

**Men's non-disclosure of intimate partner violence: A case study of Ga-Masemola,
Sekhukhune District in Limpopo Province**

By

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RESEARCH DISSERTATION

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DECLARATION

I, Mankwana Othilia Kgate declare that this dissertation is my own work and that all the sources used to compile this research report have been acknowledged by means of complete references.

Mankwana Othilia Kgate

Date

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my family for their support throughout the project. It was because of them that I had courage to undertake this project. Their words of encouragement helped me to successfully reach my goal of completing the study.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DoJ& CD- Department of Justice and Constitutional Development

GBV-Gender Based Violence

IPV-Intimate Partner Violence

NGOs- Non-Governmental Organisations

PFVA- Prevention of Family Violence Act

PTSD- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

SAHRC- South African Human Research Council

TREC- Turfloop Research Ethics Committee

VEP- Victim Empowerment Program

ABSTRACT

Intimate partner violence among heterosexual couples seem to be on the rise with men as victims of female perpetrated violence. Recent research on this phenomenon indicates that partner violence against men is a social and health problem that is hidden and unspoken of in most societies. The current study was aimed at exploring men's non-disclosure of intimate partner violence at Ga-Masemola, Sekhukhune District in Limpopo Province. Qualitative research methodology and exploratory research design were applied to successfully explore men's non-disclosure of IPV. The target population of this study was heterosexual male victims of ages 18 and above. Non-probability sampling of blended convenience sampling and snowball sampling were employed. Data was collected using a semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions and was analysed through thematic analysis of qualitative data.

The results of the study have revealed that male victims of partner violence hide their situations. Determinants of non-disclosure were found to include men's own personal feelings of fear to disclose, masculinity factors, societal expectations and cultural norms, which negatively affect men's decisions to disclose. Help-seeking behaviour of male victims remains a huge challenge for most male victims. Due to fear of ridicule, disbelief and false accusations, abused men seem to lack courage to seek help. The shocking outcome is that most victims appear to lack knowledge of services available for them. The study recommends that public education, advocacy and appropriate gender-sensitive intervention programmes be implemented to overcome the effects of violence and to prevent further victimisation.

Key words: intimate partner violence, male victims, female perpetrators, masculinity, shame, non-disclosure, help-seeking.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

Intimate partner violence has become a global social and health problem (Ongundipe, Woolett, Ogunbanjo, Olashore & Tshitenge, 2018; Walker *et al.*, 2019). Adebayo (2014) noted that intimate partner violence has been perceived as a female issue throughout the world, whereas violence against men is a shocking reality. The problem is that men suffer in silence. The pattern of violence often starts with forms of abuse such as verbal, psychological and financial abuse, expanding to other forms of abuse which include physical and sexual abuse (Tilbrook, Allan & Dear, 2010).

Male victims of intimate partner violence find it difficult to identify themselves as victims of violence since the ideology is that women, and not men, are victims. Being labelled as a male victim of violence comes with diminished masculinity (Walker *et al.*, 2019; Younger, 2011). In agreement, Thobejane, Luthada and Mogorosi (2018) assert that masculinity expectations of men are that a man should not cry out loud to the public when experiencing violence. The Bapedi people of Limpopo Province usually use the phrase: “Monna ke nku o llela teng” which literally translates to “a man is a sheep, he cries internally”. For this reason, most men do not disclose any form of violence they might be experiencing.

Tsui (2014) and Kumar (2012) and Brown (2008) agree that male victims of partner violence face interpersonal obstacles that prevent them from disclosing violence perpetrated by their female partners. One of these obstacles is that men are afraid of being ridiculed if they reveal the victimisation to anyone close to them, including helping professionals (Thobejane *et al.*, 2018; Dempsey, 2013).

Although there are studies on men’s non-disclosure of intimate partner violence, most of these studies were not conducted in South Africa. The researcher was motivated to conduct this study among South African participants because of dearth of literature on

the phenomenon within the South African context. This could mean that findings from other studies hardly represent South Africans since people of different geographical areas, societies or cultures may have different worldviews (Nicholas, Rautenbach & Maistry, 2010).

The second motive for the researcher to conduct this study was based on the realisation that partner violence against men exists and is not well documented. The researcher was of the view that extensive research has been conducted on intimate partner violence against women where men are regarded as perpetrators than victims. Perryman and Appleton (2016) assert that intimate partner violence against men is under-explored since the abuse has been mostly viewed as male to female violence. The study has indicated that most men are victims of female perpetrated physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse. The researcher also noticed lack of statistical data of abused men in South Africa. This could mean that violence against men is less recognised or is not viewed as a social problem by the public.

Although information regarding female perpetrated violence against their partners, either in heterosexual or homosexual couples seemed to be lacking, the focus of this research was only on heterosexual male victims of female perpetrated intimate partner violence.

1.2 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

The concepts of the study were defined as follows:

1.2.1 Intimate partner

Intimate partner refers to a person with whom one has a personal intimate relationship that is characterised by emotional connectedness, regular contact, physical contact, sexual behaviour, knowledge about each other's lives and identity as a couple. The relationship includes former or current spouse, dating partners, lifetime partners, boyfriends and girlfriends (Breiding, Basile, Smith, Black & Mahendra, 2015).

1.2.2 Intimate partner violence

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is defined as any form of abuse that happens between intimate partners, and include physical, emotional, sexual, psychological and verbal abuse (Murray & Graves, 2013).

In this study, intimate partner violence involved physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, psychological abuse, stalking, verbal abuse, and financial abuse exerted by former or the current intimate partner towards the other partner.

1.2.3 Non-disclosure

For the purpose of this study, non-disclosure refers to an act of not disclosing intimate partner violence to friends, families, colleagues or any other person, including helping professionals.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Lien and Lorentzen (2019) allude that men are subjected to psychological violence, severe physical violence accompanied by threats, economic violence, controlling behaviour and sexual harassment from their female partners. The study further highlighted that one of the victims had suffered life-threatening physical injuries from female violence which required extensive treatment. Ovens and Barkhuizen (2012) argue that female perpetrated violence against men should be considered a global social problem of domestic violence as it has influence on policies and social perceptions. For instance, shelters that provide services for abused men in Limpopo Province are scarce, and those that are available are limited to women. Since most services are not available for male victims of intimate partner violence, men are not aware of the services that could be of use when experiencing violence (Tsui, 2014; Hines, Brown & Dunning, 2007). This may contribute to the problem of men concealing the abuse.

In patriarchal societies, men are expected to dominate women. The ideal image of abused men is unusually due to societal stereotypes of masculinity that are placed on male victims of female perpetrated violence. Men are portrayed as strong; this prevents them from disclosing their experiences (Barkhuizen, 2010; Ovens & Barkhuizen, 2012). Men are also exposed to ridicule in societies they live in when they appear as victims of violence; and as a result, they conceal their experiences until the situation worsens (Adebayo, 2014; Brooks, Martin, Broda & Poudrier, 2017; Vernon, 2017).

