one would have been waiting for until a stage where society regards them as mature enough to make own decisions. Nonetheless, this view was in contrast to those of the third educator, who had the following to say:

*After initiation the learners seize to be aggressive by nature and begin to epitomise humility. Their behaviour also changes from*



*arrogance and begin to embrace a personal growth mindset. They start to portray maturity traits. They seize having an identity crisis and become proficient when it comes to communication. They become more responsible after initiation (Educator 3, 2022).*

The opinion of this educator reveals that, like in any other school in the world, there are always two groups at the end of every learning spectrum: those who make it to the intended outcome and those who miss it. In this case, some come out of the initiation schools with a more focused and responsible mind-set, whilst others come out a bit stubborn. This seems a normal outcome because initiation schools are meant to guide and orient initiates into an adult and responsible life, but the choice of application remains with an individual. Educator 4 had the following to say:

*The initiates that have done the ceremony at an early age tend to change negatively in behaviour. They become disobedient, unruly and bullies. Some even venture in bad habits of drinking and smoking since they feel that they are men and can do anything they please. Some of them even tend to undermine their fellow learners who have not yet been initiated and treat girls with a high degree of disrespect. However, the initiates that do the ceremony at an older age tend to maintain their behaviour (Educator 4, 2022).*

This view could imply that the potential consequence of initiation may be that young men are socialized into two opposing belief structures that value and identify various cultural standards that can generate confusion, anxiety, and conformity pressure, combined with ambiguity on what to comply with.

#### **4.7.3. Undermining others**

Initiates were observed by educators to tend to undermine those not yet initiated. The 1<sup>st</sup> educator indicated that there is a tendency of undermining those not yet initiated by those who are newly initiated. This came out in the following quote:

*I do believe there is a teaching that is done wrongly at their centres of initiation especially with the term MAN. The teaching comes with wrong interpretations as if a MAN is someone who must not respect, listen and take orders or do anything that follows orders (Educator 1, 2022).*

Whilst this educator holds this view at face value, it could however not necessarily mean undermining others but simply the mere fact that the behaviours and specific vocabulary learned during the time spent in the bush distinguishes men who have been through initiation and those who have not. The following quote confirms this position:

*The major reason is that they feel that developmental stage where they are getting into adulthood. As young adults they are eager to taste new waters e.g., Indulgence into drugs, alcohol etc. Everyone must identify them that is why they isolate themselves. Again, as young adults now, they differ from their peers and should be given respect unlike in the past (Educator 2, 2022).*

This educator's opinion indicates that the isolation of new initiates is not out of arrogance or anything strange, but a mere identity of the new self, weaned from the childish past. Hence, it is a gesture of self-respect and detachment from childishness. In agreement with the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> educators, the third's viewpoint was as follows:

*The notion that once you are circumcised you are classified as a man and therefore anyone who has not undergone is not of the same status as undergone the rite. It might negatively affect socialisation processes in a school setup whereby initiates might be viewing the uncircumcised as being inferior. The initiates sometimes demand respect from the uncircumcised and this in a way results in conflicts among male learners (Educator 3, 2022).*

This again seems to indicate that the new initiates are excited by the crossover from childhood to adulthood, and as they apply their confidence in real life, the uninitiated misinterpret it as a demand for respect. The behaviour seems to be coined in one's background rather than the initiation school, as confirmed by another educator:

*For the young age the information given to them ends up spoiling them because it's not at their level and therefore they tend to prove that they are men negatively, thereby ending up messing. For the older age, the information suits them perfectly and they can handle and use it positively without changing their behaviour negatively. However, if the initiate was already badly behaved before initiation, he is likely to maintain his bad behaviour or even become worse (Educator 4, 2022).*

This outcome depicts that the key reasons behind the high rate of interpersonal violence amongst young black men is that it is perpetrated by men who are able to overlook pain, never show fear and who are always ready to fight. The depiction of a good male as fearless gives men the common cultural indicators to gain social status, thus raising the likelihood of victimization at the same time

#### **4.7.4. Post-initiation support**

The results of the interviews carried out indicate that there is need for follow-up mentoring to ensure that initiates live by the learned principles. This can be confirmed by the following quote from one of the educators:

