

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERCEPTIONS ON THE ROLE
OF GANGSTERISM IN THE SPREAD OF HIV/AIDS. A CASE OF DUNCAN
VILLAGE IN THE BUFFALO CITY METRO MUNICIPALITY**

By

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DECLARATION

I, Zoliswa Mgudlwa, hereby declare that “an investigation into young people’s perceptions on the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV/AIDS. A case of Duncan village in the Buffalo City Metro Municipality” is my individual work and all the sources that I used or accessed have been indicated and acknowledged by means of a complete reference list.


Signature

Zoliswa Mgudlwa

Date: 15 September 2023

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my family; my husband Cwangco, my daughter Zintle and my two sons Ambesa and Hlombe.

Your encouragement kept me going, I appreciate you

Thank you.

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To start with, my credit goes out to God, my protector for providing me a chance and a strong suit to finish this research study.

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Globally and in South Africa, young people are predisposed to contracting the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) due to several social challenges. These social challenges include poverty and gangsterism. In South Africa, there is a high prevalence of HIV amid a rising level of gangsterism among youths which exacerbates the spread of HIV and this negates efforts to prevent the spread of this virus among this demographic group.

Purpose: The purpose of the study was to investigate young people's perceptions on the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV/AIDS in Duncan Village.

Setting: The study was conducted in Duncan Village, which is a township in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality located in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa.

Study population: The study population will be young people between the ages of 18-35 years residing in Duncan village.

Sampling: Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants who were selected based on the participants' ages. The sample size of 20 participants were reached. No data saturation was reached.

Data collection and analysis: Data was collected using in-depth interviews and a semi-structured interview guide. The data collected was analysed using Braun and Clark's six steps of thematic analysis.

Results: A total of 20 participants were selected, most of the participants' ages ranged from 18-35 years. Young people understood gangsterism as a group of young people involved in delinquent behaviour like drug abuse and multiple sexual partnering. These gang-related activities increased the spread of HIV. Gangsterism fostered sexual violence and affected the sexual rights of women putting them at risk of contracting HIV.

Conclusion: From these findings, it was concluded that gangsterism is an enabler of the spread of HIV in Duncan Village.

Key words: Perceptions, Knowledge, HIV, Gangsterism, Youth, Duncan Village

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ART	Antiretroviral Therapy
ARV	Antiretroviral
DoH	Department of Health
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
NGOs	Faith Based Organisations
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
PLWH	People Living with HIV
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Program on AIDS
UNICEF	United Nations Children's emergency Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
SANAC	South African National AIDS Council
STI	Sexual Transmitted Infection
UNISA	University of South Africa
WHO	World Health Organization

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Gangsterism and the spread of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) are concerning problems among South African youths. Among general populations, deviant behaviour among gang members is associated with the spread of HIV (Stone et al., 2021). South Africa has one of the highest prevalence rates of HIV in the world, with at least 13.7% of the population living with HIV by the end of 2021 (STATSSA, 2022). In addition, it also ranks first in terms of new infections per year with an estimated 270 000 new infections by the end of 2016 (STATSSA, 2022). This shows that the spread of HIV is too high and thus needs to be curbed especially given the rise of gangsterism in South African townships (Mthembu, Maharaj and Rademeyer, 2019).

In light of this association, it is imperative to investigate young people's perceptions of the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS). The study looks at this problem using Duncan Village in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality as a case of interest. This study empowers stakeholders to appreciate the HIV/gangsterism challenge from a youth perspective, enhancing opportunities for youth-centric solutions to the studied problems.

1.1.2 Youths/ young people

Boyd and Ellison (2022) explain that youth consists of people who fall into the adult and child categories, individuals aged 15 to 18 years are also included in the legal definition of children. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines a 'child' as everyone under the age of 18 "unless, under the law applicable to the child, maturity is attained earlier (Wium and Dimitrova, 2019). Similarly, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) defines a 'child' as a person under the age of 18 (Ildephonse Sindyigaya, 2024). Children constitute a vulnerable category in need of special protection because of their physical and psychological immaturity (Ildephonse Sindyigaya, 2024). As an age category, youths are positioned across the boundaries of childhood and adulthood (Ildephonse Sindyigaya, 2024). The age cohort between 15 to 18 years is referred to as 'adolescents (Wium and Dimitrova, 2019). However, this age categorization is not universally accepted. Ross (2020) stated that UN agencies, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the United

Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) define adolescents as boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 19 years. In South Africa, youth are considered as people who are aged between the age of 14 and 35 years (Höltge et al., 2021). This consideration is in line with the National Youth Policy of 2000 and the National Youth Commission Act of 1996 (Höltge et al., 2021). For this study, the South African definition of youth as outlined in the National Youth Policy of 2000 and the National Youth Commission Act of 1996 will be used. This study will focus on adult youths who have attained the age of consent, (that is 18–35-year-olds). These are youth who have completed matric who employable or pursuing tertiary education or are out of both (employment and tertiary education).

1.1.3 Gangsterism

Youths between the ages of 18 to 25 years are increasingly forming gangs and being incorporated into existing gangs due to continued economic despair (Nowotny, Valdez & Cepeda, 2023). (Hesselink & Bougard, 2020) refer to a gang as a group of people who engage in criminal and other social delinquent behaviours together. These delinquent behaviours include drug abuse, violence and having multiple sexual partners (Hesselink & Bougard, 2020). According to Kelly and Ward (2020), gangsterism refers to the efforts of young people to create a space that is adapted to their needs; arising out of poverty, with the lack of opportunities and exclusion from society, these gangs aim at meeting their needs by organising themselves and developing their own rules. Based on these explanations, it can be ascertained that gangsterism refers to the behaviours of a group of young people within a larger community who come together to engage in criminal activities.

1.1.4 Gangsterism, youths and HIV

Since the first reporting of HIV four decades ago in South Africa, there continues to be a challenge in HIV prevention (Kangethe, 2023). Whilst there is evidence of a decline in the number of new infections in South Africa, there are key populations where there are challenges in efforts to decrease HIV infection incidences (Beyrer, 2021). According to Muncan et al. (2020) These key populations include people who inject drugs, young women, sex workers and young people from such key populations. The inclusion of young people who inject drugs as a key population in the spread of HIV is associated with the activities of gangsterism like drug abuse and having multiple sexual partners which predisposes young people to the spread of HIV (Hesselink & Bougard, 2020). It is therefore important to understand the roots, rationale and dynamics of these risk behaviours from the involved demographic groups – the youths.

1.2 Background of the study

According to Ayalew, Manda and Cai (2021) South African youths are exposed to several social and health-related challenges which include drug abuse, violence, poverty, criminal activities and HIV. South Africa has the biggest HIV epidemic in the world, with an estimated 7.2 million people living with HIV in 2017 (Ayalew, Manda and Cai, 2021). South Africa accounts for a third of all new HIV infections in southern Africa (Machethe, Obioha & Mofokeng, 2022). Machethe, Obioha & Mofokeng (2022) continue to highlight that youth are among the most affected population group with an estimated 60% of all new HIV infections occurring among young people in the 15-24-year age group.

Sivhabu & Visser (2019) stated that with regard to unemployment, statistics show that the unemployment rate is higher (43%) among black Africans compared to other races (coloured: 28%; Indian/ Asian: 17%; and white: 7%) . Davids, Soji and Abdulla (2022) highlight that the high unemployment among youths especially black Africans has led to a rise in gangsterism in South African townships. In addition, youth unemployment is 36.1%, compared to 16.3% among the adult population, with absorption rates of 30.7% and 57.6%, respectively (Sivhabu & Visser, 2019). Mojola, Angotti, Schatz and Houle (2021) mentioned that Statistics South Africa of 2015 also reported that out of a total of 10.1 million individuals in the 15–24-year age group, 32.7% (3.3 million) are neither employed nor attending an education institution. Davids, Soji and Abdulla (2022) also added that this rise of gangsterism in South African townships has become a cause for concern for the prevention of HIV. Gangsterism is perceived to encompass activities that are linked to an increase in the risk of being infected by HIV (Davids, Soji & Abdulla, 2022). These gangster activities that are associated with the spread of HIV include drug abuse, violence, coercion and intimidation (Davids, Soji & Abdulla, 2022). Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), (2019) continued to add that this places populations like young women and adolescents in vulnerable positions from protecting themselves from HIV infection.

Gangsterism is associated with closed structures that do not open up to outside members for fear of infiltration, which makes it difficult for them to receive education and information regarding HIV prevention (Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), 2019). On the other hand, such gang structures may be viewed as a haven for vulnerable young people ((Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), 2019).

This suggests the possibility of multiple and varying perceptions of how youths view this phenomenon.

1.3 Problem statement

Mthembu, Maharaj and Rademeyer (2019) stated that socio economic challenges of rising unemployment, growing inequalities, deep poverty levels and loss of hope among young people has led to young people feeling excluded, deep levels of resentment, social fragmentation in families, and gangsters have become role models and provide resources in communities. According to SAPS, (2018) murder rose by 6.9% nationally between 2017 and 2018, according to the SAPS Crime Situation Report. The Western Cape was largely responsible, with its 12.6% increase in murders. Of the 3729 murders recorded in the Western Cape, 808 were gang-related.

The rise of gangsterism in South Africa has come with some risk behaviours and activities that exacerbate the spread of HIV. Statistics indicate that it is on the rise across South African townships, which include Duncan Village (Mthembu, Maharaj and Rademeyer, 2019). Amongst activities carried out by gangs, which exacerbate the spread of HIV is having sex with multiple partners through coercion or force. In addition, gang members also engage in sex whilst intoxicated which impedes their decision to protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases (Kangethe, 2023). There is also the sharing of needles by different gang members when injecting drugs, a practice which promotes the transmission of HIV from one person to another. Injecting drugs using that same needle is associated with health and social harms such as hepatitis as well as HIV (Mottiar and Lodge, 2018). Exposure to HIV through the use of contaminated injecting equipment is six times more likely to result in HIV infection than exposure to HIV through unprotected sex (WHO, 2023). In essence, this suggests that gangsterism contributes to the increase in vulnerability of young people to HIV in several ways.

Although there are several studies including works by Bujra, (2000); Anderson, Beutel and Maughan-Brown, (2007); Peltzer, Eto, Petros and Kanta (2008); Bott and Obermeyer (2013) and De Oliveira (2016), which have investigated the role of various factors on the spread of HIV, the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV is still obscure. A review of the available literature shows that there is little or no research that has been carried out to investigate how young people perceive gangsterism in the spread of HIV in South African townships like Duncan Village. The study's problem is therefore the increasing rates of HIV infection among youths and the growing

challenge of gangsterism. The link between the two is widely talked about but not well-investigated in South African townships, including Duncan Village.

1.4 Rationale of the study

The challenge of gangsterism continues to engulf South African townships as crime statistics continue to soar. This is a cause for concern because gangsterism is associated with negative social and health outcomes. As South Africa struggles to reduce the rate of new infections, especially among key populations like young people and young people using drugs, there is concern about the role of gangsterism in the spreading of HIV. The rise in gangsterism coincides with high HIV prevalence in South Africa. A study must be conducted to see how youth view gangsterism and its impact on HIV prevalence. Youth are more susceptible to being gang members or gang victims. Hence their views in this regard are important as they provide an understanding of the problem from the perspective of people affected by gangsterism and HIV.

1.5 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate young peoples' perceptions of the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV and AIDS in Duncan Village, Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality.

1.6 Objectives of the study

The following objectives were addressed in this study:

- To explore the social perceptions about gangsterism in spreading STIs including HIV and AIDS.
- To investigate the perceptions of youth on the relationship between gangsterism and sexual violence.
- To gain insights into youths' understanding of gangsterism
- To establish gang activities that are being exhibited by gangs in Duncan Village

1.7 Research Questions

The main question that was to be answered at the end of this study was 'What are the perceptions of youth on the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV/AIDS?'

- What are the social perceptions about gangsterism in spreading STIs including HIV and AIDS?
- What are the perceptions of youth on the relationship between gangsterism and sexual violence?

- What are youths' understanding of gangsterism?
- What are the gang activities exhibited by gangs in Duncan Village?

1.8 Significance of the study

In South Africa, there is limited literature on the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV especially from young people's perspective who are vulnerable to HIV and gangsterism. This is despite gangsterism being an intense social challenge in South African communities. It is the youths, as vulnerable groups, who are mostly affected by gangsterism. It was therefore imperative that a study be conducted to assess the perceptions of young people on gangsterism and its impact on the spread of HIV. Hence, this study is important because it gives insight into the perceptions of youth from townships regarding the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV. This is important because it assists the government and development agencies in formulating informed interventions on how to reduce the impact of gangsterism in the spread of HIV in South African townships. The study is also significant because it adds to the existing body of knowledge on the issue of gangsterism and the spread of HIV and AIDS among youths in South Africa generated by other studies such as Van-Wyk and Theron (2005), Maringira and Masiya (2018) and Maree (2018).

1.9 Research process

The research begins by reviewing literature that relates to gangsterism and the spread of HIV. This is important because it helps shape the study at hand and also to identify gaps that exist with regard to gangsterism and the spread of HIV. The literature review also helps the researcher to formulate adequate questions for data collection. A qualitative research approach is adopted for the current study. Data is collected from a selected sample of youths using in-depth interviews and focus groups. However, before data collection commences, permissions were sought from relevant authorities including from the research ethics committee of University of South Africa (UNISA). In conducting the study, standard ethical considerations are observed. Data collected is analysed using the thematic data analysis technique. Conclusions and recommendations are then drawn from the analysed data.

1.10 Research assumption

The main assumption of this study is that young people in South Africa perceive gangsterism as playing a driving role in the spread of HIV. This is because gangs and gangsterism are associated with high-risk behaviour that promotes the spread of HIV.

1.11 Definition of terms

Investigation- an investigation is a thorough search for facts, especially those that are hidden or need to be sorted out in a complex situation. The goal of an investigation is usually to determine how or why something happened (Collins English Dictionary, 2023). In this study, investigation would mean finding out about young people's perceptions on the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV.

Young people- refers to youth between childhood and adulthood. Young people are also defined as "the appearance, freshness, vigour, spirit (Cambridge English Dictionary, 2023). In this study, young people will be persons between the ages of 18 to 35 years.