When men do not disclose their experiences, there is a high probability for them to start abusing substances in order to cope with the traumatic experience (Hines & Douglas, 2009; Perryman & Appleton, 2016). Kubai (2014) asserts that most men suffer from psychological and emotional distress due to violence. Others suffer from depression which could also contribute to loss of employment due to absenteeism at work (Davis, 2010; Nicholas *et al.*, 2010; Kumar, 2012; Tilbrook *et al.*, 2010).

1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Ecological theory

The researcher observed the phenomenon under study through the application of the ecological theory, which seeks to explain human behaviour within a person in an environment (PIE) framework (Alaggia, Regehr & Jenney, 2012). It avows that four systems of ecology affect the interaction between people and their environment. These systems encompass the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and the macrosystem (Kia-Keating, Grossman, Sorsoli & Epstein, 2005; Borden, Garrity, Gliske, Otto, Otto & Richmond, 2018).

Microsystem

Parrish (2010) explains the microsystem as the relationship between an individual and the immediate environment. This could be the interaction between an individual and his or her partner. Dynamics of power that exist between individuals may determine disclosure of violence (Tat & Ozturk, 2019). In this sense, factors that influence men not to disclose intimate partner violence may include dependency, whereby the male partner may be dependent on the perpetrator for finances and emotional support (Hamel, 2014).

Mesosystem

Mesosystem refers to the relationship between an individual and the settings in which he or she encounters on a regular basis, such as church (Borden *et al.*, 2018). Religion-based pressure may contribute towards men's silence when they are abused by their partners. Victims with strong religious beliefs may be unlikely to speak about their abusive relationships due to religious-based prohibitions. The pressure to remain silent about violence encountered is most likely to be strong if the victim is a religious leader in the community (Murray & Graves, 2013).

Exosystem

The exosystem refers to social settings such as government institutions that deliver services to residents. Although people are not direct active participants, they are affected by what happens in these social settings (Parrish, 2010; Rogers, 2010). Findings by Tsui (2014) and Adebayo (2014) indicated that domestic violence services and agencies directed at helping men who are victims of intimate partner violence are limited. In this sense, their silence may be influenced by looking at an environment

that fails to meet their needs. This shows an imbalance fit between the person and the environment (Weyers, 2011).

Macrosystem

The macrosystem encompasses economic, educational, political, legal and social systems that bring about the overall culture of society (Alaggia *et al.*, 2012; Kia-Keating *et al.*, 2005). The macrosystem focuses on societal factors such as cultural norms and expectations that may impact disclosure of intimate partner violence. Cultural pressures may pose as a serious barrier towards the disclosure of abuse due to masculinity factors that require men to avoid emotions and vulnerabilities (Kia-Keating *et al.*, 2005). Hamel (2014) noted that men are socialised from a younger age to be strong. When they deny that they are abused, hurt or in pain, they are often labelled as strong.

In a nutshell, when applied in this study, this theory describes factors that determine men's non-disclosure of intimate partner violence by examining transactions between the person and the environment. According to Heise (1998) as cited in Alaggia *et al.*, (2012), disclosure of violence is determined by an interplay between individual and environmental factors. Determinants of non-disclosure of intimate partner violence with male victims could be successfully assessed at various levels of ecological system.

1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.5.1 Aim of the study

This study was aimed at exploring men's non-disclosure of intimate partner violence at Ga-Masemola, Sekhukhune District in Limpopo Province.

1.5.2 Objectives of the study were as follows:

- To establish men's views about disclosing violence experienced from their intimate partners.
- To identify determinants of men's non-disclosure of intimate partner violence.
- To determine men's views about seeking help as victims of intimate partner violence.
- To help improve services for male victims of gender-based violence.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research, the researcher made use of the qualitative research approach, which helped the researcher to get a broader and clear understanding of the phenomenon from participants' perceptions. This was because participants' lived experiences are better explained in this type of research approach (Rubin & Babbie, 2011).

1.6.1 Research design

An exploratory research design was chosen for this study since it is responsive to areas that have not yet been extensively researched. This design helped in establishing new concepts about the phenomenon from participants (Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole, 2013; Royse, 2011). When applied in this study, this design enabled the researcher to successfully explore men's non-disclosure of intimate partner violence.

1.6.2 Population

The target population of this study was heterosexual men of ages 18 and above, who reside at Ga-Masemola village, and who were victims of intimate partner violence from their current or former intimate partners. Included were men of different social classes,

marital statuses, ethnic groups, cultural and religious backgrounds. According to Carey (2012), the population of a study is the total group of people from which a sample is drawn. This refers to individuals that the researcher wants to learn about.

1.6.3 Sampling method and sample size

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used non-probability sampling in which she blended convenience sampling and snowball sampling. In convenience sampling, participants were chosen based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study. The advantage of this method is that it is easy to implement; it is affordable and participants are easily accessible (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). On the other hand, snowball sampling is applied when participants are hard to reach. This method is useful in researching sensitive topics. This method helped the researcher to access participants through referral of someone the participants know with whom they share the same problem (Monette, Sullivan & Dejong, 2008; De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2011; Neuman, 2011).

Although these methods had advantages, the researcher believed that finding male victims of intimate partner violence using any of the methods has limitations since not everyone approached can be a participant in the study. When applying these methods, the researcher started with the application of convenient sampling whereby participants were chosen conveniently from public spaces such as malls, churches, supermarkets and streets. For confidentiality purposes, a private space was used to conduct the interview. The researcher asked for the identification of other victims of intimate partner violence among existing participants who had knowledge of potential participants that are experiencing the same problem (snowball sampling).

This research had a sample of 15 participants. This sample size was chosen since the researcher was of the view that the sample was going to be enough to be able to gather in-depth information about men's non-disclosure of intimate partner violence. Since the goal of this study was not about making generalisations, it was hoped that the sample size was going to help generate salient themes about the subject in question. According to Dudley (2011), sample size refers to the number of people to be included in a sample. Although a sample size is predetermined, the study relied on

getting rich data. Therefore, data was collected until saturation level where no new information was generated in relation to the study.

1.6.4 Data collection

For the purpose of this research, the researcher used a semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions as a method of data collection. The method gave the researcher a chance to clarify questions to participants to help them understand exactly what was being asked. It further enabled the researcher to ask for clarification and further explanations (Burnett, 2009). The interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis with participants. The researcher requested for permission to conduct the study from the community. Interviews were conducted in a private space to ensure confidentiality. Consent forms were presented to participants in their home language and were signed by those who were willing to participate in the study.