*Regular meetings to be held where they discuss about importance of behaviour. These initiates might also be afforded an opportunity to lead or share in these meetings (Educator 2, 2022).*

This position indicates that not only are initiates taught good behaviour and responsibility, but they are also taught leadership skills, which was also supported by the third educator who had the following to say:

*Once initiates begin to portray themselves in a negative way or in bad light, reminding them by way of talking to them might also help them. Initiates must be encouraged to work hand in glove with other learners as a way of pacifying negative thoughts. Incorporate initiates in co-curricular activities that enables them to establish symbolic synergies with other learners who are yet to undergo the initiation rite (Educator 3, 2022).*

Based on this educator's view, it can be safely concluded that the intended influence of initiation rites amongst the amaXhosa is to mould a boy into a relevant and useful man in the society, a full representative of acceptable morals and responsibilities as upheld by the previous generations. The intention is to pass on the baton of culture, customs, beliefs and a sense of responsibility to the upcoming generation of men. It is against this backdrop that the current study seeks to confirm the influence of initiation rites on behavioural changes by the initiates. To uphold this, follow-up mentoring to ensure that initiates live by the learned principles might be necessary. This stance was supported by another educator who said the following:

*In instances of negative change, parents of the negatively changed learner should contact the initiation school elders to help advise the initiate accordingly (Educator 4, 2022).*

This position reflects that parents and society work together to build up a responsible community since parents may involve initiation school elders to help advise the initiate accordingly. This further presents the fact that African children are raised by the community and taught through their people's culture and traditions. This traditional mode of education is formally conveyed through parents and elders through initiation ceremonies. The ritual marks the transition and sometimes the circumcision of boys from adolescent to adulthood. Therefore, initiations are an ethnic philosophy and are special and consist of the African continent's religious and moral values.

#### **4.7.5. Transition into maturity**

Some educators highlighted that according to their observations, there seems to be a mixture of portrayal of both maturity and bullying by the new initiates, as confirmed by the following quote by one of the educators:

*Make learners attend initiation when they are older e.g., above 20 years. At this stage they can understand and correctly handle the information given to them and uphold the good behaviour (Educator 4, 2022).*

A change in the character of the newly graduated initiates characterizes the psychological importance of the male initiation tradition. As social norms are versatile enough to tolerate boyish pranks, boyhood can be defined as being free to do as they please, and no one takes them seriously as they are considered immature. The shift in character suggests that more mature and responsible behaviour should be exhibited by the initiated men. This is entirely different from the anti-social and reckless conduct of boys, which is easy to handle. The goal of these inductees being anointed by a responsible individual in the community is to pass the good characteristics of the anointer to the newly graduated initiate. This opinion was supported by another educator who had the following to say:

*Orientation must be done before the commencement of the program. After initiation counselling must continue the initiates. All initiation centres must be registered and all the elders at all centres must be trained to teach good ethics. There must be a way to strip of their so-called status in the event of bad behaviour (Educator 1, 2022).*

This finding confirmed that behavioural attitudes were described as an aggregate of easily available or influential assumptions about the possible effects of performing the target behaviour, while subjective norms were described as the perceived social pressure to perform the target behaviour or not, and behavioural intentions were described as the perceived probability of performing the target behaviour. However, the ability to implement the desired behaviour is one aspect that should restrict the conversion of intentions to behaviour. In addition, since one should also take into account how others interpret one's actions, subjective expectations on how to behave

were also included as a predictor of behavioural intentions. The best predictor of behaviour was then described as behavioural intentions.