Perceptions- can be defined as the sensory experience of the world, which includes how an individual recognizes and interprets sensory information (Oxford English Dictionary, 2023). In this study, the perception will be from young people's experiences and sensory information regarding the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV.

Role- is defined as a position or purpose that someone or something has in a situation, organization, society, or relationship (Cambridge English Dictionary, 2023). In this study, the role will refer to the position that gangsterism plays in the spread of HIV.

Gangsterism- it is the culture of belonging to organized gangs of criminals, especially involving violence (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2023). In this study, gangsterism will refer to organised gangs of criminals that involve violence.

Spread- refers to a situation where more cases of disease than expected happen in a given area or to a group of people (Ministry of Health, 2019). In this study, spread will refer to HIV transmission among young people involved in gangsterism.

HIV and AIDS- According to WHO (2023) HIV is described as an acronym for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. HIV affects the immune system of the body, which results in a person becoming vulnerable to opportunistic infections like tuberculosis, and some cancers. The development of such cancers and opportunistic infections due to the progression of HIV infection defines Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) (WHO, 2023). HIV is primarily spread by HIV-infected, blood, semen, vaginal fluids and breast milk from an infected person to an uninfected person (WHO, 2023).

1.12 Dissertation outline

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

This chapter provides a general introduction to the study. This introduction also includes the background, problem statement, and research questions, rationale of the study and objectives, as well as the significance of the study. The chapter also outlined the key assumption of the study.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

This chapter focuses on the exploration of conceptual, empirical and theoretical literature on the role of gangs and gangsterism in the spread of HIV and AIDS. The chapter presents both international and local literature on gangsterism and the spread of HIV. The chapter ends with a description of the theoretical framework that guides the study.

CHAPTER 3: Research Methodology

This chapter discusses the research design and methodology, scope of the study, target population and sampling techniques, data collection and data analysis. Chapter 3 also describes ethical principles considered throughout the study as well as the trustworthiness measures employed.

CHAPTER 4: Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the study. The chapter begins with a presentation of the demographic characteristics of the sample and then presents findings aligned with the study's objectives. The study findings are also discussed in relation to the existing literature on gangsterism and the spread of HIV.

CHAPTER 5: Discussion

Chapter 5 discusses the study findings in relation to the literature reviewed. The chapter discusses the findings according to the main themes outlined in chapter 4. The discussion also analyses the implications of particular findings in Duncan Village context.

CHAPTER 6: Conclusion, Limitations and Recommendations

Chapter 6 is an outline of the conclusion of the study aligned with the research objectives. The study's strengths, limitations, and recommendations are also outlined

in Chapter 6. In addition, the theoretical, practical and policy implications of the study findings are presented in chapter 6.

1.13 Summary

The chapter introduced the research at hand by providing a background to the study. In addition, the chapter also outlined the problem statement as well as the objectives that the research seeks to achieve at its conclusion. Furthermore, the chapter outlined the rationale, significance and the research process that was followed in conducting the current study. Lastly, to put the study into context, the chapter also provided definitions of key terms.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The previous chapter provided an introduction to the research about young people's perceptions of the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV. The current chapter discusses empirical literature that relates to gangsterism, HIV and what young people think about the effect of gangsterism on the spread of HIV. The chapter also discusses the theories underpinning the study.

2.1 HIV and AIDS among young people

According to UNICEF (2020) the issue of high HIV prevalence amongst young people is of great concern not only in South Africa but globally as well. According to UNAIDS (2019), the spread of HIV among young people remains a huge burden for global health authorities. Current global statistics show that young people aged between 15 and 24 years constitute 32% of infections world-wide (UNICEF, 2020). UNICEF (2020) continue to highlight that current data also show that youth from Southern and Eastern African regions contribute the highest number of new infections.

The high number of new HIV infections among youths is largely attributed to high-risk behaviours of youth such as having high-risk sexual behaviours, social norms,

vulnerability and poor policies put in place for the prevention of HIV among young people (Khalifa et al., 2019).

Interestingly, regardless of their indulgence in high-risk behaviour, youth often perceive low vulnerability to HIV (UNICEF, 2020). This low-risk perception of HIV infection among young people has resulted in low uptake of HIV testing services (UNICEF, 2020). In South Africa, only 38% of young women and 29% are reported to have used HIV testing services (Khalifa et al., 2019). The same trend is seen in the Southern Africa region, where a Zambian study reported that 42% of young people tested for HIV (Khalifa et al., 2019). The current rate of HIV testing among youths in South Africa is deemed insufficient for the country's goals to reduce the spread of HIV (UNICEF, 2020). Several obstacles have been identified that stop young people from getting tested for HIV. These obstacles include fear of being rejected by family, friends and the society at large (Vujovic et al., 2018). The other obstacle is that young people are concerned with stigma, discrimination and lack of confidentiality at HIV testing centres (Govender et al., 2018). There is, therefore, a need for insight into young people's preferences regarding HIV testing and factors that might influence the majority of the youths to get tested (Govender et al., 2018).

Young individuals have a lower percentage of PLWH who are virally suppressed than the adult population, in addition to the low use of HIV testing services (Khalifa et al., 2019). HIV is spreading more widely because fewer young people are virally suppressed and fewer people are taking advantage of HIV testing programs (Khalifa et al., 2019). The growing number of youth worldwide raises the possibility of new HIV infections among this demographic, thereby exacerbating the chance of HIV spreading (Khalifa et al., 2019).

The increase in the absolute number of young people described by Khalifa et al. (2019) also results in a high population density of young people in some localities like townships resulting in competition for employment opportunities (Davids et al., 2022). In South Africa, the high unemployment leads to young people especially engaging in alternative outlawed capitalism to make a living, which includes the formation of gangs (Davids et al., 2022). On the other hand, unemployment and poverty among young women lead to risk-taking social behaviours that predispose to HIV infection such as commercial sex (Zuma et al., 2022). Noteworthy, among the clients of young women who are commercial sex workers are gang members who are also associated with

multiple sexual partners leading to the spread of HIV (Karim & Baxter, 2019). In light of this, Karim and Baxter (2019) stated that there is a need to implement HIV prevention interventions among young women and young men who face the social challenges of unemployment and poverty.

2.1.2 Young people and HIV prevention interventions

According to UNAIDS (2023), young people are among the demographic categories most susceptible to HIV infection. Unprotected intercourse and sharing contaminated needles during drug misuse are the two main ways that young people get HIV (WHO, 2023). WHO (2023) continue to state that a contributing factor in the HIV epidemic among youth is a deficiency of awareness on HIV prevention. WHO (2023) further stated that the necessity of putting awareness initiatives for young people into action is shown by this lack of knowledge.

2.2 Gangsterism

In South Africa gangsterism is most popular among Coloured communities, males and in communities that exhibit gang-related risk behaviours such as the use of firearms, violence and drug abuse (Davids et al., 2022). In addition, gangsterism is most likely to develop in communities where there is high unemployment, low educational levels, poverty and a lack of meaningful structured opportunities for young people (Davids et al., 2022). These risk factors for the development of gangsterism also influence the types of gangs that are formed in different communities (Davids et al., 2022).

2.2.1 Gangster activities

This section discusses gang activities. Gangs engage in a range of activities which include violence, gender-based violence, theft and robberies, drug abuse peddling and having multiple sex partners.

Violence: Gangs are considered significant architects of violence in communities where they operate. In some instances, gang violence is not limited to streets only but can spill into school yards (Maringira, 2020). Violence perpetrated by gangs takes different forms which are emotional or physical. Violence involves exercising undue power over an individual or a group of people. In schools, the common form of violence is bullying, whereas in the street physical attacks on individuals or group of people is a common form of violence (Van der Westhuizen & Gawulayo, 2021). In some cases, people are coerced by gangs to give up their belongs failure of which they get attacked. Although females can be active gang members, a review of the available literature

shows that male gang members are at the fore-front of perpetrating violence against people (McLean, 2019).

Gender-based violence: Gangs are highly influenced by masculinity and patriarchy. They therefore show very little regard for women and or women's rights (Petrus and Desira Julie-Anne Davids, 2023). They view women as objects which they need to achieve their own goals. This is why gangs normally use female gang members as weapon carriers or spies. Gangs commit a significant amount of GBV in the community and their settings. According to UNAIDS (2020), GBV is any act 'that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering' that is directed against a person because of their biological sex, gender identity or perceived adherence to socially defined norms of masculinity and femininity. Although GBV can be experienced by both men and women, male gang members are more likely to be perpetrators of violence than victims (UNAIDS, 2020).

Studies have shown that women who are victims of GBV are likely to be at high risk of getting infected with HIV because they lose the power to make their own decisions. According to Sutton (2017), although gangs have female gang members to meet their own sexual needs, they also need decent girls outside the gang networks. However, due to negative perceptions of gangs that are out there, gang members often get rejected by decent girls. This sometimes infuriates them and they end up forcing themselves on the girls (Rosen & Kassab, 2018). All this has the potential to exacerbate the spread of HIV amongst the perpetrators and the victims alike.

Multiple sexual partners: Gang members pride themselves in having multiple sexual partners and children with different partners (Bailey et al., 2020). In the context of HIV, this is a high-risk behaviour which accelerates the spread of HIV. Women are cautioned through HIV programming not to associate with male gangsters since they become vulnerable to gender-related violence including physical and emotional abuse (Bailey et al., 2020). In addition, women are warned about their reputation which could be damaged by gang-related habits such as substance abuse or getting in conflict with the law (Bailey et al., 2020). Regardless of the cautioning, young women continue to have sexual relations with male gang members even when they are aware that the gang member, has multiple sexual partners (Sutton, 2017). Kelly and Ward (2020) explained and stated that gangster is also known to attract women because they believe they can provide protection, material goods, and romance. Men are said to do all these to keep their women happy, obedient and envied by other men (Kelly & Ward,

2020). Protection from gang enemies extends beyond the members of the gang; it also shields the woman from enemies she may have made through her involvement in gang-related activities, such as snitching, gossiping, stealing, or women who have slept with other men (Sutton, 2017). Even when a gang member is unaware of the motives behind their female partner's attack, they will frequently fight to defend her. Gang members consequently wind up with more sexual partners who are forced to comply with the demands of the gangster, thus, there is a higher probability of contracting HIV as a result of this (Frenk et al., 2020).

Drug abuse and trade: Gangsterism is also associated with drug abuse. Gangsters sell drugs and they have territories and markets for those drugs which they protect (Hesselink & Bougard, 2020). Gangs also abuse alcohol as they engage in binge drinking most of the time. This results in gang members and people who buy drugs from them being susceptible to engaging in HIV high-risk behaviour (Hesselink & Bougard, 2020). This is so as the influence of drugs usually distorts judgement. Hence gangsters by being consumers and sellers of drugs, indirectly contribute to the spread of HIV.

2.3 Gangsterism in South Africa

The issue of gangsterism existed in South Africa existed long before the attainment of democracy in South Africa. The dawn of democracy in South Africa brought with it hopes that inequality and poverty would be eradicated but the reality on the ground is that such challenges continue to exist (Geldenhuys, 2020). In a bid to earn a living or survive, young people are organising themselves into groups who engage in criminal activities such as robbery, theft, violence, drug peddling, assassinations and fraud (Geldenhuys, 2020). This is largely fuelled by rising unemployment, social inequality and to some extent poor service delivery (Geldenhuys, 2020). Amid all these challenges, it is the youth that have been heavily affected. As such, young people, particularly young men, have been more susceptible to engaging in social delinquent activities such as gangsterism, theft, robberies, violence, drug peddling and drug abuse (Geldenhuys, 2022).

Currently, crime statistics in South Africa are amongst the highest in the world (Bhorat, Lilenstein, Monnakgotla, Thornton & Van Der Zee, 2017). As a result, South Africa is considered one of the most violent countries in the world (Scorgie, Baron, Stadler, Venables, Brahmhatt, Mmari & Delany-Moretlwe, 2017). Youth aged between 15 to 35 who stay in poor communities and townships commit and experience violence as

well as gang-related anti-social activities. These not only affect their mental health but put them at risk of getting infected by diseases such as HIV (Scorgie, et al., 2017; Antunes & Ahlin, 2017).

According to Maringira & Masiya (2018) young people voluntarily join gangs or they are coerced into joining the gangs. Various strategies are used by gangs to coercively recruit members. The first strategy includes threatening the prospective recruit's family. This then pushes the targeted youth to join the gang to protect his family (Maringira & Masiya, 2018). Alternatively, the gang just threatens violence to the young individual if he or she refuses to be part of the gang (Maringira & Masiya, 2018).. When one joins a gang the initiation includes, committing a crime and evading police afterwards. Once an individual joins a gang, it is difficult to quit or even to defect to another gang because that would mean the defector will be killed (Petrus & Kinnes, 2019).

Besides cohesion, some young people join gangs voluntarily. According to Desira Julie-Anne Davids (2023), several factors attract individuals to be gang members. These include loyalty (reliability and support from the gang), esteem (earning a rank, identity, superiority, reputation, status, attention, sexual interests and gaining respect), acceptance and belonging (a sense of belonging from gangs while neglected by family) physiological and self-actualisation needs (Ralph-Morrow, 2020).

Besides these internal and personal factors that engulf individuals in gangsterism, external factors also attract individuals, these include; entertainment (pleasurable experiences, relief from boredom, parties), substance availability (drugs are acquired and provided by the gang), material gain (tax-free material and financial resources), dominance (a sense of superiority, access to weapons, freedom from responsibility, protection, strength) and survival (transporting and selling drugs for financial gain) (Motlafi, 2018).

Another factor that can be considered in the South African context is that of geographical location in relationship to wealth, poverty and race. According to Maringira and Masiya, (2018) poor townships or informal settlements next to more affluent "white suburbs" (leafy suburbs, luxury cars, shopping centres), lead to youth having a quest for a more luxurious lifestyle. A sense of deprivation develops during an individual's efforts to make a life within environments characterised by poverty and economic vulnerability, which can lead to gangsterism as the youths develop (McLean, 2019). These situations make it easy for adolescents (especially males) to admire the

gang members who are displaying their power through violence and their affluence through access to material resources like substances, cell phones, glamour, power and the admiration of girls (Sutton, 2017). This is basic human nature and in the South African context, there is no difference.