1.6.5 Data analysis

In this research, the researcher implemented thematic analysis of qualitative data. This type of analysis helped the researcher to identify themes that seek to address the research question (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Recorded information was examined inductively from participants' original recorded texts (Neuendorf, 2019). Braun and Clarke (2006) described steps of thematic analysis as follows:

1.6.5.1 Becoming familiar with the data

The researcher read the collected data to a point where she broadly knew what is contained in the data. This helped the researcher to create a mental picture of the entire data set (De Vos *et al.*, 2011; Bless *et al.*, 2013).

1.6.5.2 Generating initial codes

Dudley (2011) purports that in this step, the researcher breaks the text into fragments which share common characteristics and classify these fragments into various categories. Codes were developed with focus on patterns within the data. In doing this, the researcher was trying to find a set of codes that fit the data well to address the research questions appropriately.

1.6.5.3 Searching for themes

After coding, salient themes started to emerge inductively from the texts (Neuendorf, 2019). To successfully determine relevant themes in the data, the researcher examined the codes, checked how they flow and relate to each other. Those that support each other were fitted together into a theme (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

1.6.5.4 Reviewing themes

After searching for themes, the researcher identified, reviewed and modified preliminary themes. The emphasis was placed on gathering information that agrees with each theme so that the themes can accurately link with the entire data set (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

1.6.5.5 Defining themes

The researcher described what each theme was about and how it related to the whole knowledge of research. Defining the themes enabled the researcher to check whether the theme answered the research question (Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen & Snelgrove, 2016).

1.6.5.6 Producing a report

After successfully completing the analysis process, the researcher wrote up the dissertation report.

1.7 QUALITY CRITERIA

1.7.1 Credibility

In qualitative research, credibility is concerned with whether the researcher's methods of data collection and analysis address the research question. The research approach and design that were used in this study are highly appropriate. There is logic within the study design, data collection method, data analysis as well as the research question.

Bless *et al.* (2013) further noted that the purpose of exploratory research is to gain an understanding of a phenomenon under study. This has led the researcher to believe that a combination of qualitative approach, exploratory research design, the interview as a method of data collection and data analysis used in this study render this study highly credible.

1.7.2 Dependability

The researcher conducted the research in a logical way to enable future researchers to repeat the study. The researcher described the sampling method in detail, and how data was collected and analysed. Therefore, the researcher is confident that if the study is to be repeated, the findings will be the same.

1.7.3 Conformability

The researcher took steps to ensure that findings come from the data collected and not her own predispositions. She quoted the responses of the participants so that the

reader sees how they felt about the research problem and how the researcher interpreted the responses.

1.7.4 Transferability

The researcher has given details of the methodology that was used in this study, which should be able to assist the reader to understand exactly what was done and how. Transferability requires the researcher to provide sufficient details of the context of the field work for the reader to decide whether the prevailing environment is similar to another situation with which he or she is familiar, and whether the findings can be applied to other settings (De Vos *et al.*, 2011; Bless *et al.*, 2013).

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will help researchers and readers of this study to understand factors influencing men to conceal intimate partner violence inflicted by their partners. It will be a starting point for other researchers who wish to study similar or related topics. This study generates information about current trends of IPV and supports available information about intimate partner violence against men. Results from this study will help policy makers with knowledge to help in new developments and adjustments on South African policy.

Furthermore, the study could essentially contribute to basic knowledge of Social Work practice for the effective rendering of services in the future and promoting the building of a society that is just. Social Work programmes and other professional programmes tailored to deal with domestic violence issues may be shaped in such a way that they consider special needs of men who are also victims of domestic violence. Lastly, this study might challenge people's generally accepted stereotypes and myths about the concept of men abuse.

1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The following ethical guidelines were observed throughout the research:

1.9.1 Permission to conduct the study

It is considered ethical for the researcher to acquire permission to access research participants, especially for research that is conducted in South African traditional areas. This is done by approaching a gatekeeper to request for a letter of permission from a designated traditional leader (Singh & Wassenaar, 2016). Before conducting the study, the researcher first consulted the traditional authority of Ga-Masemola village for permission to conduct the research in the community by following procedures set by the designated traditional leader. After consultations, the researcher was granted permission through a written letter that allowed the study to take place in the village.

1.9.2 Ethical Clearance

To successfully conduct this research with proper ethical considerations, the researcher obtained an ethical clearance certificate from Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC).

1.9.3 Voluntary participation

The researcher ensured that all men participating in the research have freely decided to participate without being forced or coerced to do so (Rubin & Babbie, 2014; Royse, 2011). For men who participated in the study, their right of self-determination was respected, and any participant was free to withdraw from the study at any time. This was communicated to them verbally and in writing to help them to understand that they were not obliged to participate if they did not wish to do so.

1.9.4 Informed consent

Men who participated in the study were given enough information about the study. The researcher explained to them the purpose of the study and specific procedures that involve them. In addition, the researcher explained what was expected of them as well as how long they were going to be involved in the study. They were also informed about their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty (Royse, 2011).

To assure participants of the true meaning of the consent form, the researcher provided the translated version of the form from English to Sepedi since the majority of them spoke Sepedi. Once the researcher was confident that they understood what it meant to take part in the study, participants were requested to sign a written consent form.

1.9.5 No harm to participants

In the words of Babbie (2007) as cited in De Vos *et al.* (2011), harm to participants in the social sciences research may possibly be of an emotional nature. When dealing with men as victims of intimate partner violence, they may not completely feel comfortable in sharing their experiences. De Vos *et al.* (2011) noted that it is difficult to predict and determine emotional harm on participants. Therefore, one cannot be completely sure that participants are 100 percent safe from emotional harm. In unfortunate cases, the researcher informed men who happened to be emotionally involved that it was not the researcher's intention to cause harm, and as a corrective measure, the researcher referred them to relevant professionals such as Social Workers who render professional services for free.

1.9.6 Confidentiality and anonymity

The researcher maximised participants' confidentiality by making sure that interviews were conducted in a private space. Raw data obtained from participants were kept confidential, where only the researcher had access. To ensure maximum security, the information was stored in an encrypted document in a password-protected computer.

The research data is not linked to men who participated in the study in any way, meaning that their personal information such as names were removed. Nicholas *et al.* (2010) noted that confidentiality means that identifying information should not, in any way, be made available to anyone who is not directly involved in the study. The most important form of confidentiality is anonymity, which essentially means that the men remained unidentified throughout the study.

1.9.7 Favourable risk-benefit ratio

According to Munro (2011), favourable risk-benefit ratio implies that risks involved and benefits that might accrue in the research must be considered. Wiles (2012) alludes that qualitative research topics that are sensitive can maximise risks to participants since these topics focus on personal issues. It is important for the researcher to prevent possible harm to participants. Should such harm occur, it is the responsibility of the researcher to provide appropriate intervention (Peled & Leichtentritt, 2002).