#### **4.8. Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, the researcher presented and interpreted the research findings. As a re-statement, the research intended to address the question of why learners' behaviour in the selected schools changed after initiation. This main question was subdivided into the following sub-questions, namely: What are traditional leaders' perspectives on the changes in learners' behaviour after the initiation ritual? ; What are learners' perspectives on the changes in learners' behaviour after the initiation ritual?; What are educators' perspectives on the changes in learners' behaviour after the initiation ritual?; and What interventions can be employed to improve/uphold behavioural changes by male learners after the initiation ritual? The researcher analysed the data thematically, and the findings showed that initiation provides self-development and cultural knowledge through the promotion of a sense of belonging, as adolescents and adults are part of group life, not individuals alone, lacking sanction, purpose and support. The whole initiation rite process highlighted above clearly presents a picture that by the scope and context of traditional male circumcision, the isiXhosa culture aims to groom young men into adulthood with responsibility and to be brave enough to face and solve real-life challenges. In the next chapter, the researcher discusses the research findings presented in this chapter, draws conclusions for the study and proffers recommendations.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter follows the presentation and interpretation of the findings obtained from the data collected in the study through interviews. The chapter therefore discusses the study's findings with reference to other empirical studies and presents conclusions and recommendations based on the findings obtained in the study. The conclusions are offered after a summary of the findings for each study objective. Recommendations are presented for key stakeholders based on the study's findings. Finally, suggestions for further research as well as proposals for understanding why the learners' behaviours in the selected school changed after initiation are also presented in this chapter.

The study sought to address the following objectives:

- (i) To determine traditional leaders' perspectives on the changes in learners' behaviour at a selected school in the Amatole East District.
- (ii) To establish learners' perspectives on the changes in learners' behaviour after initiation rituals at a selected school in the Amatole East District.
- (iii) To establish educators' perspectives on the changes in learners' behaviour after initiation rituals at a selected school in the Amatole east district; and
- (iv) To ascertain possible interventions for the improvement/upholding of behavioural changes by male learners after the initiation ritual.

The discussion of findings therefore follows the themes derived from the above stated objectives which were developed in chapter 4.

#### **5.2.1. Traditional leaders' perspectives on learners' behaviour changes**

The study found that traditional leaders expected initiates to transform their general behaviour from boyhood, self-centric behaviour towards more communal and family focused behaviour since the initiation process is designed to graduate boys into manhood. Initiates were anticipated to develop certain specific characters, which include the following:

- Being respectful;

- Responsibility for family and the good of community;
- Honesty; and
- Adherence to cultural norms and traditions.

These views were supported by all the traditional leaders who participated in the study.

The study findings confirm some of the literature's recorded expectations from traditional leaders as alluded to by scholars such as Ntombana (2011), who describes initiation as a rite of graduation into beginning or acceptance into a community or society. This confirms traditional leaders' expectations of initiates becoming more responsible towards their families as well as towards the community they live in. This expectation was also emphasised by Mtuze (2004), who notes that it is only upon initiation that boyish immaturities are expected to end, and more responsibilities are expected from the initiates. The initiation rites are fundamentally expected to result in the overall transformation of character for the boys into manhood (Papu & Verster, 2006). Traditional leaders' expectations are consistent since the practices have been passed from generation to generation as part of the religious and traditional leadership transition and have seemingly been consistent in preserving certain key cultural rites, one of which the manhood initiation rite (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2010; Mohlaloka et al., 2016 and Mbiti, 2015). This has been anchored on the expectation that initiation is expected to build, foster, and uphold societal morality, especially for boys/men (Ratele, 2010).

Initiation is also expected by the traditional leaders, as reported in this study's findings, to pass on key traditional norms, cultural practices, and beliefs across generations. This confirms findings by other scholars. Nqeketho (2008) writes that initiation rites are expected to pass on key beliefs and practices, such as the rituals, language, and symbols to be observed in each community. During initiation, the boys are expected to learn and use specified language and symbols as part of their training process and only boys who achieve expected proficiency levels graduate (Stinson & Paterson, 2018). Literature records that the traditional leaders' expectations in terms of the outcomes of the initiation process are generally uniform across different ethnic and/or tribal groups, in terms of their focus and emphasis on the passing on of key morals (Mfecane, 2016). However, the rites differ by ethnic or cultural groupings, but the focus



remains similar (Hill & Varone, 2021). In South Africa, language is a unique and fundamental treasure which is mainly preserved by traditional leaders, and this is perpetuated by practices such as initiation rites (Kepe, 2010).