2.4 Gangsterism and the spread of HIV

Past biomedical and behavioural research on reducing the spread of HIV has primarily focussed on the individual at risk. Literature is scarce on the social and cultural processes, which influence how HIV is spread. Motlafi (2018) note that HIV transmission involves risk behaviours in which people often engage in intimate contact. Consequently, the social relationships within which individuals are embedded can greatly influence the transmission of the virus. These relationships can include sexual partners, relationships with family, friends, co-workers and communal associations. These relationships are important because they can have a direct or indirect effect on individuals' understanding of risk behaviour, willingness to engage in sexual risk behaviours, self-efficacy and access to resources (Hammett et al, 2018). The ability of these relationships to exert influence may stem from providing individuals with emotional, motivational, monetary and informational support (Katz, 2018). Gangs as a social group, engage in high-risk behaviour which exposes people within and outside the gangs to HIV (Motlafi, 2018).

The relationship between gangsterism and the spread of HIV is well-documented in some contexts. In addition, there is some evidence showing that HIV and AIDS are among the causes of gangsterism, and there is overwhelming evidence that gangsterism exacerbates the spread of HIV (Fuge, Tsourtos & Miller, 2021). The argument that gangsterism results from HIV and AIDS stems from the fact those children who lose their homes and sometimes identity due to HIV and AIDS-related deaths of their guardians or parents often find themselves homeless and living on the streets. As a result, surviving children are forced to affiliate with gangs as a means of survival and finding identity (HSRC, 2019).

Regardless of HIV increasing gangsterism, gangsterism itself spreads HIV through the support of risky behaviours and sexual aggression towards the weak and female members of society (Rachel, Roman and Donga, 2022). Rachel, Roman and Donga, (2022) note that under volatile conditions in a gang-infested environment, acts of violence against women include strategic use of rape and gang rape, forced pregnancy, forced marriages/relationship and sexual slavery. This is usually done with

little or no consideration for safety against HIV and STIs (Jacobs and Slabbert, 2019). As a result, both the victim and perpetrator are put at high risk of contracting HIV (Jacobs and Slabbert, 2019). Consequentially in South Africa, sexual violence is the crime experienced by most women with Stats SA (2018) reporting that in 2018, 68% of South African women experienced a sexual crime. Gangs, due to their beliefs and masculinity-centred views are among the chief perpetrators of rape exposing people to the risk of contracting HIV (Dickson-Gomez, Quinn, Broaddus & Pacella, 2017).

In addition, due to fear that gangs instil in their victims, very few victims report rape cases and seek information concerning their health in time. According to Sui et al., (2021) rape victims are often reluctant to report rape cases or seek treatment due to fear of retribution, stigma and lack of trust in legal and social support systems. In the South African context, the conviction of rape-accused gang members was below 33% and the sentence given to the convicted gang members who committed the crime is perceived as not being a deterrent enough to potential gangster offenders (Sui et al., 2021).

Various studies have established that sexual assault, exploitation and coercion are rampant within gangs (Brookings, 2013; Wise, 2013; Berelowitz et al. 2013; Beckett et al. 2013; Coy et al. 2013). Existing research also show that girls within gangs are often treated as commodities and are expected to have sex with members of their gangs, or ensnare rival gang member thus exposing them to HIV infection through engaging multiple partners (Sui et al., 2021). It has also been identified that many unwanted sexual encounters, including sex with someone incapacitated by alcohol, are not regarded and perceived as rape by gang members who view rape as only involving explicit force between strangers (Khan and Arendse, 2021).

Sexual encounters among gang members increase the risk of spreading and contracting HIV because gang members frequently engage in sex whilst intoxicated by drugs and or alcohol (Sui et al., 2021). Drugs and alcohol impair perceptions making it difficult for youths to use condoms to prevent the spread of HIV (Khan and Arendse, 2021). In addition, alcohol and other drugs can create “expectancies” such as the expectation that those who consume substances are more sexually aroused, less able to control their sexual urges, or unable to use condoms or other protection (Sui et al., 2021).

Another activity that fuels the spread of HIV and is consistent with gangs is group sex. According to Kelly & Ward (2020), group sex is also consistent with the general sexual

expectations and gang ideals of masculinity. Gang members are expected to have insatiable sexual appetites and girls are generally expected to be sexually available to them (Kelly & Ward 2020). In a study by Dickson-Gomez et al. (2017), it was revealed that male gang members almost universally endorsed the norm that boys were supposed to have multiple, concurrent sex partners. However, such expectations create ambivalence as girls and boys reported having sex when they didn't want to, but because gang norms dictate that both boys and girls should want or at least submit to sex at any time, many boys and girls were not quite willing to call such experiences coerced or forced sex which exacerbates the spread of HIV (Jacobs & Slabbert, 2019).

Furthermore, gangsterism worsens the HIV situation in that it fuels violence to an extent that young people view HIV as less harmful compared to the immediate danger of gang violence (Kelly & Ward 2020). Kelly & Ward (2020) argues that for young men living in an environment of extreme violence, where human life is not valued the desire to protect themselves from HIV is seen as of minor importance. Furthermore, love which is equated with sex, is used as an escape from violent surroundings (Kelly & Ward 2020). Jacobs and Slabbert (2019) in their analysis of HIV and township youth culture in Alexandra, South Africa found that many young people feel that since 'one's time to die is predetermined, it is not necessary to protect oneself against HIV. In addition, the dangers and perils of daily township life may often seem more tangible than the dangers associated with HIV and AIDS resulting in the increased spread of HIV (Jacobs and Slabbert, 2019).

In addition, from a gang perspective, women are viewed as "*property of the gang*", and are expected to be loyal to their gang boyfriends (Jacobs & Slabbert, 2019). In a related study, it was established that young men who were not affiliated but were oppressed by the violence encountered in the gang environment, are influenced by the particular understandings of masculine identity that gang culture perpetuates which includes sexual violence towards women (Rachel, Roman and Donga, 2022).

Engaging in high-risk behaviour is considered to be among the causes of the spread of HIV (UNAIDS, 2020). This high-risk behaviour includes having sex with multiple partners, using the same needle when injecting drugs and drawing tattoos, forced sex and not taking anti-retroviral therapy (ART). Lack of education and awareness is blamed for such behaviour. It has been identified that education and awareness from people outside gangs are not usually taken seriously (Kelly & Ward 2020). As a result, gangsters end up engaging in risky behaviours, which leads to the spread of HIV. Due

to this lack of awareness and education concerning HIV and AIDS, gangs and gang members unknowingly spread HIV among themselves (Kelly & Ward, 2020). For instance, gangs rape women without using protection even when they do not know their status or their victim's status.

Generally, gang activities are harmful to the community. In the context of Duncan Village, the area in which the proposed study is located, gang activities such as drug peddling, abuse, theft, robberies, multiple sexual partners and sexual offences such as rape and sexual assault are a cause for concern.

2.5 Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework is a collection of theories and models from the literature, is a fundamental part of most research studies, and underpins the research questions (Polit & Beck, 2020). It is a systematic guide for the research questions, designs, implementation, and interpretation of the study and provides the reasons for the study. This study is informed by two theories, which are namely, the labelling theory and the differential-association theory.

2.5.1 Labelling theory

Labelling theory provides a distinctively sociological approach that focuses on the role of social labelling in the development of crime and deviance. The theory was developed by Becker in 1963 (Becker, 2018). The theory assumes that although deviant behaviour can initially stem from various causes and conditions, once individuals have been labelled or defined as deviants, they often face new problems that stem from the reactions of self and others to negative stereotypes (stigma) that are attached to the deviant label (Becker, 2018). These problems in turn can increase the likelihood of deviant and criminal behaviour becoming stable and chronic (Becker, 2018). Deviant labels attached to persons may include drug addicts, alcoholics, violent gangs; criminals sex offenders, prostitutes and psychiatric patients.

According to Sjöström (2017), deviant labelling may lead to involvement in deviant groups, which is by itself an important risk factor for crime and deviance. Elaborating on this point, Becker (2018) argued that deviant groups represent a source of social support in which deviant labels are accepted, while at the same time providing collective rationalizations, attitudes, and opportunities that encourage and facilitate deviant behaviour. Becker (2018) suggests that labelling may increase juvenile

involvement in deviant peer groups due to three main processes. First, labelling can bring on rejection from conventional peers and from other community members who may fear and mistrust them. For example, parents may prevent their children from associating with known delinquents. By associating with deviant groups, known delinquents can receive a more positive image of themselves from the standpoint of significant others (Spencer, 2018). Second, labelling may result in withdrawal from encounters with conventional peers, because such encounters may entail shame, embarrassment, and uneasiness. Finally, youths tend to make friends with those who are similar to themselves. Youths who have a deviant self-concept may seek the friendship of individuals who share the deviant self-concept (Spencer, 2018).

According to Spencer (2018), there is a high danger that people who are vulnerable and impoverished are likely to be labelled as deviants even without evidence. This is usually driven by entrenched stereotypes and stigma which tend to associate disadvantaged social groups with delinquent behaviours. Sjöström (2017) have suggested that formal labelling may be more likely to trigger stigma for members of the impoverished because such groups are already associated with stigma, to begin with. Existing research shows that there is evidence that young people from less privileged backgrounds are more likely to be labelled delinquent as opposed to their counterparts from privileged backgrounds (Sjöström, 2017). Perhaps this explains the existence of the majority of gangs in poor townships in the South African context.

The stigma that is associated with deviant labelling can result in exclusion from social relations and legitimate opportunities. According to Spencer (2018), there are two main processes through which exclusion can result from deviant labelling. First, conventional others, including peers, community members, and gate-keepers in the opportunity structure for example teachers and employers, may reject or devalue the labelled person (Spencer, 2018). Again, stereotypical images of criminality can become defining features of individuals labelled as criminal offenders, thereby bringing on negative reactions by others that are driven by fear, mistrust, self-righteousness, and so on, as well as people's fear of being associated with stigma (Spencer, 2018).

Second, labelling may lead to social withdrawal due to anticipated rejection or devaluation. Becker (2018) has argued that the social interaction of "normal" people and stigmatized individuals often entails uneasiness, embarrassment, ambiguity, and intense efforts at impression management. Becker (2018) argues that individuals

labelled as deviants often internalize commonly held beliefs about how people devalue and react negatively to labelled deviants. Labelled individuals may often expect others to devalue and even reject themselves, thereby avoiding situations in which they anticipate that their deviant label may stir up stigma. In turn, “withdrawal may lead to constricted social networks and fewer attempts at seeking more satisfying, higher-paying jobs” (Becker, 2018).

2.5.2 Differential Association Theory

Another theory that will guide this study is known as the differential association theory propounded by Edwin Sutherland (McGlamory-Evans, 2019). The theory addresses how people learn deviance. According to the differential association theory, the environment plays a key role in deciding which norms people violate. The theory further outlines that people within a particular reference group provide norms of conformity and deviance and therefore heavily influence the way other people look at the world, including how they react (McGlamory-Evans, 2019). McGlamory-Evans (2019) advances that people learn their norms from various socialising agents such as parents, family, friends, teachers and media among others. In essence, people learn criminal behaviour from interactions with others, especially in intimate groups. For instance, gangs provide an environment in which youths learn to become deviants and criminals. These gangs define themselves as countercultural and glorify violence, crime and retaliation as means to achieve social status. Gang members learn to be deviant as they conform and embrace their gangs’ norms. Deviant activities that characterise gangs include rape, drug peddling, abuse, and multiple partners (McGlamory-Evans, 2019). These activities are believed to exacerbate the spread of HIV amongst youth in areas where gangs exist.

According to Sutherland, there is a difference between criminals and non-criminals, not so much from the goals that guide their lives, but from the different means they choose to achieve. Sutherland (1939) presented nine postulates. The first is that criminal behaviour can be learned, the second is that criminal behaviour can be learned in collaboration with others, through a communication process, and the third postulate is that the main part of learning about criminal behaviour is realized within primary groups. Furthermore, the fourth postulate of the differential association theory notes that the learning process about criminal behaviour includes the technique of committing penal crimes that sometimes are very complicated or very simple and in a specific way aiming motivations, encouragements, rationalizations and attitudes. The

fifth postulate is that the way that motivation is managed depends on fact if the individual is in contact with those people who have positive definitions people who approve of criminal behaviour or those who have negative definitions of criminal behaviour who may punish them. The sixth postulate of the differential association theory is that someone becomes a criminal because of the reason that he gets more definitions that allow criminal behaviour and fewer definitions that punish him. The seventh postulate is that contact with those who approve of the violation of norms or denounce it, makes changes in participation, duration, importance and intensity. The eighth postulate described by Sutherland is that the learning process of criminal behaviour includes all the mechanisms that are part of the whole lesson. the ninth postulate is that criminal behaviour is an expression of general needs and values.

2.6. The link between theoretical and empirical findings

These different theories are all essential to understanding gangs and different scholars may choose to view gangs from different perspectives. One may however consider a collective outlook on gangs that pays attention to integrating a rather holistic approach for the formation of gangs as related to the spread of HIV.

2.7 Conclusion

The chapter discussed HIV among youths in South Africa. Furthermore, the chapter discussed gangsterism under headings that include “types of gangs” and “gang activities”. Through the discussion, several deviant and high-risk behaviours that gangs engage in were revealed. The chapter also provided a discussion, based on existing literature, on how gangs and their associated activities contribute to the spread of HIV among youth. The chapter also discussed the theories underpinning the current study. These theories discussed are the labelling theory and the differential association theory. The next chapter will focus on research design and methodology.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Discussed in this chapter are: the study design, philosophical perspective, study setting, population, data collection method and ethical considerations. This chapter outlines the methodology used to conduct the research. It addresses processes used to recruit participants and collect data on young people's perceptions of the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV and AIDS. A case of Duncan village in the Buffalo City Metro Municipality. The specific steps involved in gaining ethical approval from the Ethics Committee (Higher Degrees Committee) of the College of Human Science at UNISA are also defined.

3.1 Interpretivist philosophical perspective

In research, a paradigm is a general or world view or philosophical view that guides how people see research (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). A paradigm has four aspects, these are methodology, ontology, epistemology, and axiology. There are many research paradigms, however, the most common are positivism and interpretivism (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019).

This study was guided by an interpretive paradigm. Interpretivism is a paradigm that is grounded in social sciences. Its core principles are subjectivity and flexibility (Kumar 2020:38). Interpretive scholars believe that because of the diversity and dynamics of society research output should attempt to capture the personal differences that come with this diversity (Kumar, 2020). This diversity is a function of personal experiences, backgrounds belief systems and values. Interpretivists therefore believe that human beings cannot be studied like other objects in the scientific world. Flexible rather than systematic approaches to research are required to capture differences in perception,

belief and experience among human beings generally described as social actors under the paradigm (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019).