Men's non-disclosure of intimate partner violence is a sensitive topic and has probability of stimulating emotional harm to men who were reminded of the experienced violence. For participants who were affected emotionally after participating in the research, it was beneficial to refer them to local social work offices and other professional bodies for help at no cost. This study possibly helped male victims of partner violence to establish ways to disclose their experiences. Consequently, their plight of violence experienced may be heard. This was beneficial in integrating intervention processes of helping professionals; particularly for hidden phenomena such as violence against men. New trends of this type of violence started to emerge; and some of the participants gained access to services. Participants were informed about risks and benefits involved in the study before signing consent forms.

CHAPTER TWO

MEN'S NON-DISCLOSURE OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The victimisation of men by their female partners is a serious social problem; it is underreported (Wright, 2016) and largely ignored by society (Shuler, 2010; Park, Bang & Jeon, 2020). Violence against men is being regarded as a family problem which does not require legal assistance. Consequently, it becomes normalised and many cases of violence remain largely unreported (Srivastava, 2016).

Although feminists argue that intimate partner violence (IPV) is committed by men against women, women can certainly abuse their male partners (Adebayo, 2014; Safariolyaei & Amiri, 2017). In consensus, Zuure (2018) revealed that men do experience sexual violence, stalking and physical violence from their intimate partners. McHugh, Rakowski and Swiderski (2013) noted that like other types of abuse that men experience, assumptions still exist that psychological abuse is something that women become victims of with men as perpetrators. In contrast, Hines and Douglas (2009) have indicated that women are more likely to perpetrate psychological and emotional forms of abuse towards men.

Men are subjected to psychological abuse, economic violence and controlling behaviour from their female partners. This includes mild to severe physical violence, psychological violence, threats, material violence and sexual harassment (Lien & Lorentzen, 2019). Results from Walker *et al.* (2019) further revealed that men experienced physical, sexual and verbal abuse, coupled with manipulative and controlling behaviours from their intimate partners. Participants also reported secondary abusive experiences, with police and other support services responding with ridicule, doubt, indifference and victim arrest.

There are relatively few studies in literature that concern disclosure of violence among male victims. Male victimisation in IPV situation has long been a neglected

phenomenon in academic research and is rarely mentioned in social service provision. Intimate partner violence against men remains an invisible occurrence. This is due to the reluctance of society to support them, because men are culturally perceived to be masculine and strong (Simon and Wallace, 2018).

2.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AGAINST MEN

Gelles (1974) purports that incident reports of male victims of female perpetrated physical aggression have emerged from early to mid-1970s. Research by McCarrick, Davis-McCabe and Hirst-Winthrop (2016) and Wright (2016) purports that Suzanne Steinmetz was amongst the first academics to research and document violence against men. Steinmetz (1977) termed this phenomenon the “husband battering syndrome”. This study has revealed that husband battering is something common though people choose to ignore it (Steinmetz, 1977; Shuler, 2010).

Historically, society has never accepted the notion that men can be victims of domestic violence. The patriarchal society expected men to dominate women, not the other way around. Husband beating was kept a secret in patriarchal societies (Steinmetz, 1977). George (1994) avows that in France a “battered” husband was humiliated and ridiculed by society by parading him around town riding donkeys backwards while holding its tail.

Steinmetz emphasised that the ignorance of the battered husband syndrome is rooted in the stigma attached which is embarrassment. Men who find themselves in violent situations are reluctant to talk, especially after experiencing physical violence (Lien & Lorentzen, 2019). Shuler (2010) states that in the past, domestic violence has been a personal matter than a social problem. Recently, it is viewed as a serious social problem and crime.

2.3 MEN'S NON-DISCLOSURE OF VIOLENCE EXPERIENCED FROM THEIR INTIMATE PARTNERS

It is difficult to get male victims of IPV to come forward due to myths placed on them. Men do not want to be considered weak and are more silent about this matter (Shuler, 2010). Morgan and Wells (2016) purport that men who experience physical and other forms of violence perpetrated by their partners feel that their situations are different since they are men. Thus, this may affect disclosure of violence experienced. Information pertaining to men's voices regarding violence perpetrated against them seems to be insufficient. Simon and Wallace (2018) have noted that few studies in the literature have concentrated on issues of men's disclosure of their victimisation.

2.4 DETERMINANTS OF MEN'S NON-DISCLOSURE OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

2.4.1 Masculinity factors

Studies show that men do not want to admit that they are victims of intimate partner violence due to masculine standards and their fragile self-image. It is evident that most male victims of IPV prefer to hide their situations with the hope of protecting themselves from eroded self-esteem (Adebayo, 2014; Lien & Lorentzen, 2019). These victims are often exposed to socio-cultural stereotypes of masculinity. Men who come forward to admit that they are being battered by women are judged harshly for failing to control them (women). This is based on the general idea that men are physically stronger than women and therefore, should have the power to prevent any kind of female-inflicted violence against them. This view disregards that violent women tend to use objects during intimate partner violence at a higher rate than violent men (Ewan, 2010; Kumar, 2012; Hamel, 2014).

It is often difficult to recognise men as victims of violence with the implications placed on gender roles and masculinity factors (Munirkazmi & Mohyuddin, 2012). Men are expected to be breadwinners, to be strong, and to have power over women. Consequently, this discourages men from disclosing their experiences. Madzivhandila (2015) states that male children are groomed from a younger age to have strength, act like men and refrain from crying when hurt.

Dominant conflicting debates of masculinity and intimate partner violence hindered men from identifying IPV and prevented them from responding to violence appropriately (Corbally, 2015). Shame of victimisation and gender expectations are identified as barriers to recognition and acceptance of male victimisation (Wallace *et al*, 2018).

2.4.2 Gender stereotypes

Wright (2016) purports that gender stereotypes enable women to be aggressive to men since it is more acceptable for women to hit men and not the other way around. This is not only aligned with physical abuse but includes psychological abuse. It is usually considered a crime when men commit violence against women. Violence is perceived abusive if perpetrated by males. For instance, forced sex perpetrated by women on men is deemed impractical (Dutton & White, 2013).

In opposing the feminist idea of women being only victims of violence, scholars agree that domestic violence affects people of different genders. Cook (2009) and Adebayo (2014) confirm that violence is not only experienced by women, but also men. Consequently, men are not likely to report their victimisation, and little is known about the needs of this understudied population (Cheung, Leung & Tsui, 2009).

2.4.3 Relationship dynamics

Individuals experiencing intimate partner violence compare the costs and benefits of the intimate relationship for them to decide how they could respond to the violence

(Heyman, Foran & Wilkinson, 2013 as cited in Borden *et al.*, 2018). According to Strong, De Vault and Cohen (2010), victims of violence may not disclose their experiences if the benefits and rewards are greater than the costs in the relationship. Similarly, Kumar (2012) avers that in cases where an abused man is mentally, emotionally or financially dependent on the perpetrator (female partner), the idea of leaving the relationship generates the feeling of depression and anxiety. Therefore, it is evident that men who depend on their female partners have increased chances of bearing abusive acts from their abusive partners.