However, literature avers that certain unexpected behaviours emanate from the initiation rites. As part of the initiation process, the boys are trained and expected to be brave, ready to fight for and defend their families and communities, and to be accepted as having achieved manhood maturity. This has however been recorded in literature as having contributed to violent behaviours by some of the initiates as they abuse the bravery acquired during the initiation process (Ratele, 2010). Moreover, this view is also emphasised by the theoretical framework wherein the Social Constructionism theory shows the existence of various masculinity behaviours which have been passed from generation to generation, some of which are passed on unintentionally and are unwanted (Mfecane, 2013). This was not confirmed by this study as the focus of the study was on the expected behavioural changes from the perspective of the various stakeholders in the initiation rites and processes. The expectations of the initiates and/or learners are discussed in the following section, as found in the study.

### **5.2.2. Learners' perspectives on learners' behaviour changes**

Study participants presented the following as the key expectations upon completion of the initiation processes:

- Acquisition of respect for the elderly and community values.
- Acquisition of life-skills such as self-dependence and sustainability.
- Ability to participate in societal gender-based roles and communal decision-making;
- Acquisition of morals to guide the next generation; and
- Respect for humanity and the environment.

The expectations of the initiates/learners are not different from the expectations of the traditional leaders since the learners become socialised to these expectations since their early boyhood by their elders who tell them about and prepare them for the initiation rites.

The initiates' expectations are reciprocal to the expectations of the traditional leaders. From the leaders' perspective, they expect the initiates to be respectful of their elders and to adhere to communal values and morals. This was the same expectation held by initiates who expected to be equipped with the skills and the value system to enable them to respect all elders in their communities and have the appropriate knowledge of their community values and norms. Similar expectations on the outcomes of the initiation process are also recorded by several scholars (Ntombana, 2011; Mtuze, 2004; Stinson & Paterson, 2018; Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2010; Mohlaloka et al., 2016). Therefore, there is confluence of almost all the expectations after graduation from the initiation process. Literature does not however distinguish stakeholder expectations of the outcomes of the initiation process. Scholars provide a generic outline of the expected outcomes of the initiation processes and the various initiation practices.

The expectations of the initiation learners of acquiring self-dependence and sustainability skills mirrors the expectation of traditional leaders of the initiates becoming more responsible for family as they graduate into manhood. This expectation is also emphasised by the expectation of initiates that they should have the skills to participate in societal gender-based roles and participate in communal decision-making. It is only mature men who have the privilege to participate and/or contribute during communal meetings. It is therefore an expectation by the initiates that they became acceptable once they go through the initiation processes and rituals. The same expectations have also been emphasised in literature by scholars such as Hill and Varone (2021); Kepe (2010); Lemmer and Van Wyk (2010); and Mtuze (2004), amongst many others.

The study also found the expectation of initiates to be equipped with skills to respect the environment and humanity, which appears to be a more contemporary expectation which the learners have acquired through their education and other life experiences. The respect for humanity is mainly acquired from the learners' religious exposure and is emphasized in different religions which also have similar practices. This is therefore being incorporated into the initiation rituals because the initiates have different religious orientations, and they all participate in the initiation rites despite their religion. Inasmuch as the initiation rites are inclined towards the African traditional religions, other religions are also being initiated into manhood, as explained by some scholars

(Mavundla, et al., 2009; Kepe, 2010; Mfecane, 2013; Ntombana, 2011; and Mohlaloka et al., 2016). The findings show a congruence between traditional leaders' expectations and learners' expectations of the outcomes from the initiation rites since the initiates expect to fit into communal lives where the initiates are expected to exhibit certain characteristics as signs of having undergone the initiation rituals and having achieved the expected behaviours. The following section discusses the expectations of educators.

### **5.2.3. Educators' perspectives on learners' behaviour changes**

Educators' perspectives may be regarded as being independent and unbiased, with a focus on their independent comparative observations of the behaviours exhibited by initiates against behaviours exhibited by learners that have not yet been initiated. The initiates' observed behavioural changes are generally negative and may not reflect the expectations from traditional leaders. These include the following:

- Shift of learners' focus from schoolwork to newly acquired manhood;
- Tendency by initiates of undermining those not yet initiated; and
- A mixture of portrayal of maturity and bullying.