The study was interpretive in the sense that it captured individual experiences and observations of the young people's perceptions of the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV. The researcher ensured that participants' experiences were not manipulated or modified throughout this study since they were treated as the actual reality of the situation. The researcher was interested in finding out the young people's perceptions of the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV. The interpretive nature of this study was further motivated by the fact that not many studies have been conducted in this area.

3.2 Research Approach

The study was based on a qualitative approach. According to Polit and Beck (2020), qualitative research involves the use of exploratory and descriptive research to gain insight into opinions, motivations and underlying reasons. Creswell (2020) further adds that qualitative research is the key instrument utilised by qualitative researchers to collect data through observations and interviews. In qualitative studies, the researcher focuses on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem and not the meaning that the researcher brings to the research or that writers express in the literature (Creswell, 2020). The use of a qualitative approach enabled the researcher to explore and describe young people's perceptions of the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV.

3.3 Research Design

Kumar (2020) defines research design as a plan, structure and strategy of investigation conceived to obtain answers to a research question or problem. In this research study, the researcher used an exploratory descriptive research design. The choice of research design and data collection method in this study was based on the research objectives, thus, it was aimed at exploring the perceptions about gangsterism in spreading STIs including HIV. According to Creswell (2020), exploratory research is employed when the objective of the study is to explore an area where little is known. Hence the researcher was interested in finding out about the young people's perceptions of the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV, the researcher used exploratory research to explore the phenomenon so that the researcher could gain

insight into the phenomenon. The descriptive research design was also used in this study hence it is a qualitative study. Creswell (2020) asserts that the primary purpose of a descriptive design is to describe the situation, preferences, practices, opinions, concerns or interests of the phenomenon under study. In this study, the descriptive design was adopted to help give a clear description of the young people's perceptions of the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV.

3.4 Study Setting

Polit and Beck (2020) define the study setting as the physical setting where the study will happen. This study was conducted in Duncan Village Area in Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. The image below shows the study setting.



Figure 3.1: Location of Duncan Village (Bing images, 2023)

3.5 Study Population

The study population refers to the whole aggregation of cases in which the researcher has an interest (Polit & Beck, 2020). The study population for this study was young people between the ages of 18 and 35 irrespective of gender and who reside in Duncan Village.

3.6 Sampling, and sample size

A sample refers to a subset of a population (individuals, elements or objects) or a group selected to act as representatives of a population as a whole (Ramadass and Aruni 2019). Polit and Beck (2020) further define sampling as a process of selecting a group of people, events, behaviour, or other elements with which to conduct a study. In this

study, the researcher used non-probability purposive sampling to choose participants. The purposive sampling strategy assumes that the researchers' knowledge or judgment of the research population and its dynamics allows them to select the individuals in the sample (Polit & Beck, 2020). In this study, the researcher used non-probability purposive sampling to choose participants. The researcher's judgement of the sample was based on the age of the participants which was confirmed by their identification documents.

The sample size for this study was 20 participants which was determined by data saturation. Polit and Beck (2020) explain that data saturation refers to the point where no additional data can be elicited from further sampling of a population. The inclusion and exclusion criteria for the sample were:

Inclusion criteria:

- Young people aged between 18 - 35 living in Duncan village.
- Young people who are willing to take part in the study.

Exclusion criteria

The criteria for exclusion in a sample were:

- Young people between the ages of 18-35 years are not willing to take part in the study.

3.7 Data Collection

Data collection relates to the methodical process of acquiring information that is pertinent to the resolution of the identified research problem (Iyadurai, 2023). The researcher collected data using semi-structured interviews. Creswell (2020) describes an interview as a dialogue during which the interviewer asks questions directed at obtaining information and a better understanding of the interviewee's perceptions, experiences, and knowledge. Therefore, the interview is an effective mechanism for acquiring insightful information on people's behaviour, views, attitudes and meanings they allocate to critical issues relating to their lives (Tobi & Kampen, 2018).

In-depth semi-structured interviews were utilised to obtain views and understanding of individual participants' perspectives. In this regard, the researcher prepared an interview guide beforehand for directing the proceedings during interviews. A field

notebook was used to document observations of the participants' non-verbal behaviour and communication during the interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Furthermore, the researcher used an audio-recorder with the participants' concurrence, to ensure that none of the participants' interview information was omitted, lost or missed (Aydin, Kaplan, Atilgan & Gürel, & 2019). The interviews were conducted in isi-Xhosa and each interview lasted 30 minutes.

3.8 Data Analysis

For the thematic data analysis of the study, the researcher adopted and applied six phases as identified by Braun and Clark (2022). In phase 1, The researcher acquainted herself with the data collected by listening to the interview audio recordings and reading the notes captured in the notebook for corroboration. Phase 2 the researcher, while listening to the audio recordings, created codes to link each response to its relevant participants, each of whom was allocated a code ranging from "Participant 1" to "Participant 20". Phase 3 involved the researcher generating individual themes from the groups of the participants' statements or responses. The phase was the researcher's review and allocated each of the individual themes following the objectives of the study. Phase 5, the researcher externalised the preliminary analysis by checking with other researchers in the field whether logical, objectives and sound processes were followed. Phase 6, the researcher submitted the preliminary analysis of the findings to the supervisor for re-checking before producing and writing the final research report.

3.9 Measures to Ensure Trustworthiness of the Study

Trustworthiness or rigour of a study refers to the extent of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ascertain the quality of a study (Polit & Beck, 2020). These include credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

3.9.1. Credibility

According to Aydin, Kaplan, Atilgan & Gürel (2019) credible research outcomes are true, credible and believable. Tan (2017) states that credibility demands that researchers apply acceptable research methodologies. Also, for a study to be credible, it must involve respondents who can respond to research questions. Acceptable research methods were applied and documented in this study to ensure credibility. The

researcher also pre-tested data collection tools to ascertain that they collected relevant data which could effectively meet the research objectives, thus enhancing credibility.

3.9.2. Dependability

Dependability refers to the stability of data over time and conditions; evidence that is consistent and stable (Majid, 2018). According to Yona (2020), dependability mainly focuses on the documentation of steps taken and decisions made during analysis. To ensure dependability, the researcher described all the processes and procedures that were applied in the research methodology. Furthermore, the researcher conducted a pilot study with a few participants who met the inclusion criteria. This pilot study was very useful in perfecting or improving the final study tool and questions. It also helped to inform and identify unexpected issues that were likely to hinder the collected data from being consistent and stable. Moreover, the researcher ensured that the questions posed to the participants were aligned with the purpose of the study and the actual problem to be resolved (Richard 2019).

3.9.3. Confirmability

Confirmability is a quality relating to the degree to which third parties can confirm research outcomes as true (Kyngäs, Kääriäinen & Elo, 2020). Kyngäs et al. (2020) view confirmability as the extent to which research outcomes are corroborated by the collected data. Confirmability is also similar to reliability in quantitative research, it is only possible if other researchers follow the process identically for the results to be compared. If the data collected can confirm that the results and conclusions of a study are true, then confirmability is attained.

3.9.4. Transferability

Transferability, which refers to the extent to which findings are useful to persons in other settings, is different from other aspects of research in that readers determine how applicable the findings are to their situations (Holloway & Galvin, 2023). In line with Tobi and Kampen's (2018) views, the researcher provided comprehensive and contextualized descriptive information to allow other researchers to make inferences about the findings in other settings. In qualitative studies, research output possesses transferability as quality if its outcome can be generalised to other contexts (Holloway & Galvin, 2023). According to Aydın, Kaplan, Atilgan & Gürel (2019), data saturation enhances transferability. Saturated data which captures as many angles as possible

of the phenomenon of interest also makes it possible for a researcher to transfer findings to other contexts (Holloway & Galvin, 2023).

3.10 The Ethical Considerations

Ethics are important professional practices that require the researcher to respect the rights of human subjects involved when conducting a study. For this reason, this study considered the following:

3.10.1. Permission to conduct a study

The researcher requested and obtained permission to conduct this study from the UNISA Ethics Committee. In addition, permission to carry out this research from Duncan Village was also sought from the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality councillor and the head of the NGOs.

3.10.2. Informed consent

Silvia (2020) argues that a written consent form must be administered and signed by every participant as proof that they would have consented to participate in the research study. Silvia (2020) further argues that this consent form should detail information about the participants' rights. For instance, participants must be well informed that they have the right to decline to participate at any stage if they choose to do so. In this regard, participants of this study signed the consent form which was set as proof that they agreed to be part of this research.

3.10.3. Right to equity, human dignity and protection against harm

In any social research, participants' dignity must be protected and research should not cause any harm to the people involved in the study. Clark-Kazak (2017) suggests that the right to equity, human dignity, and protection against harm are incorporated into the following two rights:

The Right to Self-Determination: This means that participants should not be forced to participate in a research study. Hence participants must voluntarily choose whether they want to participate in the study or not, without any fear or risk of prejudicial treatment. It also means that people have the right to probe questions, refuse to give certain information and withdraw from the study at any stage. In short, participants' contribution to the research study should only be by their freewill.

The Right to Full Disclosure: This means that people's right to make informed, voluntary decisions about the study requires full disclosure. In providing full disclosure the participants should be informed of the nature and purpose of conducting the study. They must be also informed about how the study will affect them, and the benefits and potential risks encountered during their participation. Importantly, the researcher should disclose the right of the participant to decline participation or to withdraw at any stage if they choose to do so.

It is important to note that, the right to full disclosure and the right to self-determination forms the foundation of informed consent. The researcher provided the participants with an information sheet that had relevant information to acquaint them with the entire research process.

3.10.4 Right to anonymity and confidentiality

Anonymity and confidentiality are important ethical practices that were considered in this research. During the data collection process, anonymity and confidentiality were designed to protect the privacy of human subjects who participated in the study (Kumar, 2021). Participants of this study were assured of the right to anonymity and by so doing, the researcher assigned number codes or pseudonyms while conducting interviews. These pseudonyms were codes such as Participant 1 to protect their identity.

To maintain confidentiality, participants were assured that the information they provided to the researcher was to be kept confidential and not to be used for any other purposes except for this study and only accessible to this researcher.

3.10.5. Justice

Another important ethical issue that this researcher followed during the research process is justice. Brannen (2017) asserts that the primary rights in upholding the principle of justice are the right to fair treatment and the right to privacy

The right to fair treatment requires the researcher to equitably distribute the risks and benefits of the research. Yin (2018) note that the issue of fair treatment is particularly observed during sample selection. The author states that in selecting study participants, researchers are prejudiced towards selecting people with diminished

autonomy such as those who are poor, or mentally challenged. Saunders et al (2019) further indicates that such people are less likely to refuse to participate and are vulnerable to coercion. Given this, the researcher did not recruit participants who were mentally ill. In upholding the right to fair treatment, Aiyede & Muganda (2022) further caution against prejudicing people who withdraw from the study, this prejudice may be in the form of withholding health education to those who decline to participate in the study. Considering this, the researcher will equitably ensure all benefits like understanding and gaining insight into the causes of gangsterism in their society. It will further enlighten the society on the effects of gangsterism on young people.

The right to privacy: This forms the second right enshrined in the principle of justice. Blaikie and Priest (2017) define the right to privacy as the liberty of people to control the time, extent, and circumstances in which their personal information can be shared or not shared. The private information includes beliefs, practices, opinions, and records. To uphold the right to privacy, Creswell (2020) recommends the maintenance of strict confidentiality in handling personal information which includes ensuring anonymity. To uphold this right, participants will not be asked to disclose their names and all recordings of interviews will be kept confidentially in password-secure files, whose passwords are known only to the researcher. Interviews with the participants will also be conducted in a private room and they will be assured that all the information they share will remain confidential.

3.10.6. Beneficence

The principle of beneficence entails the researcher to minimise harm and maximise the benefits. Two rights are incorporated from this principle, that is; the right to freedom from harm and discomfort as well as the right to be protected from exploitation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The right to freedom from harm and discomfort requires the study not to cause any harm or discomfort to the participants. The researcher should minimise, and avoid any form of harm or any information that may embarrass participants or endanger their lives, homes, jobs and social life. This is in line with Creswell and Poth, (2017) assertions that participants should not be subjected to any form of discomfort during the study. This study involved the interviewing of human subjects and did not experience any form of harm that jeopardized the participants of the study. Such forms of harm as described by Polit and Beck (2020) may include financial, emotional,

physical, or social harm. In this study, the researcher avoided asking very sensitive questions and made it a point that participants had the right to decline being further interviewed whenever they felt uncomfortable.

Freedom from exploitation is a right that serves to protect participants from any disadvantages through their participation in the study (Polit and Beck, 2020). To ensure that participants are not exploited in any way, Aiyede & Muganda (2022) recommends that the researcher must assure participants that their contribution to the study will not negatively affect them. For example, the participants of this study were assured that their contribution or refusal to contribute was not going to prejudice their treatment at school. Brannen (2017) further notes that the relationship that is built between the researcher and the participant should be used to do good rather than cause harm to the participant. In doing so, this study used these relationships to provide health education to reduce the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.

3.11 Conclusion

The chapter outlines the methodology that was followed in conducting the research. The methodology was designed to assist the researcher in generating knowledge relating to youth perceptions of the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV. Thus, the chapter discussed the philosophy underpinning this study. In addition, the approach and design adopted for this study were outlined. The chapter also discussed the research sample, population, sampling, data collection, analysis and ethical considerations that were observed in conducting this study. The next chapter focuses on data analysis.

CHAPTER 4

STUDY FINDINGS

The previous chapter discussed the methodology that was followed to investigate young people's perceptions of the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV. This chapter presents the findings from data collected and analysed to describe young people's perceptions of the role of gangsterism in spreading HIV. This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section outlines the sample's biographical

information. The second section of the chapter focuses on presenting the findings in response to the objectives of the current study.

4.1 Biographical information of the participants

This section discusses the distribution of the sample following the biographical information such as; age, race, gender, employment status and the duration of stay in Duncan village.