Other studies have noted that male victims of intimate partner violence may not disclose their violent experiences with the hope that it is still possible for them to save the relationship. This takes into consideration the issue of children, which could include fear of losing custody of the children if the couple separates because of the reported abuse. Moreover, providing care for children may also be exceptionally difficult as men may not have been socialised into such domestic roles (Kirst-Ashman, 2010; Kumar, 2012; Laing, Humphreys & Cavanagh, 2013).

2.4.4 Personal feelings

Fear of being disbelieved seems to play a major role in preventing men from disclosing violence by their partners. It has been noted that law enforcement officers are likely to see women as victims rather than offenders, and men as perpetrators. This discourages men from disclosing violence by their female partners because they fear that if they do report to the police, they will be assumed to be the aggressors, and be placed under arrest (Kingsnorth & MacIntosh, 2007; Hines *et al.*, 2007). Swan, Gambone, Caldwell, Sullivan and Snow (2008) further noted that women tend to use violence towards their male partners when they retaliate. Contrary to studies above, Cook (2009) noted that there is ignorance in the fact that women can perpetrate violence against men equally as men do against women. This is based on the figures that are mostly used in research, that view women's violence towards men as acting in self-defence. Based on the findings of this research, this is not true given the many cases of intimate partner violence that indicate a mutual combat of violence in many households.

Male victims of intimate partner violence are reluctant to talk about their abusive experiences since they believe that when they try to share their experiences, they are not given a listening ear. Instead, they are ashamed of their experiences (Kumar, 2012; Adebayo, 2014). Tsui, Cheung and Leung (2010) alluded that shame fosters reluctance to seek help. Men who experience violence from their partners do not disclose their experiences because of fear of additional problems that may occur after disclosure.

2.4.5 Male Socialisation

Socialisation plays an important role in normalising violence. Children can be socialised from a younger age to respond to violence by accepting it, which then leads to viewing violence as normal at an adult age. That is, if adults in a society do not view violence as a serious matter, younger people exposed to such values will have increased chances of accepting the violence (Madzivhandila, 2015).

In consensus, Heilman and Barker (2018) noted that men are typically socially instructed to refrain from showing emotional vulnerability and are monitored to show only a limited range of emotions. Men's display of sadness, loneliness, affection, love and friendship among other expressions of the heart, is socially interpreted as a sign of weakness. Thus, men's emotional wellbeing is damaged by a learned inability to recognise, communicate and understand their emotions.

2.4.6 Societal factors

Men who experience intimate partner violence in the hands of their female partners prefer to suffer in silence because of societal pressures placed on them. The society is likely to accept female aggression against men and condemn male aggression against women. This leads men not to see themselves as victims and therefore conceal intimate partner violence (Robertson & Murachver, 2009; Kumar, 2012; Adebayo, 2014). McHugh *et al.* (2013) assert that aggression and control are less likely to be recognised if perpetrated by women. The general point of view is that

domestic violence is something which male perpetrators inflict on their female partners and not the other way around (Donovan & Hester, 2010; Dempsey, 2013).

Walker *et al.* (2019) aver that societal perceptions of intimate partner violence on research, frameworks, measures and methodologies has focused on female victims of violence and are unable to capture the full scope of male victimisation. Lack of societal recognition of abuse against men has influenced men's decision to disclose their experiences. Society perceives violence as a gendered experience (Scotts-Bahle, 2020). Consequently, this acts as a barrier to disclosure of violence (Wallace, Wallace, Kenkre, Braford & Borja, 2018).

Several scholars such as Stiles, Ortiz and Keene (2017), Wallace *et al.* (2018), Dim (2020) and Walker *et al.* (2019) agree that men are unable to recognise violence perpetrated against them by their partner as violence. Perceptions that men are perpetrators, not victims prevent male victims of abuse from seeking help. According to Voller *et al.* (2015), the general myths surrounding male victimisation, for instance, include the belief that men cannot be raped; instead, they are assumed to have the power to escape the abuse. Gender norms derived from masculinity perceptions that view men as strong hide the problem of men abuse (Park *et al.*, 2020).

2.5 HELP-SEEKING AMONG MALE VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

An Asian study conducted by Cheung *et al.* (2009) has revealed that when men are assaulted by their female partners, psychological and personal barriers coupled with traditional values greatly affect their help-seeking decisions. The challenge facing men when seeking help is that they are treated differently as compared to female victims (Machado, Santos, Graham-Kevan & Matos, 2017).

Research conducted by Wright (2016) proves that male victims of intimate partner violence find it difficult to seek help. The participants highlighted that social pressures make it difficult for men to admit that they are victims of violence. Others are reluctant to seek help because of masculinity factors. They believe that being a male victim of partner violence degrades them as men.

One of the external factors which prohibits male victims of intimate partner violence from seeking help from social service professionals and other relevant officials such as the police is that men may have a challenge in locating the few resources that are available for them (Hines & Douglas 2009; Dutton & White, 2013). Moreover, if they happen to seek help, chances are that they may encounter resistance from those offering services to victims of partner violence. The general concern is that male victims may not even be aware of services that support them when they are abused. Others even assume that the services are for female victims instead (Tsui, Cheung & Leung, 2010; Tsui, 2014; Adebayo, 2014).

Male victims of partner perpetrated violence fear that they may not be believed if they were to seek help (Kingsnorth & MacIntosh, 2007; Walker *et al.*, 2019; Dempsey, 2013). Since service providers usually see women as victims and as a result, women use this to their advantage. The impact of attitudes towards male victims of IPV is serious since society does not believe men who describe these experiences, and often perceive them as “weak” or in fact “abusers.” This contributes towards barriers that men experience to seek help and to leave the relationship (Bates, 2019).

Dutton and White (2013) aver that male victims of IPV are less likely to seek help due to male socialisation that reduces their chances of seeking help. Abused men are portrayed as strong, assertive and intelligent. This could explain why abused husbands find it difficult to seek help or to even talk about their experiences (Barkhuizen, 2010).

Shuler (2010) further avers that abused men do not seek social services due to strong endorsement of social and cultural values and avoidance of gender role conflict. On the other hand, social stigmatisation and men’s denial of being victims are among the many reasons explaining why they are less likely to seek help as compared to women.

Male victims of intimate partner violence face internal and external factors that prohibit them from seeking help from social service agencies, especially for issues that society deems unusual for a man not to handle himself. There are unfair practices of the judicial system whereby the treatment of victims of intimate partner violence varies based on gender differences. Some of the victims are not taken seriously, are

wrongfully accused for the perpetrated abuse and lose custody of their children (Hines & Douglas, 2009).