Further to these, educators observed the need for reinforcement and the continuous mentoring of initiates, as well as the need for establishing post-initiation counselling and disciplinary structures. These structures are meant to ensure that initiates continue to adhere to the principles and disciplinary behaviour expected of the initiates by traditional leaders and custodians of the initiation process.

Educators' observations mainly focused on the undesirable behavioural outcomes of the initiation rites. The general tendency by learners to undermine learners not yet initiated amounts to bullying, which is likely to result in the initiates being violent later in life, as observed in literature that the initiates are trained to be brave men, but some may end up misusing the bravery in violent tendencies in society (Ratele, 2010). This also leads to undesirable social constructionism whereby initiates regard themselves as superior and more acceptable in society than uninitiated boys (Mfecane, 2013). Such undesirable behaviours are likely to lead to initiates being gender bullies since initiation is mainly done by boys ready to graduate into manhood. Although not specifically outlined by educators, emphasis on the need for continuous mentoring and

the establishment of disciplinary structures suggests that initiates' behaviour is unacceptable and undesirable to society.

Another undesirable behaviour exhibited by initiates relates to the shift in focus from educational achievement towards the just obtained manhood. Initiation rituals are therefore a distraction to learning processes as the initiates value the initiation process more than their educational endeavours. Literature as highlighted above reports some of the common unwanted results of the initiation process, which may include the examples cited above. This could possibly be an indicator that the initiation age may require adjustment to ensure that the initiates would have completed certain educational levels. Furthermore, reconsidering the initiation ages may help in eliminating undesirable bullying by initiates towards those not yet initiated. However, literature shows that circumcision, which forms a major part of the initiation rites, is done between the ages of 10 and 22 years (Gwata, 2009). This may affect those initiates that are of school-going age and disrupt their focus from their studies towards the initiation and the associated maturity. Despite the various benefits associated with the circumcision rites that are part of the initiation rituals, such as cultural acceptance, improved sexual intercourse, prevention of diseases and penile hygiene (Venter, 2011; Westercamp & Bailey, 2007), there is need for ensuring that the practice is done at the appropriate age.

#### **5.2.4. Interventions for improving/upholding behavioural changes by male learners**

The behaviours acquired by initiates during the initiation rituals require reinforcement and continuous mentoring to ensure that the acquired skills, values, and behaviours are maintained and upheld by the initiates. This perspective was given by educators who expressed the need for such reinforcement, probably because of their understanding of educational philosophy and the need for re-emphasis of concepts in the education process. This is emphasised by the Theory of Planned Behaviour, which highlights the capacity to implement target behaviour (Stagner, 1942). Therefore, behaviour changes can be transformed in the long-term, hence the need to continually reinforce the acquired behaviours. This is particularly important given the reduction in the initiation time-frames due to demands from the school calendars, which have significantly reduced the initiation time from an initial period of up to six months to just

about four weeks (Nqeketo, 2008 and Siswana, 2016). It is therefore important to re-train and re-orient the initiates in the planned behaviours for initiates.

Educators also believe in the carrot-and-stick approach to upholding the attitudes and behaviours acquired by learners from the initiation rituals. Thus, according to the educators, there is need to develop mechanisms for ensuring discipline by the initiates. This was based on the perspectives that initiates are sometimes bullying their fellow learners who have not yet been initiated and if this goes unabated, it may result in more unwanted behaviour by the initiates later in life, exhibiting violent behaviour and masculinity. It is therefore necessary to keep the behaviour of initiates under watch and within specified confines, and any unwarranted behaviours should be punished.

### **5.3. Conclusions**

The chapter has discussed the findings presented in Chapter 4. Based on these findings, the following are the conclusions of the study:

- a) Traditional leaders have a gamut of educational expectations from the initiation process, which include transformation into manhood for the initiates and the exhibition of socially acceptable behaviour such as being respectful, honest, brave, and responsible. These expectations are prerequisites for one to become a responsible and respectable family and community leader. The initiates are also expected to become ambassadors for carrying forward key traditions, rites, language, and practices that are expected to be perpetuated amongst their communities.
- b) Learners have educational expectations that are very similar to the expectations of traditional leaders. This is probably a result of the processes that the initiates undergo before the initiation process, which includes counselling by a family leader or elder who has experience in the initiation process and the expected outcomes. Therefore, the study concludes that learners do not have independent expectations as their expectations are highly influenced by the family elders and leaders who inculcate the expectations that learners internalise.
- c) Educators perceive the initiation process to be pedagogically valuable but taking cognisance of some unexpected outcomes of the initiation process.