4.1.1. Sample demographic characteristics of the participants

Table 4.1.1: Demographics of participants (n=20)

Participants	Age	Gender	Level education	Occupation	Duration of stay
Participant 1	23	Female	Matric	Unemployed	9 years
Participant 2	20	Male	Matric	Unemployed	9 years
Participant 3	19	Male	Matric	Student	9 years
Participant 4	18	Female	Matric	Students	9 years
Participant 5	18	Female	Matric	Student	9 years
Participant 6	22	Female	Matric	Unemployed	9 years
Participant 7	18	Male	Matric	Student	9 years
Participant 8	21	Female	Matric	Unemployed	9 years
Participant 9	27	Male	No Qualification	Unemployed	9years
Participant 10	30	Female	Diploma	Formally employed	2 years
Participant 11	25	Male	Degree	Informally employed	2 years
Participant 12	35	Male	Matric	Unemployed	8 years
Participant 13	35	Female	Diploma	Unemployed	8 years
Participant 14	18	Female	Matric	Unemployed	9 years
Participant 15	19	Female	Diploma	Informally employed	5 years
Participant 16	21	Female	Diploma	Informally employed	9 years
Participant 17	26	Male	Degree	Formally employed	1 year
Participant 18	24	Female	Diploma	Informally employed	9 years
Participant 19	29	Male	Degree	Unemployed	9 years
Participant 20	28	Female	Degree	Informally employed	9 years
Total	N=20 (100%)				

Table 4.1.1 indicates that most of the participants who took part in this study were aged between 18 and 35 years and they constituted 55% of all the participants. Furthermore, 20% of the participants were aged between 26-30 years while 25% were aged between 31-35 years. The researcher feels comfortable with the fact that all the ages between 18-35 are represented in the study. The researcher also collected data regarding the race of the participants. This information was important because it helped the researcher to determine the distribution of the participants by race. Results of the data

collected show that the participants belonged to two races which are colored and African. The majority 90% of the participants were Black African whilst the other 10% were of coloured race. This result reflects the reality prevailing on the ground which shows that Duncan village is a dominantly black African community. The researcher also gathered data regarding the gender of the participants. This information was important because it helped the researcher to ascertain the gender distribution of the sample from which data was collected.

The majority 55% of the participants were females whilst male participants constituted 45% of the total sample. The research also gathered data concerning the occupations of the youth who participated in this study. The participants were asked to respond indicating whether they were formally employed, informally employed, student or unemployed. 45% of the participants were not employed. Twenty percent (20%) were informally employed, whereas only 15% were formally employed. Twenty percent (20%) of the participants were students. The results essentially show that a majority 65% were not formally employed. This supports recent information which points to high unemployment among youth in townships.

The researcher probed for data concerning the participant's level of education. The participants were asked to respond indicating whether they have a matric, diploma or degree as their highest level of education. The results posted above show that 45% of the participants indicated that their highest education qualification was a matric, 25% indicated that they had a diploma and 20% of the participants indicated that they had a degree as their highest academic qualification. Only 5% of the participants did not have any educational qualifications. The researcher then collected data on the period that each participant resided in Duncan village. Responses ranged from 1 year to more than nine years. This information was important in determining how the participants were spread in terms of the period they had spent residing in Duncan Village. The majority (70%) of the participants had stayed in Duncan village for more than 9 years. Ten percent (10%) of the participants indicated that they had stayed in Duncan village for 6-8 years 11 months, and the other 10% indicated that they had stayed in Duncan village for a period ranging from 1 to 2 years 11 months. Furthermore, 5% of the participants indicated that they had stayed in Duncan village for a year whilst the other 5% indicated that they had lived in Duncan village for a period ranging from 3 to 5 years and 11 months.

4.2. Perception of the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV

This section provides an analysis and interpretation of data that was collected concerning youth perceptions of the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV. The data has been grouped into themes that correspond with the objectives of the study. The table below summarises the main themes of the study

Table 4.2: Emerging themes, young people’s perceptions of gangsterism and the spread of HIV in Duncan village

Main theme	Theme	Sub-theme
Understanding gangsterism	Youths understanding of gangsterism	
Gangsterism and the spread of STIs and HIV	Gang-related activities fueling the spread of HIV	
	Gang activities and how they fuel the spread of HIV	
Gangsterism and sexual violence	Impact of gangsterism on sexual violence	
	Role played by gangs which lead to violation of women’s sexual rights	Proliferation of dangerous masculinity beliefs Drug peddling and abuse
	Sexual violence and the spread of HIV	
Gang behaviours	Gang behaviours	Witnessed gangster behaviours in Duncan Village
	Behaviours exhibited by gangs	
	Perceptions of gangster activities accelerating the spread of HIV	

4.2.1 Youth’s understanding of gangsterism

The research solicited responses regarding the participant’s understanding of gangsterism. Gathering this information was important because it enabled the researcher to determine participant’s knowledge about gangsterism. Numerous views emerged about what participants understood by gangsterism. Essentially, **most** of the responses gathered from the participants showed that participants know gangsterism as being associated with; crime, drugs, violence, lack of direction and sexual promiscuity. This was depicted in responses shared by the participants. For instance, participant 1 shared that:

“For me, I think my understanding of gangsterism is a group of ignorant young people who have no future and then come together and form a group that is

involved in gun robberies, substance abuse and generally breaking laws in the community. That's what I understand about gangsterism."

Similarly, participant 2 pointed out that gangsterism is an act of forming a group that engages in behaviours such as violence, crimes, use of drugs, theft, vandalism, and assault. This is revealed in a response shared by participant 2 as follows:

"My understanding of gangsterism is that we speak of behaviours of gangsters, Gangsters are then people that belong to a gang, gang which is then a group of people that ascribe to same beliefs thereby exhibiting such behaviours as violence, crimes, use of drugs, intimidation, vandalism, theft assault and all other things you can think of that are violent."

Participant 4 described gangsterism as a grouping of people who engage in criminal acts. This is seen when the participant said:

"Gangsterism is about groups of people engaging in criminal acts"

Furthermore, Participant 7's understanding revealed that gangsterism is seen as a group of people who engage in illegal activities including violating other citizens' rights. This can be seen in the following response provided by the participant:

"Gangsterism is the criminal acts done by a formed group of people, usually men to break the law and violate the rights of others."

Drawing from the responses shared above, it can be derived that the general understanding of gangsterism is that gangsterism refers to a group of people who share the same beliefs and behave in a deviant way. Majority of participants identified behaviours such as violence, theft, robberies, intimidation, rape, vandalism, drug abuse and peddling as some of the activities which gangs engage in. Essentially, this shows that gangsterism is largely viewed as being synonymous with criminal activities. The findings align with existing literature which shows gangs use coercive force to get what they want. For instance, Maringira and Masiya (2018) point out that gangs use various strategies including threats and intimidation to get their way and to recruit members. Furthermore, Sutton (2017) states that gangsters are known for being

violent, drug abusers and peddlers, having multiple sexual partners and being involved in various other criminal activities.

4.2.2 Gangsterism and the spread of STIs and HIV

This section discusses findings regarding youth perceptions of gangsterism and the spread of STIs and HIV.

4.2.2.1 Gang related-activities fueling the spread of HIV

The research explored gang-related activities carried out by gangs which are perceived as fueling the spread of HIV in Duncan village. Responses provided by **most** participants show that there are several activities associated with gangs that are seen as accelerators of the spread of HIV. These activities include gender-based violence, rape, multiple sexual partners and drug abuse. These activities are revealed in the information provided below. Participant 16 said:

“Gangs engage in numerous risky behaviours such as having multiple sexual partners, sexual violence and rape which increase the spread of HIV.”

Likewise, Participant 17 also identified drug abuse, and sexual violence against women and multiple partners as some of the activities that gangs engage in and fueling the spread of HIV. This is seen when Participant 17 said:

“Gangsters increase the spread of HIV by abusing drugs which makes them engage in unprotected sex or sharing needles with another gangster when taking drugs. Gangs also have many girlfriends with whom they have sex with. They have sex with many women through force, violence, rape and intimidating them if they refuse”

Participant said:

“Gangs sell drugs which cause young people to lose self-control and end up exposing themselves to HIV and other STIs.”

The responses above show that gang activities that are perceived to be key accelerators of the spread of HIV include drug abuse, sharing of needles when injecting drugs, selling drugs, sexual violence and having multiple sexual partners. This confirms existing literature which indicates that gangs exacerbate the spread of HIV and AIDS is having sex with multiple partners through coercion, force or consent. In addition,

gang members also engage in sex whilst intoxicated which makes it difficult to protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases (Aziz, 2017). Furthermore, the findings align with the study conducted by Mottiar and Lodge (2018) who established that there is rampant sharing of the same needles amongst gangs, a practice that is associated with the spread of infections such as hepatitis and HIV.

4.2.2.2 Gang activities and how they fuel the spread of HIV

In addition to identifying gang-related activities that are perceived as fueling the spread of HIV and STIs, the research also explored participant's perceptions of how the identified activities fuel the spread of HIV. Data collected from the participants indicate that gangs fuel the spread of HIV by committing rape mostly against women. This fuels HIV because gangs rape women without their consent thereby taking their right to make choices on whether to use protection or not. Responses provided also show that gangs fuel the spread of HIV because they forcibly have unprotected sex with women without considering their HIV status. Most participants reveal the following:

“Gangs are associated with rape and sexual violence against women. Rape disempowers victims from choosing to have safe sex. Gangs rape their victim's whole are mostly women and they spread or contract HIV which they may transmit to their next victims. They just want sex by force and intimidation regardless of a person's HIV status which they don't know. This increases the spread of HIV.”

Further to this participant 2 pointed out that gangs fuel the spread of HIV by sharing needles when they inject drugs. By sharing needles, they increase the chances of transmitting HIV to other gangs. The participant also pointed out that gangs also engage in risky sexual behavior such as having multiple sexual partners to boost their ego. This is seen when Participant 2 said:

“As far as I am concerned my perception of gang activities in spreading HIV are that gangsters share needles when they are doing drugs, it speaks to them having more than one sexual partner as they believe it makes them feel better sleeping with more than one person, thus increasing the risk of contracting and spreading HIV amongst themselves and to others outside their gangs.”

Similarly, most participants echoed the same view as participant 2 and noted that gangs spread HIV by using the same injections, raping women and using drugs. They revealed when the participant said:

“In most cases, gangsterism does have an effect in spreading STIs including HIV and AIDS because they are the ones using infections when using drugs of which it is possible to use an already used injection. Also, rape is dominant where there are gangsters and drug use which causes high numbers of HIV and AIDS infections since they are bullies.”

Participant 20 explained that gangs sexually violate women and have unprotected sex with their victims without taking into consideration the issue of consent and the HIV status of the person they are having sex with. Additionally, participant 20 highlighted that gangs rape lesbians as a way of correcting them. This is revealed when Participant 20 said:

“Gangsters are usually involved in the most sexual assault which then means that when they are performing the act, they are not using protection as they forcing people to have sex with them so there’s no way they can know if that person is HIV negative or positive and of raping people that are lesbian or gay believing that it’s a corrective act measure also it spreads the virus.”

Participant 11 indicated that gangs accelerate the spread of HIV by peddling drugs to young people who then behave recklessly when they are intoxicated. Noted reckless behaviour includes unprotected sex and abuse of young girls. This is revealed in a response provided by participant 11 who said:

“People who are gang members promote transmission of HIV by selling drugs to young people and making the school children sell drugs in schools. The young people end up engaging in premarital and unprotected sex when they are high on drugs. Gangs also abuse young girls and want to have sex with them.”

Based on the data presented above it can be derived that gang-related activities fuel the spread of HIV by increasing the vulnerability of young people to the risk of HIV transmission. The risk is increased by activities such as sexual violence, multiple sexual partners, drug abuse and sharing injections used when taking drugs by gang members. These findings affirm an assertion by SANAC (2017) which notes that HIV

prevalence amongst young people is of great concern not only in South Africa but the whole world at large because the youth are more susceptible to getting new infections partly due to their high-risk behaviours. According to UNAIDS (2019), the spread of HIV among young people remains a huge burden for global health authorities and the higher prevalence of HIV among young people is largely due to high exposure to HIV risky behaviours. The findings also cement the assertion by Hesselink & Bougard, (2020) who underscored the role of drugs in creating “expectancies” such as the expectation that those who consume substances are more sexually aroused, less able to control their sexual urges, or unable to use condoms or other forms of protection (Sui et al., 2021).

4.2.3 Gangsterism and sexual violence

The research also investigated the perceived relationship between gangsterism and sexual violence. To gain more insights into the relationship between gangsterism and sexual violence the researcher probed for responses regarding the perceived impact of gangsterism on sexual violence, understanding of the role played by gangs which lead to violation of women’s sexual rights as well as participants perceptions about sexual violence and spread of HIV.

4.2.3.1. Impact of gangsterism on sexual violence

The research explored participant’s perceptions regarding the impact of gangsterism on sexual violence. Based on the responses shared by the participants it emerged that there is consensus among the youths that gangsterism increases the occurrence of sexual violence. This was revealed in the responses shared by participants as follows. Participant 7 said:

“Gangs are just violent by nature hence they contribute to the rise in cases of sexual violence. They rape women or force them to have sex with them by threatening and intimidating them.”

Similarly, Participant 11 also provided a response which indicates that gangs increase the occurrence by normalising it. This is revealed when Participant 11 said:

“I am of the view that gangsterism results in the normalisation of sexual violence and related activities. Generally, gangs are associated with the violation of other

people's rights and they violate women's rights about their sexual rights. They rape women, they don't respect the principle of consent. There are several cases of gangs which have occurred in Duncan village and South Africa at large. All this can be attributed to gangs."

The response provided above shows that gangsterism is seen as having a significant impact on the occurrence of sexual violence mainly through rape and violation of women's sexual rights in general.

Furthermore, Participant 13 gave a response indicating that gangsterism increases the occurrence of sexual violence by being inconsiderate of women's rights. The participants also highlighted that gangs feel entitled to everything and this includes sex. Participant 13 indicated that gangs do not take no for an answer and they have a belief that a real man should always have his way ahead of a woman. This can be illustrated by Participant 13's quote below:

"Gangs do not respect women's rights so because of that they do not consider women's sexual rights. For example, gangs don't take no for an answer when it comes to sex. The choice of women or girls when it comes to sex is never respected by gangs. They want everything whenever they want. Gangs do not take no an answer and women are always forced to have sex with gangs against their will. Normally girls end up having sex with gangs because if they refuse, they will be victimised. Gangs are just rapists"

Additionally, Participant 17 also shared a response indicating that gangsterism increases sexual violence in the community because they perpetrate criminal activities which include robberies, drug abuse and peddling, intimidation and rape. This is revealed when Participant 17 said:

"Gangs are criminals who are known for robberies, selling and abuse of drugs and rape. Usually, when they engage in these criminal activities, they increase sexual violence mainly against women."