2.6 IMPACTS OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE ON MALE VICTIMS

2.6.1 Psychological effects

Studies have shown that men who experience intimate partner violence at the hands of their female partners suffer psychological effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (Douglas & Hines, 2011; Kubai, 2014; Lien & Lorentzen, 2019). Dutton and White (2013) aver that men who are victims of IPV exhibit negative psychological symptoms. Most men show signs of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) after experiencing common couple violence (McGlinchey *et al.*, 2020). Safariolyaei and Amiri (2017) allude that feelings such as shame, helplessness, hopelessness, low self-esteem and loss of jobs resulting from partner violence are some of the factors leading to PTSD.

In their study, Lien and Lorentzen (2019) noted that most male victims have suffered a variety of psychological problems such as insomnia, trauma, a deep sense of insecurity, anxiety and difficulties in concentration. Some struggle with trauma and social anxiety. The tragic outcome of experiencing violence is that it may lead to drastic decision-making by the victim. Male victims of partner perpetrated violence harbour ideas of committing suicide (Lien & Lorentzen, 2019). In consensus, Younger (2011) avers that suicide is likely to result from a violent relationship.

2.6.2 Physical injuries

A study conducted by Lien and Lorentzen (2019) revealed that men experienced frequent physical and psychological attacks that led to both minor and more serious physical injuries. Appallingly, one of the male victims was reported to have suffered

severe concussion and cuts resulting from attack from his partner. Results from the study also revealed that one suffered life-threatening physical injuries that required extensive treatment. Amongst other injuries, blisters, minor cuts, bruised eyes, bites, scratched hands and backs are most common physical injuries reported.

2.6.3 Finances

Wallace *et al.* (2018) aver that while men suffered PTSD, others were left bankrupt after experiencing violence. In support, Lien and Lorentzen (2019) confirmed that some of the male victims experienced financial deterioration after they had tried to fight for the contact rights over their children in courts.

2.6.4 Self-esteem, alcohol and drugs

A study conducted by Lien and Lorentzen (2019) revealed that all men who experienced violence had low self-esteem. They had a sense of not being good enough. A sense of inadequacy and feelings of worthlessness were also amongst the negative impact of violence experienced. Most men, although not all, who have been subjected to sexual abuse have also used alcohol, anabolic steroids, cannabis and other drugs to deal with difficult emotional issues and their sense of worthlessness.

2.6.5 Impacts of violence on children

Research indicates that violence between partners pose effects not only on victims but also on their children. The conflict between partners can end up in breakups, with serious disagreements over the division of parental care of the children. Threats of sabotage of contact, humiliation and battering a partner in front of the children are all forms of psychological and physical violence that also have consequences for the children involved (Lien & Lorentzen, 2019). Wallace *et al.* (2018) indicated that men's

experiences impacted on the development of future relationships and their relationships with their children.

2.7 SERVICE PROVISION FOR MALE VICTIMS OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

It is not easy for male victims of female perpetrated violence to access services due to labeling constraints. In most cases, men are likely to be labelled aggressors, ignoring injuries incurred. This also affects issues relating to custody of children. They are commonly viewed as the root cause of violence and as a threat to children (Dutton & White, 2013; Adebayo, 2014; Tsui, 2014).

Although there are domestic violence services that are gender-neutral, most of these services are mostly geared towards the needs of female victims of violence. Awareness campaigns and the public rhetoric in general on domestic abuse continue to focus primarily on female victims (Tsui, Cheung and Leung, 2010; Wright, 2016).

Despite the underreporting of men abuse and the underutilisation of services by male victims, men need help. There should be specialised services designed specifically for male victims. Cook and Hodo (2013) aver that while services for male victims of violence are slightly increasing, these services are still rare. This agrees with Adebayo (2014) and Tsui (2014), who noted that resources for male victims of violence are limited. For services that are available, Roebuck *et al.* (2020) purport that access to shelters by male victims is limited.

The area of understanding male victims' needs is underdeveloped (Wallace *et al.*, 2018). This is due to limited research that focuses on service provision for male victims of abuse. It is of paramount importance that appropriate interventions are offered to abused men to overcome experienced abuse and prevent future abuse. Studies by Tsui (2014) and Tsui, Cheung and Leung (2010) found that most men were not aware of services available for them as victims of partner violence.

To improve services for male victims of partner abuse, it is important for abused men to know about services available and how to access them (Wallace *et al.*, 2018). Tsui (2014) further extrapolated that:

- There should be an increase in awareness about intimate partner abuse. Gender-inclusive practices and services should be advocated for.
- There has to be a review of laws and policies and increased funding and resources.
- There should be a clear emphasis on anonymity in service provision.

2.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter gave an overview of literature review on non-disclosure of intimate partner violence. Determinants of men's non-disclosure of IPV, help-seeking experiences and service provision for male victims were discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORKS AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Male victims of domestic violence have been seriously neglected in public policy, and as a result, abused men are not reporting their victimisation. The study of intimate partner violence against men is important to better understand the prevalence of IPV against men in order to create public policies to prevent further abuse (Safariolyaei & Amiri, 2017).

In this chapter, focus will be on legislative frameworks and intervention strategies that already exist of addressing violence in South Africa. The discussion will be aligned from background information on legislations addressing violence in South Africa. An overview of vulnerable groups will be discussed, including the scope of South African legislations and intervention strategies.

3.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON LEGISLATIONS ADDRESSING VIOLENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

The post-apartheid South African government has established democratic values and a constitution that enshrines human rights, including the right to freedom and security of persons. These provisions were strengthened by the international human rights jurisprudence. The South African government is responsible for the management of crime through the development and implementation of relevant policies, strategies and programmes to carry out this responsibility (Nel & Van Wyk, 2013).

The South African government has, since the emergence of family violence, established and implemented legislations appropriate to address it. These legislations included the Prevention of Family Violence Act 133 of 1993, which was further

developed and strengthened through the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998. Vetten (2005) argued that this act was amended because the PFVA did not regard men's right to a fair hearing. The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC, 2018) has also highlighted that the first sexual offences court was introduced in South Africa in the year 1993 to specifically improve the adjudication of sexual offences. On the other hand, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 was also established to afford victims of crime specific rights as enshrined in chapter two of the Act.

3.3 GROUPS CONSIDERED VULNERABLE TO VIOLENCE

Van Niekerk *et al.* (2015) assert that the legislative documentation acknowledged high levels of violence with the prioritisation of certain vulnerable groups which placed focus on children, women, the elderly, persons with disabilities and the rural population. The tragedy is that there is less recognition of male victims of violence. Bendall (2010) confirms that anybody can be a victim of family violence. Men's vulnerabilities should be recognised and addressed (Department of Social Development, 2007).

3.4 PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE

Strategies for the prevention of gender-based violence are linked to efforts that are aimed at increasing gender equality. Since men are typically not recognised as victims and survivors of gender-based violence, non-formal and formal education is important to prevent this violence. To positively prevent and respond to GBV, it is also important to strengthen legal and policy frameworks (Department of Social Development, 2007).