Some of the educators' observations include the superiority complexity exhibited by some initiates who end up bullying fellow learners that have not yet been initiated and/or undermining fellow learners not yet initiated. Furthermore, educators observed that due to the high regard of the initiation process in society, some learners end up neglecting their studies due to their pride of having achieved the initiation into manhood. The study therefore concludes that the initiation process is not comprehensive to cover some of these unexpected behaviour outcomes from some of the initiates.

- d) The study also concludes that it is fundamental to continually reinforce the initiation lessons so that the learners' characters are transformed for life. This is achievable through continuous training and re-training and re-orientation of the initiates on the key aspects of the initiation process beyond circumcision. This should also include disciplinary structures to ensure that unsuitable behaviours are punished, and the initiates become good ambassadors of the initiation practices.

The following section presents the recommendations based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the study.

#### **5.4. Recommendations**

The study therefore recommends the following to ensure that the initiation process and associated training leads to the expected educational value and behavioural transformations as expected by the different categories of participants:

- a) Initiation processes should incorporate educational training in both traditional and medical practices especially with the circumcision processes. Relying on traditional nurses to undergo the process may endanger some of the initiates. Moreover, the subjects trained during the initiation process should be wide-ranging enough to eliminate some of the ills observed by educators.
- b) The initiation process and associated trainings should be done in stages since there is not enough time to undertake the initiation process for longer time-frames due to other commitments by the initiates, such as attending formal school. Therefore, the initiation process and trainings are recommended to be done over a longer period or spread over a longer time period to ensure that the timelines are sufficient to impart all the required skills.

- c) The initiation process and training are recommended to be done after the initiates have finished basic formal education. This is meant to ensure that the initiation process does not distract learners from their formal education by focusing on the initiation rites. Otherwise, there is need to synchronise the trainings offered during initiation with the formal education curriculum so that learners can see an interrelationship between the two types of education.
- d) Co-operation between the school and society; schools must invite elders from the community to have discussion with initiates about what behaviour is expected at school.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Ethical Clearance



#### UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2022/03/09

Ref: **2022/03/09/48015350/09/AM**

Name: Mr A Kaseke

Student No.:48015350

Dear Mr A Kaseke

**Decision:** Ethics Approval from  
2022/03/09 to 2025/03/09

**Researcher(s):** Name: Mr A Kaseke  
E-mail address: 48015350@mylife.unisa.ac.za  
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**Supervisor(s):** Name: Dr LM Luvalo  
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Name: Dr N Madikizela-Madiya  
E-mail address: madiyn@unisa.ac.za  
Telephone: 0124294698

**Title of research:**

**THE INFLUENCE OF INITIATION RITES ON MALE LEARNERS'S BEHAVIOUR AT A  
SELECTED SCHOOL IN THE AMATHOLE EAST DISTRICT**

**Qualification:** MEd Socio-Education

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2022/03/09 to 2025/03/09.

*The **medium risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2022/03/09 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.



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2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
6. 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. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
7. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2025/03/09**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

*Note:*

*The reference number **2022/03/09/48015350/09/AM** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



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**Appendix B: Proof of editing**

**EDITING LETTER**

696 Clare Road

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11 November 2022

To: Whom it may concern

**Editing of Master's Thesis: Kaseke Abisha (Student Number: 48015350)**

**THE INFLUENCE OF INITIATION RITES ON MALE LEARNERS AT A SELECTED  
SCHOOL IN THE AMATHOLE EAST DISTRICT**

This letter serves as confirmation that the aforementioned thesis has been language edited. Requisite academic writing conventions have been adhered to.

Any queries may be directed to the author of this letter.

Regards



MP MATHEWS

Lecturer and Language Editor

[Mercimathews4@gmail.com](mailto:Mercimathews4@gmail.com)

083 676 4778

## Appendix C: Turnitin report

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# Chapter 1-5

*by* Abisha KASEKE

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