Participant 20 gave a response which indicated that gangsterism increases the occurrence of sexual violence because gangs sell drugs and promote substance abuse

which often results in sexual violence against women and men. This is seen in a response provided by Participant 20 as follows:

“Gangsterism involves selling drugs to young people and these drugs cause the young boys and girls to lose self-control. Sometimes they end up being taken advantage of when they are high on drugs. Young girls have been drugged and raped. Even boys are also sodomised although women are the biggest victims.”

Based on the responses above, it can be derived that participants perceive gangsterism to have an incremental impact on the occurrence of sexual violence in the community. The participants identified activities that include, rape, drug peddling and abuse, intimidation, coercion and disregard of women’s sexual rights and choices as common acts amounting to sexual violence that are normally committed against women by gangsters. The findings of this study, with regards to the impact of gangsterism on sexual violence concurs with existing literature which shows that gang activities such as substance abuse fuel sexual violence. For instance, Khan and Arendse (2021) established that there are many unwanted sexual encounters, including sex with someone incapacitated by alcohol, which is not regarded and perceived as rape by gang members who view rape as only involving explicit force between strangers (Khan & Arendse, 2021). According to Dickson-Gomez, et al. (2017), gangs are chief perpetrators of sexual violence due to their beliefs and masculinity-centred-views and they expose their victims to the risk of contracting HIV.

4.2.3.2. Role played by gangs which lead to violation of women’s sexual rights

The research explored the role that gangs and gangsterism play which led to the violation of women’s sexual rights. Essentially, the research wanted to gain insight into how gang activities and behaviours lead to the violation of women’s rights. Based on the data collected from the participants, it emerged that there are two main roles that gangs play that fuel the violation of women’s rights. The first role is the influence they have on the behaviours of young people through their masculine beliefs. Secondly, gangs are associated with drugs and substance abuse which expose women to violation of sexual rights at the hands of their male counterparts.

Proliferation of dangerous masculinity beliefs: Data collected show that some of the participants are of the view that gangs cultivate a culture of violence by spreading masculine beliefs. Gangsterism is anchored on the belief that a real man should get

whatever he wants. The majority of participants reveals that gangs believe that women in their territory are theirs and thus the women should submit to the demands of the gangs whenever they need them. This can be seen in the responses provided by the participants. For instance, Participant 3 said:

“These people who are members of gangs play a big role in promoting sexual violence against women. They teach young men and their members that they can get whatever they want and consider women to be objects who exist to please them. The gang members and other people influenced by gang behaviour end up not respecting women’s sexual rights resulting in them raping women and disrespecting their sexual choices”

Furthermore, Participant 9 gave a response indicating that gangs are a bad influence on the community and people who emulate them end up engaging in acts such as sexual violence against women.

“Gangs are known for not respecting women’s rights in the community and there are some young men and even older men who end up copying such behaviour leading to violation of women’s rights. It’s like they normalise having sex with women regardless of what the women want using tactics such as threats, intimidation or by force. In the end, more women suffer as a result of such behaviour”

Similarly, Participant 16 provided a response which indicated that gangs play a big role in influencing men to disrespect women’s sexual rights. This is revealed when Participant 16 said:

“Gangsters are violent by nature and deviant men sometimes end up being influenced by their behaviour. They end up breaking the law, robbing women, raping them and forcing them to have sex with them without an agreement to do so. So, on top of the gangs who are already violators of women’s and human rights at large other men are influenced to join in on the bad trend. In the end, we have more women experiencing sexual violence.”

From the responses cited above it can be derived and concluded that gangsterism leads to the violation of women’s sexual rights through the spread of dangerous beliefs

such as the belief that women belong to men or that real men cannot be denied what they want by women. This is in line with findings made by Jacobs and Slabbert (2019) who established that gangs view women as their property who are expected to be loyal and submissive to their gang boyfriends'. The responses also show that gang members and other men outside gangs maybe influenced to adopt behaviour that leads to violation of women's rights. This includes; the 'normalisation' of violence against women. The finding that gangs influence others to act defiantly corroborates findings by Rachel, Roman and Donga (2022) who found that young men who were not affiliated but were oppressed by the violence encountered in the gang environment, are influenced by the particular understandings of masculine identity that gang culture perpetuates and this includes sexual violence against women.

Drug peddling and abuse: Data collected also revealed that drug abuse and peddling which is a key characteristic of gang activities is perceived by participants to lead to violation of women's sexual rights. Specifically, the responses shared by some of the participants indicate that gangsterism leads to violation of women's sexual rights through peddling and abuse of drugs which exposes women to the risk of rape and sexual assault. All this is revealed in responses provided by some of the participants. For instance, Participant 7 said:

"There is selling of drugs to young people, boys and girls. They take these drugs and when they are high girls are raped or boys rape girls and women. Drugs push young people especially men to act violently treat other people. Women are forced to have sex although they don't agree to have sex"

The response above indicates that drugs and drug abuse influence young men to engage in acts that violate women's sexual rights. In addition, the response shows that women are taken advantage of when they are intoxicated with drugs. This view was echoed by Participant 15 who said:

"These guys stay in groups and take dangerous drugs such as nyaope, ganja and cocaine. When they are high, they can do anything from robberies to raping women. They don't respect people and do anything they please. As many people continue to take these drugs, they become more likely to violate women's rights, if they are women, they are also at risk of being violated by others who

may take advantage of them. In short, gangsters play a role in leading to violation of women's sexual rights."

The response quoted above shows that drugs are perceived as increasing the chances of perpetration of sexual violence in two ways, first, they cause men to act in a way that violates women's rights. Second, drugs put women in a position in which they become vulnerable to sexual violations by men.

Furthermore, Participant 19 responded indicating that gangs' practice of gang peddling and drug abuse leads to incidences of violation of women's sexual rights. This is revealed in a response quoted below. Participant 19 said:

"I think gangs play a role in causing violation of women's rights by selling and promoting the use of drugs like nyaope, cocaine and others which I don't know. But what I know is that nothing good comes out of drugs. Drunk and drug addicts can just touch you whilst you are walking and this is harassment. Some pass disrespectful comments when they are high. I also believe most people who rape people are people who do drugs because no sane person can do such a despicable thing against women. When they don't have money for drugs, they rob people and sometimes rape them after robbing them."

Based on the responses shared above it can be inferred that through drug peddling and abuse, gangs play an enabling role in violation of women's rights. Particularly, the findings show that women who take drugs sold by gangs expose themselves to sexual exploitation. This confirms the findings by Hesselink and Bougard, (2020) who indicated that intoxication by alcohol and other drugs results in less ability to control sexual urges or to use condoms or other protection. McLean (2019) notes that drugs sold by gangs include but are not limited to marijuana, mandrax, cocaine, heroin and crystal meth and these drugs are not only highly intoxicating but also dangerous to one's health.

4.2.3.3 Sexual violence and spread of HIV

The research also solicited responses regarding what the participants think about sexual violence and the spread of HIV. The main reason for gathering data on sexual violence and the spread of HIV was to gain insights into what the participants think is the link between sexual violence and the spread of HIV. Data collected show that the

participants think that sexual violence contributes to and increases the spread of HIV. This is revealed in the responses that were shared by numerous participants as follows. Participant 2 gave a response indicating that sexual violence leads to the spread of HIV because in cases of violence, the choice to use protection is disregarded hence increasing the risk of contracting HIV for both the victim and the perpetrator. This is seen when Participant 2 said:

“I think sexual violence promotes the spread of HIV to the one committing the violence and the victim of the violence. If the violence is in the form of rape or forced intercourse, I think there is no time to wear condoms because there is fighting. By having unprotected sex one can get HIV”

Similarly, Participant 4 gave a response indicating that sexual violence is likely to lead to the spread of HIV citing that where there is sexual violence there is little chance for discussion about safe sex and HIV testing so that people know about each other’s HIV status and accordingly make the appropriate choices. Participant 4 said:

“My thinking is that sexual violence takes away one’s voice to decide about strategies for safe sex. You don’t get the opportunity to test for HIV before having sex. Sexual violence takes away one’s right to make sexual choices due to fear. Some are also afraid of revealing their actual HIV status when they are positive because they are scared of being victimised by perpetrators of sexual violence.”

Furthermore, Participant 13 responded indicating that sexual violence fuels the spread of HIV. This is revealed when Participant 13 said:

“Sexual violence increases the spread of HIV. These days many people are being gang raped and I think its gangs who do that in Duncan Village. You can see that if 5 people rape you without protection maybe one of the people is HIV positive and the disease is spread.”

Based on the data presented above it can be inferred that there was consensus among participants that sexual violence fuels the spread of HIV. Particularly, the participants identified that sexual violence that involves forced unprotected sex and the lack of consent increases the risk of HIV transmission to both the victims and perpetrators of

sexual violence. These findings corroborate the findings by Camp, Sherlock-Smith, and Davies (2018) who found that there is a positive relationship between sexual violence and HIV transmission with girls and women being the likely victims of sexual violation. Kelly & Ward (2020) established that forced sex may directly lead to HIV transmission, and women and girls may be unable to negotiate safer sex because of gender power inequalities. Furthermore, Jacobs and Slabbert (2019) opine that sexual violence is often perpetrated by women with little or no consideration for safety against sexually transmitted infections such as HIV.

4.2.4 Gang behaviours

The research also sought to gain insights into the typical behaviours of gangsters. To achieve this, the researcher probed for responses on whether participants had witnessed gangster behaviours, the behaviour they witnessed and whether they think that gang activities fuel the spread of HIV. Data collected on these aspects is discussed below.

4.2.4.1 Witnessed gangster behaviours in Duncan Village

The research sought responses on whether participants had witnessed gangster behaviours in Duncan village. Data collected show that the majority of participants had witnessed gangster behaviours in their community. There were also a few who responded indicating that they had never witnessed gangster behaviour. This is revealed in the responses captured below. Participant 1 said:

“Of course, I have witnessed gangster behaviours, especially by young boys in this community.”

Additionally, Participant 7 also added that he had seen gangster behaviour in the neighbourhood. In his own words, the participant said:

“Yes, I have seen young men around this place behaving like gangsters. We have gangsters here!”

Likewise, Participant 14 also indicated that they had witnessed gangster behaviour in Duncan village. In their own words, Participant 14 said:

“Yes, I have witnessed some guys who move as a group and behave like gangs.”

Participant 18 also indicated that he had witnessed gangster behaviour in Duncan village community. This is revealed when Participant 18 said:

“Yes, I have witnessed gangster behaviour”

On the contrary, there were a few participants who responded indicating that they had not witnessed gangster behaviours in the community. For instance, Participant 5 said:

“No, I haven’t witnessed the real gangster behaviour, but I hear there are gangs who are robbing residents.”

Additionally, Participant 12 also said they have yet to witness gangster behaviour in the community. The participant said:

“I have yet to witness gangster behaviour; however, I have witnessed criminals in action snatching phones and robbing people.”

Based on the responses quoted above it can be derived that an exhibition of gangster behaviour happened in Duncan village as has been witnessed by the participants. It is also noted that there are participants who have not witnessed gangster behaviour.

4.2.4.2 Behaviours exhibited by gangs

The researcher also investigated the behaviours that participants have witnessed being exhibited by gangs in the community. Data collected show that an array of behaviours have been witnessed by participants and these behaviours include sexual harassment, intimidation, violence, drug abuse and peddling, theft, robberies and hijackings. This is revealed in the responses shared by several participants who took part in the study. Participant 2 said:

“In Duncan village, you will find your common gangster behaviours such as rape, intimidation, theft, stabbings, people who sell drugs, at times hijackings, what else?”

Furthermore, Participant 7 indicated that he had witnessed gangs engage in theft, robberies, hijackings and multiple sexual partners". In their own words, Participant 7 said:

"I have witnessed shop lifting, hijacking, street robberies as well as house break-ins. On top of that, they have many girlfriends whom they sleep with in exchange for money and other material things"

Some of the participants indicated that they have seen gangs intimidating other people, sexually harassing women and abusing drugs. This is revealed in a response that was provided by Participant 10 who said:

"Behaviors I have seen being exhibited by gangs are sexual harassment of women and girls, they pass silly comments, I have seen gang members being drunk, taking drugs and being high in the streets. Gangs also bully and intimidate others to get what they want. If you don't give them what they want they turn violent."

Participant 15 said:

"The bad behaviours I have witnessed being displayed include selling of drugs to teenage boys and girls, violence against rivals or other innocent people, destruction of property, threatening others and intimidation. People are robbed, killed and haunted by gangs. I have also seen people, women, who are victims of rape by gangs"

Based on the findings discussed above, it can be inferred that behaviours which participants have witnessed being exhibited by gangs include sexual harassment, drunkenness, selling and taking drugs, bullying, violence, robberies and theft. These findings are in congruence with existing literature which indicates that gangs are associated with behaviours that are deemed deviant or criminal. According to Sui et al., (2021), gang members learn to be deviant as they conform and embrace their gangs' norms. Deviant activities that characterise gangs include rape, drug peddling, abuse, and multiple partners. Petrus and Kinnes (2019) highlight that gangs threaten violence against young individuals if they refuse to be part of the gang. All this shows that gangs are largely associated with deviant behaviours.

4.2.4.3. Perceptions of gangster activities accelerating the spread of HIV

The research explored participants' perceptions on whether they think the behaviours they have witnessed being exhibited by gangs accelerate the spread of HIV. Data collected regarding this question show that there are participants who identified certain gang activities as contributing to the spread of HIV whilst others did not contribute to the spread of HIV. Notably, gang activities such as drug abuse and peddling, sexual harassment, rape, violence and intimidation are perceived to accelerate the spread of HIV. On the other hand, participants indicated that they think that gang activities such as house break-ins, muggings, robberies and bullying do not accelerate the spread of HIV. All these are revealed in responses shared by participants as follows.

Participant 3 said:

"I think gang activities such as sexual harassment, rape, and having multiple partners accelerate the spread of HIV. This is because it increases the risk of getting HIV."