3.5 SOUTH AFRICAN LEGISLATIONS AIMED AT ADDRESSING VIOLENCE

To address domestic violence and related matters in South Africa, the following legislations have been considered.

3.5.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996

Bendall (2010) alluded that the South African Constitutional Act 108 of 1996 appears to have provided protection for victims of domestic violence. Section (9) of the Bill of Rights emphasises equality of persons, wherein subsection (1) of this section states that every person is equal before the law. It talks of protection and security of every citizen in the country.

In support, section (12) of this act talks of freedom and security of persons. Everyone has the right to freedom and security of the person, which includes the right (c) to be free from all forms of violence from either public or private sources (Bendall, 2010). Subsection (d) further emphasises that no person shall be tortured in any way.

In conjunction with the rights enshrined in the South African Constitution (108 of 1996), the victim's charter outlined by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJ& CD) (n.d) provided the following rights and services to victims of violence.

All departments forming part of the criminal justice system must treat all victims with fairness and respect for their dignity and privacy in order to avoid secondary victimisation. Congruent to this right, section (10) of the Bill of Rights as stipulated in the South African Constitution established that the inherent human dignity of a person must be respected and protected.

State departments are obliged to provide victims of violence with information and allow all victims to participate in criminal justice proceedings. This includes communication of information to victims in their home language to enforce understanding. This in line with Section (32) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, which aims to

promote access to information. Subsection (1) notes that everyone has the right of access to (a) any information that is held by the state and (b) any information that is held by another person and that is required for the exercise of protection of any right.

The state department should protect victims whose safety is threatened. A variety of support such as social, health and counselling support and any other support relevant shall be offered to victims by the state department where appropriate. In other instances, it may be necessary to help victims of violence acquire compensation orders and to enforce such orders.

3.5.2 Domestic Violence Act, Act No. 116 of 1998

Since the recognition of high levels of violence within South African society among domestic relationships, the state aimed to improve the available remedies that seemed to be ineffective through the enactment of Domestic Violence Act, Act No. 116 of 1998. This act was specifically formulated to afford victims of domestic violence protection from various forms of domestic violence (Domestic Violence Act, 116 of 1998). Bandall (2010) noted that the most significant option for victims of violence is acquiring a protection order under this Act. This is a court order which orders an abuser to stop abusing the victim.

3.5.3 Criminal Law (Sexual offences and related matters) Amendment Act, Act No. 32 of 2007

The Criminal Law (Sexual offences and related matters) Amendment Act (32 of 2007) defines a victim as any person alleging that a sexual offence has been perpetrated against him or her. This definition indicates gender neutrality regarding who can be a victim of violence. The aim of this act is to implement laws that deal with sexual offences and related matters through the review and amendment of law aspects. Through the implementation of this act, victims of sexual offences are provided with services that, amongst others, include the minimisation and prevention of secondary victimisation. The act addresses rape, compelled rape, sexual assault, compelled

sexual assault and compelled self-sexual assault offences, and has repealed the common law of rape offence and replaced it with legislation applicable to all forms of sexual offence irrespective of gender differences (Zedner, 1997).

3.6 INTERVENTION STRATEGIES AIMED AT HELPING VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

3.6.1 Victim Empowerment Programme (VEP)

Kimberg (2008) has noted that interventions for victims of intimate partner violence focus on the empowerment of the victim through the direct provision of shelters, restraining orders, police assistance, the arrest of perpetrators and counseling offering.

The objectives of the victim empowerment programme as noted by Nel and Van Wyk, (2013) include:

- i. To reduce the psychological trauma experienced by victims through the provision of emotional support and practical assistance immediately and after the incidence.
- ii. To refer victims of violence to trauma counseling services and other desired professional services.
- iii. To prevent possible secondary victimisation by the criminal justice system through the provision of information such as the functioning of the court system and the victim's rights within it.

3.6.2 Shelters for victims of violence

As stipulated by the Domestic Violence Act, Act No. (116 of 1998), victims of domestic violence may be assisted to locate shelters with the assistance of a police official after the occurrence of violence. Although the Act is gender-neutral when it comes to the

protection of victims of violence, Sipamla (2012) found that most shelters that are supposed to offer protection to victims admit women and children and exclude boys older than 8 to 12 years. This could prove that these shelter services are formulated to cater for women and children as victims of violence rather than men.

3.6.3 Social service provision

Murray and Graves (2013) aver that social service agencies are regarded as some of the response systems towards issues of violence. Sipamla (2012) alluded that the Department of Social Development ensures that counselling services to domestic violence victims are provided in thuthuzela care centres (shelters). Social workers based in clinics, hospitals, district offices, NGOs and other settings provide counselling to victims. Their responsibilities further include finding alternative homes for victims to ensure their safety (Ongundipe *et al.*, 2018).

3.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter gave an overview of legislative frameworks and intervention strategies that form part of the plan to address violence in South Africa. The discussion aligned from background information on legislations addresses violence in South Africa. An overview of vulnerable groups, South African legislations and intervention strategies at a national, provincial and local levels were also given. Although South Africa has established and implemented several policies of dealing with violence, there are no specific policies in place that focus on men as male victims of violence as compared to several policies that have already been implemented to specifically cater for the unique needs of women and child victims of violence such as the Convention of the Elimination of All forms of discrimination against women and children.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on presentation, analysis and interpretation of data collected from male victims of intimate partner violence at Ga-Masemola village. Convenience and snowball sampling methods were used to access abused men. Available participants made referrals to other participants through snowball sampling. Before data collection, all participants gave consent to be interviewed; participation was entirely voluntary. Participants understood their right to withdraw from the study at any time they wished to do so. Data was collected through one on one, face-to face interviews. A semi-structured interview guide was used to collect data. Findings of the study are presented in this section through themes and subthemes.

4.2 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS

This study aimed to have 15 participants but since saturation was reached before the fifteenth participant, it consisted of nine (09) male participants. These were men who are and have been abused by former or current partners. Their ages ranged between twenty-four (24) and fifty (50) years. They were all residents of Ga-Masemola village.

4.3 PRESENTATION OF THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

Participants acknowledged that they were victims of violence perpetrated by their former and current female partners. Most of them indicated that they suffered physical, verbal, emotional, financial and psychological types of abuse. The following are

themes and subthemes that emerged from the study about men's non-disclosure of intimate partner violence.

4.3.1 Theme 1: Men's views about disclosing violence

This theme talks about men's response to violence perpetrated against them by their female partners and how they feel about disclosing their victimisation. Participants' responses indicated that they do not disclose their experience. In fact, they prefer to conceal it. Some of the participants' voices have been captured as follows:

“Concealing is the better option, if I disclose this woman might think I am afraid of her. It is just that if I retaliate people will think I am the perpetrator. I prefer to keep it to myself until I figure out the best solution”.