Furthermore, Participant 8 said:

"I think behaviours like drug abuse and peddling accelerate the spread of HIV. Some gangs use the same needle when injecting drugs increasing the risk of catching HIV. Drugs also result in people not using common sense resulting in behaviours such as unprotected sex. Gangs also force women to have sex with them without protection."

In addition, Participant 11 said:

"Having many sexual partners also increases the spread of HIV. It is advised to have one sexual partner but gangs want more partners. I think this accelerates the spread of HIV. But I think behaviours and activities like robberies, muggings and house break-ins or hijackings lead to an acceleration of the spread of HIV."

Similarly, Participant 19 said:

"I think some of the activities like rape, sexual harassment, many girlfriends and alcohol abuse may accelerate the spread of HIV. On the other hand, I don't think robberies and theft do not accelerate the spread of HIV."

Based on the responses presented above it can be inferred that gang activities such as rape, sexual harassment, having multiple sexual and substance abuse are perceived to accelerate the spread of HIV. These findings are in line with existing studies which demonstrate the significant role that gang activities such as sexual violence, multiple sexual partners and drug abuse play in the spread of HIV. For instance, Katz (2018) note that there is overwhelming evidence that gangsterism exacerbates HIV prevalence. Motlafi (2018) also state that gangs as a social group, engage in high-risk behaviour which exposes people within and outside gangs to HIV and AIDS. It should be noted that, although there are gang activities that accelerate the spread of HIV, there are some gang activities that do not relate to the spread of HIV. These include muggings, burglary and robberies.

4.3. Conclusion

The chapter presented and discussed data concerning the young people's perceptions of the role played by gangsterism in the spread of HIV. The data presented largely indicated that gangsterism is perceived to lead to the spread of HIV through risk activities such as rape, substance abuse, violence, having multiple partners and the spread of dangerous beliefs. The next chapter discusses the findings presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This study sought to investigate young peoples' perceptions on the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV and AIDS in Duncan Village. From the study findings, four main themes emerged. These were understanding of gangsterism, gangsterism and the

spread of HIV and STIs, gangsterism and sexual violence and gang behaviours. These are further discussed.

5.1 Understanding gangsterism

The study participants described their understanding of gangsterism. From these descriptions, participants noted that gangsters were groups of people who behaved in a deviant way. The participants also expressed the deviant behaviours that gangsters are involved which included; violence, robberies, rape and intimidation. This finding of group deviant behaviour among gangs confirms the description of gangsterism in described by Maringira and Masiya (2018) who note that gangs are a group of people who are involved in deviant and criminal behaviour. Furthermore, the participants' understanding of gangsterism reflects on the characteristics of gangsterism by Sutton (2017) who also describes gangsters as violent, having multiple sexual partners and being involved in criminal activities.

In addition to this common understanding of gangsterism among the participants with previous studies (Sutton 2017); Maringira and Masiya (2018), Participant 1 also described a lack of direction and or no future as a common reason for gang members to come together. This description of a lack of direction and no future leading to the formation of gangs is reflective of the lack of opportunity and exclusion described by Kelly and Ward (2020) that forces young people into gangsterism. In their description, Kelly and Ward (2020) note that such hopelessness among young people results in them forming gangs as a way of creating spaces for themselves that create the opportunities they cannot get in communities. This understanding of gangsterism shared by the participants and comparability with previous studies by Maringira and Masiya (2018) and Kelly and Ward (2020) illustrated a common understanding of the concept of gangsterism.

5.2 Gangsterism and the spread of HIV and STIs

The participants also described gangsterism and the spread of HIV and STIs. In their descriptions, the participants shared the activities that spread HIV and how they did so. These activities were drug abuse, multiple sexual partnering, rape, sharing of needles and gender-based violence. These findings confirm study conclusions by Aziz et al. (2017) that gang-related activities that fuelled the spread of HIV included, sharing needles, multiple sexual partnering and drug abuse. Findings illustrated that drug

abuse fuelled the spread of HIV as gang members engaged in sexual encounters while intoxicated which lowered their perceptions of safe sex.

Concerning the sharing of needles, Mottiar and Lodge (2018) explain that gang members share used needles when injecting drugs resulting in the transmission of HIV and Hepatitis. Moreover, the description of sharing needles, in the spread of HIV is confirmed by the WHO (2023) which notes that contaminated needles are six times more likely to spread HIV than unprotected sex. These findings of activities perceived by young people to spread HIV which are confirmed by the WHO (2023); Mottiar and Lodge (2018) reveal that young people in Duncan Village are aware of the gangster activities that spread HIV and STIs.

Although knowledge of gangster activities that spread HIV exists among young people in Duncan Village, there is still a high incidence of HIV infection among youths, as described by UNAIDS (2019). DUBY et al. (2018) note that one of the factors that causes the high incidence of HIV among young people is a lack of awareness of drivers of HIV. However, the findings of this study contrast this assertion by DUBY et al. (2018) as young people detailed the gang activities that spread HIV. This contrast could imply that in Duncan Village, other factors like unemployment and poverty also described by DUBY et al. (2018) contribute to the spread of HIV among young people. In view of the high incidence of HIV among young people and knowledge of drivers of HIV in Duncan Village is a need for additional research on practices and knowledge on HIV prevention among young people in Duncan Village. Moreover, Simbayi et al. (2019) highlight that high-risk sexual behaviour among youths maybe due to low-risk perception, which may also apply to gang members.

The study also described young people's perceptions of how gangster activities spread HIV. In their descriptions, Participants 19 and 20 described the issue of rape as an activity fuelling the spread of HIV. From these descriptions, the participants highlighted that when there is sexual assault, gang members are not aware of the HIV status of their victims nor do they know their own HIV status which makes the victim and perpetrator vulnerable to HIV infection. The issue of not knowing HIV status described by participants was confirmed in the study conducted by SUI et al., (2021) who found that less than 20% of young people in South Africa are tested for HIV. In addition, Govender et al. (2018) also confirm the low uptake of HIV testing among South African young people. The low uptake of HIV testing among young people described by Govender et al. (2018); SUI et al., (2021) amid gang activities like rape

that spread HIV where victims and perpetrators are unaware of their HIV status, there is a need to scale up HIV testing services among young people.

5.3 Gangsterism and sexual violence

The participants also discussed several aspects related to the sexual violence that gang members commit. In their descriptions, participants highlight that gang members committed sexual violence inclusive of rape and engage in sexual encounters whilst intoxicated with drugs. From the participants' perceptions, most victims of sexual violence by gangsters were women. These findings confirm previous studies conducted by Khan and Arendse (2021); Dickson-Gomez et al. (2017); Sutton et al. (2017). Frenk et al., (2020) also describe the sexual violence committed by gang members and explain that masculinity beliefs shared by gangsters result in little regard for women's rights. The disregard for women's rights described by Frenk et al., (2020) is similarly described by Participant 13 who highlighted that "gangs do not consider women's rights".

Regarding drug abuse and sexual violence, participants shared how male gang members became violent after drug abuse. In addition, participants noted that drug abuse also made females vulnerable to sexual exploitation and date rape. These findings confirm previous studies conducted by Hesselink and Bougard (2020) who explain that HIV is transmitted when people's judgement to use protection during sexual encounters is distorted under the influence of drugs. Moreover, the issue of substance abuse in relation to sexual violence is explained by Khan and Arendse (2021) who found that sexual violence with intoxicated females was rampant among gangs. Furthermore, Khan and Arendse (2021) note that such violent sexual acts with intoxicated women are not considered rape by gang members.

The lack of regard for women's rights and the abuse of drugs leading to sexual violence that characterises gangsterism in Duncan Village contribute to the high prevalence of sexual violence in South Africa. In 2018, STATSSA reported that at least 68% of women in South Africa are exposed to sexual violence. Moreover, some sexually violent acts are not reported due to stigma, retribution from the gang members and lack of support from the legal system (Rachel, Roman & Donga, 2022). Noteworthy, the sexual violence by gang members occurs in a context with a high HIV prevalence, which exacerbates the spread of HIV to the broader community. In light of this, HIV prevention interventions in Duncan Village should subsume interventions that address gangster sexual violence among young people.

5.4 Gangster behaviours

Participants also described the gangster behaviours they had witnessed. From their descriptions, participants highlighted that they had witnessed gang behaviour in Duncan village while some participants had not. Further to witnessing the gang behaviours, participants shared that such behaviours they witnessed gang members included intimidation and harassment, theft, robberies, destruction of property and fighting between gang members. From these descriptions, participants' perceptions were that not all gang behaviours they witnessed in Duncan village fuel the spread of HIV. Behaviours they had witnessed such as drug peddling, intimidation, having multiple sexual partners and violence were perceived to fuel the spread of HIV.

The findings that some gang activities such as robberies, muggings, and hijacking which are witnessed by participants, despite not fuelling the spread of HIV are also consist with the description of cliques described by Maringira (2020). In defining cliques, Maringira (2020) notes that cliques commit crimes of opportunity such as house breakings, intending to get money. Furthermore, Maringira (2020) explains that such violent behaviour that characterises gang activities often includes the school environment, having a profound effect on young children. Moreover, participants described the intimidation as part of the activities done by gang members in Duncan Village. Maringira (2020); Van der Westhuizen and Gawulayo, (2021) classify such behaviour as emotional violence characterising gang behaviour. Albeit such behaviours are perceived as not spreading HIV by the participants, Van der Westhuizen and Gawulayo, (2021) explain that emotional violence or violence characteristic of gang behaviour, is exercising undue power over other people. In light of the definition and classification of intimidation by Maringira (2020); Van der Westhuizen and Gawulayo (2021), noteworthy is the issue of masculinity beliefs described by the participants which fuels the spread of HIV. In describing such masculinity beliefs, participants noted how women are treated as objects resulting in sexual violence which spreads HIV. Moreover, Maringira and Masiya (2018) explain that some threats and intimidation are also used to recruit gang members with initiation into gangsterism involving the committing of violence and evading of police.

From this comparison of intimidation and masculinity beliefs, and the definition of emotional violence by Van der Westhuizen and Gawulayo (2021), it is concerning that other gang activities which may not be perceived to spread HIV may indirectly fuel its spread in Duncan Village. In view of this, there is a need for further research in Duncan village on gangster perceptions of masculinity that drive HIV.

5.5 The theoretical frameworks

The study was guided by two theoretical frameworks, the labelling theory and the differential association theory.

5.5.1 The labelling theory

The first theoretical framework was the labelling theory. The labelling theory assumes that deviant behaviour can rise from several reasons and conditions, once people have been labelled deviant, they have new problems as a consequence of the stigma attached to the deviant label (Becker, 2018). In this study, participants understood the meaning of gangster as people who are directionless, violent, involved in multiple partnering and associated with committing crime. According to Becker (2018), such labels increase the likelihood of committing the deviant behaviour such that the behaviour becomes stable and chronic. Participants to this effect, had witnessed deviant behaviour that included hijackings, intimidation, robberies and violence associated with gangsterism. Moreover, labelling theory assumes that deviant behaviour leads to associations with other people who are deviant (Becker, 2018). From the study findings, this association among gangs was evidenced by participants identifying that gangs were groups of people associated with deviant behaviour.

5.5.2 The differential association theory

The second theoretical framework that guided the study was the differential association theory. The differential association theory assumes that people learn their norms from various socialising agents like friends and media (McGlamory-Evans, 2019). In essence, people learn deviant behaviour from interactions with other criminals, especially in intimate groups ((McGlamory-Evans, 2019). From the study findings, gang members interacted with young boys which fostered learning of deviant behaviours such as drug peddling and harmful masculinity beliefs. The teaching of young boys such deviant behaviour demonstrates the assumption of the influence of friends in moulding gangsterism as assumed by the differential association theory. Moreover, the finding of influencing masculinity beliefs also illustrates the postulates of the differential association theory that deviant behaviour can be learnt and it can be learnt in groups.

5.6 Summary

The chapter discussed the study findings. This discussion identified gangsterism as a group of people who were involved in deviant behaviour which was similar to the definitions provided by Maringira et al. (2018). The chapter further discussed

gangsterism and the spread of HIV and STIs in Duncan Village. Participants' findings on gangsterism spreading HIV were consistent with previous studies conducted by Aziz et al. (2017). Chapter 5 also discussed how sexual violence among gang members fuels the spread of HIV in Duncan Village. Moreover, the chapter discussed the findings on gangster behaviours and concludes with a discussion on the labelling theory and the differential association theory which were the theoretical framework of the study. The next chapter is the conclusion.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The previous chapter discussed research findings based on data collected from the participants regarding young people's perceptions of the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV. The current chapter summarises the findings presented in Chapter 4, discusses conclusions and thereafter provides recommendations. Discussions in this chapter are guided by the objectives that were stated in chapter one of the thesis. A recap of the objectives is provided below.

6.1. Recap of objectives

This section provided a recap of the main and sub-objectives of the study

6.1.1. The main objective

To investigate young people's perceptions of the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV and AIDS with a specific focus on Duncan village in the Buffalo City Metro Municipality.

6.1.2. Study objectives

The study also sought to achieve the following objectives:

- To explore the social perceptions about gangsterism in spreading STIs including HIV and AIDS.
- To investigate the perceptions of youth on the relationship between gangsterism and sexual violence.
- To gain insights into youths' understanding of gangsterism
- To establish gang activities that are being exhibited by gangs in Duncan Village.

6.2. Summary of findings

This section outlines the research findings under four headings. These are; the youth's understanding of gangsterism, perceptions of the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV, perceptions of gangsterism and sexual violence and activities exhibited by gangs in the community.

6.2.1. Youth understanding of gangsterism

The research established that the youth who took part in this study demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of gangsterism. They managed to accurately pinpoint the structure of gangs and activities that are associated with gangsterism. Specifically, the research established that the youths know gangsterism as being associated with crime, drugs, violence, directionless and sexual promiscuity. The research also

established that the youths understood that gangsterism refers to a group of people who share the same beliefs and behave in a deviant or criminal way. Participants identified behaviours such as violence, theft, robberies, intimidation, rape, having multiple sexual partners, vandalism, drug abuse and peddling as some of the activities which gangs engage in.

6.2.2. Perceptions on the role of gangsterism on the spread of HIV

The research also sheds light on the youth's perceptions of the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV. The research established that gangsterism, through risky gang-related activities such as drug abuse, sharing of needles when injecting drugs, selling drugs, sexual violence and having multiple sexual partners accelerate the spread of HIV.

Furthermore, the research revealed that gangsterism enabled the spread of HIV by increasing the vulnerability of young people to the risk of HIV transmission. The risk is increased by activities such as sexual violence, multiple sexual partners, drug abuse and sharing injections used when taking drugs by gang members.

6.2.3. Perceptions of gangsterism and sexual violence

The research also uncovered the youth's perceived that there was a relationship between gangsterism and sexual violence. The findings of the study reveal that the youths perceive gangsterism to have an incremental impact on the occurrence of sexual violence in Duncan Village. Gang-related activities such as rape, drug peddling and abuse, intimidation, coercion and disregard of women's sexual rights and choices are common acts amounting to sexual violence that are normally committed against women by gangsters.

The research also reveals that gangsterism contributes to the violation of women's sexual rights by promoting the spread of dangerous beliefs such as the belief that women belong to men or that real men cannot be denied what they want by women. The research also reveals that gang members and other men outside gangs maybe influenced to adopt behaviours that lead to the violation of women's rights. This includes the 'normalisation' of violence against women.

Furthermore, the research also revealed that gangsterism contributes to the violation of women's sexual rights by engaging in practices such as drug peddling and abuse, particularly, the research established that women who take drugs sold by gangs expose themselves to sexual exploitation.

The current research also concludes that there is consensus among youth in Duncan village that sexual violence fuels the spread of HIV. Principally, forced unprotected sex and lack of consent increase the risk of HIV transmission to both the victims and perpetrators of sexual violence.

6.2.4. Gang behaviours

The research also uncovered the gang behaviours which youths have witnessed in Duncan Village. Specifically, the research established that the youths have witnessed sexual harassment, drunkenness, selling and taking drugs, bullying, violence, robberies and theft. All this shows that gangs are largely associated with deviant behaviours. Although the study established that the majority of youths who took part in this study have witnessed gangster behaviours, there was a minority who indicated they have not witnessed gang behaviours in the community.

Additionally, the research established that youths in Duncan Village were the perception that gang behaviours exhibited gangs such as; rape, sexual harassment, having multiple sexual partners and substance abuse accelerate the spread of HIV.

6.3 Theoretical implications of the study

This research contributes to the existing theory on gangsterism and how it impacts the spread of HIV. The research shows how violation of one's sexual rights exacerbates the spread of HIV. This extends knowledge on the role of risky behaviours and violence especially against women in the spread of HIV. Furthering this debate, the current study contributes to the knowledge of how acts of violence against women lead to the spread of HIV. Notable acts of violence against women that accelerate the spread of HIV include rape, sexual assault and intimidation. Furthermore, the research expands knowledge on gang activities in the South African context by giving the Eastern Cape perspective. The current literature on gangsterism is concentrated in Cape Town hence this study adds to the existing knowledge by adding Duncan Village context.

The research also cements the existing literature regarding activities associated with gangs and gangsterism. Gang-related activities identified in this study include drug abuse, drug peddling, rape, intimidation, violence, robberies, having multiple sexual partners and disrespect of human rights. These activities are highlighted in the existing literature on gangsterism from different parts of the world. Additionally, the study adds to existing knowledge regarding how gangsterism and gang activities fuel the spread of HIV.

6.4. Recommendations

This section discusses the recommendations of the study from two perspectives which are, practical and policy implications.

6.4.2. Practice recommendations

The research has some practical recommendations as it informs various practitioners about the reality surrounding gangsterism and the spread of HIV in Duncan Village and South Africa at large. By uncovering what youth think about gangsterism and the spread of HIV, the study provides insights that are useful in the fight against the spread of HIV. The study showed that the youth think that gangs contribute to the spread of HIV by engaging in risky behaviours such as having multiple sexual partners, having unprotected sex and violating women's sexual rights. This shows that there is a section of the youth that is aware of the dangers of gang activities concerning the spread of HIV. From these findings, it is recommended that health practitioners intervene and try to educate gangsters and those outside gangs to avoid such risky behaviours and gangster activities that spread HIV.

The research findings also provide law enforcement practitioners with insights into some illegal activities that occur in Duncan village which largely amounts to violation of other people's rights. These activities include rape, sexual assault, intimidation, robberies and drug abuse or peddling. Violation of other people's rights is outlawed by the South African Constitution. Hence, law enforcement agents have a mandate to ensure that the rights of all citizens are protected.

The research also highlights the need for counselling of people who are victims of gang violence. In addition, the research also suggests the need for the promotion of HIV testing so that people can know their HIV status and avoid behaviours that expose them to the likelihood of HIV transmission.

6.4.3. Policy recommendations

As South Africa continues to curb the high HIV prevalence rate, there is a need to consider the role that gangsterism plays in fuelling the spread of HIV. As such, it is recommended that a policy that addresses the prevalence of gangsterism to reduce its impact on the spread of HIV be developed. Policymakers can come up with policy interventions that empower youths economically so that they can stay away from gangsterism.

Taking into consideration the role that gangs play in the spread of HIV as revealed in this study, policymakers are also recommended to develop policies that make gang

activities that contribute to the spread of HIV, heavily punishable to deter potential gang members from committing deviant activities that spread HIV.

In addition, it is recommended that there should be formulation of policies that empower law enforcement agents, social workers and the judiciary to manage the sensitive and complex issue of sexual violence. This is so because, when there is a violation of women's sexual rights women are deprived of their right and choice to safe sex thus making them more vulnerable to contracting HIV. Hence policies aimed at safeguarding women's rights are of great importance.

6.4.4 Recommendations for Future Research

The research was restricted to Duncan Village alone, in future the research could be expanded to other townships in the Eastern Cape. This will allow for generalisations of findings to different contexts.

The research only followed a qualitative research approach in which non-numerical data was collected. It is therefore recommended that future research be carried out using quantitative research to determine the relationship between gangsterism and the spread of HIV.

Furthermore, future research should consider including gang members in the research so that they can share their perspectives on the topic of gangsterism and the spread of HIV in South Africa.

6.5 Limitations of the study

Although all efforts were made to ensure the study depicted young people's perceptions of the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV in Duncan Village in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, the study had some limitations. The first limitation was the use of a qualitative exploratory study design which used a small sample size. The use of a small sample size implies that the results of the study cannot be generalised to other contexts which limits the applicability of the study especially in a context where gangsterism and HIV are widespread. The second limitation of the study was the purposive sampling technique used, this technique was based on the researcher's judgement of the participant's ages, such a purposive sampling technique does not accurately represent the population of young people in Duncan Village.

6.6 Conclusion

The chapters discussed provided a summary of this study's findings. In general, the findings showed that gangsterism is perceived to be an enabler of the spread of HIV

through the promotion of risky behaviours such as having multiple partners, sexual violence, unprotected sex and drug abuse or peddling. The chapter also discussed the implications of the current findings. The implications were divided into theoretical, practical and policy implications. Lastly, the research discussed recommendations for future research.

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Appendix 1: Ethical clearance



COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

25 July 2022

Dear Ms Sylvia Zoliswa Mgudlwa

Decision:
Ethics Approval from 25 July 2022 to 25 July 2025

NHREC Registration # :
Rec-240816-052
CREC Reference # :
31332625_CRECHS_2022

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa College of Human Science Ethics Committee. Ethics approval is granted for three years.

The **low risk application** was reviewed by College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee, 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(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the College Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.




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a progress report.

5. 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.
6. 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 require additional ethics clearance.
7. No fieldwork activities may continue after the expiry date (**25 July 2025**). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note: The reference number 31332625_CREC_CHS_2022 should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Signature: 

Prof. KB Khan
CHS Research Ethics Committee Chairperson
Email: khankb@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429 8210

Signature: PP 

Prof K. Masemola
Executive Dean: CHS
E-mail: masemk@unisa.ac.za
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Appendix 2: The consent form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

Research title

An investigation into young people's perceptions on the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV/AIDS: A case of Duncan village in the Buffalo City Metro

Researcher

(Sylvia Zoliswa Mgudlwa)

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

Appendix 3: Participant Information Sheet

Appendix 4: Participant information sheet

Research title: An investigation into youth perceptions on the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV/AIDS. A case of Duncan village in the Buffalo City Metro

**Researcher:
(Sylvia Zoliswa Mgudlwa)**

Ethics clearance reference number:

Research permission reference number (if applicable):

Date : 08/03/2023

Title: An investigation into youth perceptions on the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV/AIDS. A case of Duncan village in the Buffalo City Metro

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Zoliswa Mgudlwa and I am doing research with Dr. R Netangaheni, a senior lecturer in the Department of Sociology towards a Master's Degree at the University of South Africa. I am inviting you to participate in a study entitled: **An investigation into youth perceptions on the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV/AIDS. A case of Duncan village in the Buffalo City Metro**

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

I am conducting this research to find out the **into youth perceptions on the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Buffalo City Metro**

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You have been selected to participate to form part of a sample of 20 males and females from the ages of 18 and 35 in the area identified in Buffalo City Metro. You will be able to provide information, which will be used to describe the youth perceptions on the role of gangsterism in the spread of HIV/AIDS. Before you participate in the study, you will be



provided with a consent form where you will sign to confirm your willingness to participate in the study. It is also important to note that Covid-19 guidelines as stipulated by the University of South Africa and the South African Ministry of Health will be followed as a preventative measure against the virus.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

As a participant, you will be asked a series of questions by the researcher and you will be expected to provide answers. The study involves audiotaping of the interview questions and answers. The primary reason for recording is so that the researchers would be able to transcribe and analyse the data in details. The recording is also important so that there is no information that is not clearly recorded by the researcher. The interview questions will take about 45 to 60 minutes.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. If you participate in the study, you will be given a copy of this information sheet to sign and keep as evidence of your decision to participate in the study. You will also sign a written consent form. Withdrawing from the study will not deprive you of benefits in your community in any way.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

Participation in this study is voluntary and there will not be rewards or reimbursements. However, taking part in this study will help to strengthen the interaction between female nurses and male surgical patients. The researcher will share the findings of the study with you first, the participants in the identified area. As a participant, you will have a chance to make a difference in your community and in the District where you work through your shared experiences in the study.



ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

The study may invoke sad emotions of past healthcare seeking experiences during the interview. If you feel any discomfort during the interview or data collection, you are allowed to withdraw from the study. Even after withdrawing from the study, your identity will remain anonymous. If any harm attributed to the study occurs, you will be referred to professionals who may be of help to you.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

You have the right to insist that your name not be recorded anywhere and that no one, apart from the researcher and identified members of the research team, will know about your involvement in this research or your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a code number or a pseudonym and you will be referred to, in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

The data will also be taken to an external coder and he/she will be subjected to signing a confidentiality agreement. Thereafter, the confidentiality agreements will be submitted to the Research Ethics Review Committee for consideration. The answers that you provided during the interview will only be available to and reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, which will include the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Review Committee. Therefore, records of data that identify you will only be available to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

Your anonymous data will be used for the research report. In addition, the research report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in it.



HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

The researchers will store hard copies of your answers for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet in the researcher's home for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password-protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. After the five-year period, hard copies of the data collected will be shredded. The electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of a relevant software programme.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

There is no form of reward or compensation to participate in the study.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee, of the University of South Africa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact

Mrs Zoliswa Mgudlwa on +72 60 477 7808 and email: 31332625@mylife.unisa.ac.za

(Principal researcher), and Dr R Netangaheni (supervisor) on 012 429 6719. The findings might be accessible by December 2024. Feel free to make follow up to the researcher on the provided communication tools.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Dr R Netangaheni (supervisor) on 0+27 76 189 5087 or +27 124296719 or email: robert.Netanqahe@gmail.com Contact the research ethics chairperson of the CAES General Ethics Review Committee, if you have any ethical concerns.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.


Signature

Mrs. Zoliswa Mgudlwa



Appendix 4: The Interview Guide

INTERVIEW GUIDE (YOUNG PEOPLE)

TITLE: AN INVESTIGATION INTO YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERCEPTIONS ON THE ROLE OF GANGSTERISM IN THE SPREAD OF HIV/AIDS. A CASE OF DUNCAN VILLAGE IN THE BUFFALO CITY METRO MUNICIPALITY.

8. What do you think are the effects of gangsterism on sexual violence prevalence?
9. What is your understanding of the role played by gangs which lead to violation of women's sexual rights?
10. What do you think about sexual violence and spread of HIV/AIDS?

SECTION D: Gang behaviours

11. Have you witnessed gangster behaviour in Duncan Village?
12. What behaviour have you witnessed being exhibited by the gangs?
13. Do you think the activities accelerate the spread of HIV/AIDS in any way?

End of interview, thank you very much for your participation.

Appendix 5: Request for Permission to conduct study

002 Bonza Bay Road
Beacon Bay
East London
5241
01/02/2023

gangsterism in the spread HIV/AIDS. Face-to-face interviews will be used. Codes will be used to identify research participants. All findings will be documented, and reports will be presented to the participants to check whether the information is a true reflection of what the said. Should you have any concerns regarding how the study is going to be conducted, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher or Dr R Netangaheni 012 429 6402.

Yours sincerely

Zoliswa Mgudlwa

Contact details: 060 477 7808

Appendix 6: Permission to conduct study

Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality
East London | Bhisho | King William's Town
Province of the Eastern Cape
South Africa

Website: www.buffalocity.gov.za



Cllr M.C Morolong Yekiso
Ward 7 Councillor

No.7 Jabavu Street, East London, 5201

Tel: 043 7331190
Phone: 0826141876

Kindly be informed that:

After completion of the study, I request that I be informed of the final results of the study which are the finding and recommendations

P.P. Mlemntu

MKAKUTTA CLARA MOROLONG
COMMISSIONER OF OATHS EX-OFFICIO
COUNCIOR
BUFFALO CITY METROPOLITAN
MUNICIPALITY CITY HALL
OXFORD STREET, EAST LONDON
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

BUFFALO CITY METRO MUNICIPALITY (DUNCAN VILLAGE)

DATE..... 27 / 02 - 2023

27 FEB 2023



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The editor has carefully reviewed the manuscript for grammar, punctuation, syntax, and overall clarity. They have also worked on improving the manuscript's structure and flow.

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Date: 16 October, 2023

Signature: 

Professional Editors' Guild No: KAM002



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