When asked to expound on how they feel about disclosing the victimisation to friends, family members, colleagues and someone close, one of the participants has the following:

“I usually feel comfortable sharing my problems with my friend (Mr x), but I really cannot tell him that I am abused, especially by a woman. I cannot bring this to his attention..... he can never know that I am not able to control my wife. I will look stupid and he will no longer take me seriously or ask for my advices”.

Another participant had to say:

“I think matters between my wife and I are secrets. I cannot trust other people by telling them my affairs. Telling them will be same as giving them permission to talk behind my back. Then, life becomes difficult and I will be even ashamed to walk on the streets”.

Shuler (2010) proved that male victims of intimate partner violence are silent about their victimisation. It becomes difficult for them to come forward to disclose their experiences. This is mainly because they do not want to be considered weak.

4.3.2 Theme 2: Determinants of non-disclosure of violence

This theme involves factors that arose from the study that influence men's decisions to disclose violence at the hands of their female partners. The following subthemes present factors leading to non-disclosure of violence.

4.3.2.1 Subtheme: Costs versus benefits after disclosure

This subtheme talks about things that male victims of violence compare as costs or benefits that may come after disclosure if they decide to disclose their experiences to people around them. In other words, this refers to how much they are to gain and/or lose after disclosure. Kumar (2012) and Thobejane *et al.* (2018) extrapolated that some of the reasons that hinder men's disclosure include financial dependence on their abusive partner. They also fear abandoning their children, including being able to care for them if the relationship comes to an end. In this study, one of the participants decided to conceal violence experienced in order to maintain a good parental relationship towards children in an abusive relationship. His response to factors that affect their decision to disclose was as follows:

"I keep quiet and let pain go through my heart. If I respond I am afraid that the problem will escalate to such a point where children may notice that parents are fighting and may begin to choose sides. What if they chose her over me? I mean she is the mother after all. Women always win".

A study by Thobejane *et al.* (2018) found that men who are dependent on their rich women for daily living may fear the effects of divorce should the couple divorce as a result of the reported abuse. When asked about reasons that influence men not to disclose their experiences, participants said the following:

"I do not want this to affect the children, my wife is providing for us and it may take me a lot of time to find a decent job to cater for my children's needs. I know her words hurt, she is bitter and sometimes violent, but she has been there for me ever since my family disowned me. I will fight to keep this family together, what she is doing is wrong,

but she is a good mother and she loves me. Therefore, I think it is better to keep the problem to myself”.

Congruent to this point, another participant has said:

“She once threatened to take children and leave with them. Since she is the breadwinner, she can do that. I just cannot allow that to happen, because I may never be able to see my kids. The best way for a man to keep the family together is to stay strong on matters like these”.

4.3.2.2 Subtheme: Masculinity factors

This subtheme has shown that factors that are associated with masculinity prevent men from disclosing their victimisation. This includes factors that view men as strong and masculine.

One of the participants revealed the following:

“There is no way I am going to sacrifice my manhood by telling people my problems. Ke hlabirwa a Mokone (praising in clan names), men are born strong and it should stay like that”.

Another said:

“What can I do other than keeping quiet? it cannot be said that as men we are abused. It will look like I am trying to hide evidence, I mean.... I look stronger than my wife, I may be assumed to be the aggressor and get arrested for something I did not do, so why bother”.

4.3.2.3 Subtheme: Personal feelings

This subtheme is about men’s own feelings that prevent disclosure of violence that they experienced. One of obstacles that discourages men from disclosing violence is that they are afraid of being ridiculed if they reveal the victimisation to people around

them (Dempsey, 2013; Thobejane *et al.*, 2018). One of the participants was quoted as saying:

“I just feel intimidated by the whole thing..... if people find out that I am abused, especially by a woman I do not know how I will cope from being a joke. People don't respect weak men and I do not want to carry that label. This will just ruin my name”.

According to Kumar (2012) and Adebayo (2014), male victims of intimate partner violence do not share their experiences because they are ashamed of these experiences. Some participants of this study said:

“I feel ashamed because I do not know how my family will digest the issue of me being abused by my wife. It may seem as if she cast some sort of spell to control me”.

“I do not want to be a laughingstock; I do not want to feel humiliated not to mention how my family and colleagues will look at me. This will bring shame and I will lose respect”.

4.3.2.4 Subtheme: Societal expectations

Societal expectations that expect men to be strong and to suppress emotions limit them from disclosing their experiences (Campbell-Hawkins, 2019). This subtheme talks about expectations in society that prohibit men from disclosing violence perpetrated against them. Some participants said the following:

“In this place of residence, a man should be the head in the family. When you are a man and could not handle your wife while you are the head of the family, people will undermine you and wonder what kind of a man is defeated by a woman. Well I want to remain respected”.

“The society expects us men to be strong and to control our wives instead. Besides feeling ashamed I feel like no one would believe me just because I am a man”.

“It is highly unlikely for institutions offering support to victims of violence to recognise and acknowledge our victimisation since the society we live in, view men as

perpetrators of violence towards their female partners. I really feel discouraged to disclose, we men are not taken seriously, and we undergo violence just the same way women do”.

4.3.2.5 Subtheme: Cultural norms

Disclosure of violence by male victims can be affected by cultural pressures of masculinity that require men to avoid vulnerabilities (Kia-Keating *et al.*, 2005; Victor & Olive, 2019). To see a man crying is viewed as a disgrace in most African communities. Cultural barriers attached to crying men pose a risk for abused men to lose prestige in communities in which they live (Thobejane *et al.*, 2018).

When asked about factors that lead to non-disclosure of violence, a response by a research participant was as follows:

“I am in pain, but I feel embarrassed to even talk about it. In our culture, we say ‘monna ke nku o llela teng’, meaning- as a strong man, I should suppress the pain no matter how difficult the situation may be. Should I reveal that my wife is abusing me, people will be shocked, they will think low of me, and men will not want to associate with me after disclosure. No man would befriend someone beaten by his wife; this will affect my other relationships. A pedi man should be able to solve his issues. So, I am still looking for safer ways to resolve this”.

Similarly, another participant was quoted as follows:

“As an African man I am forced to keep quiet. I am talking about a sepedi proverb which says “monna ke nku o llela teng”. Yes, I acknowledge that I am in pain, but I cannot risk my manhood just to say my wife is the man in this house. A man who initiated through African processes cannot do that. I am telling you even my ancestors could turn their backs on me. A man releasing tears in public is not a real man in our culture”.

4.3.3 Theme 3: Views about seeking professional help

This theme highlights men's views about seeking help from helping professionals through subthemes presented below:

4.3.3.1 Subtheme: Perception of service delivery

It has been noted by Hines and Douglas (2009) that male victims of IPV have a challenge of locating resources available to them. In this regard, when participants were asked to give their views about help-seeking from professionals, one of the participants noted the following:

“What discourages me from seeking help is that services for male victims of violence may not even exist. I even wonder if men can be protected from female perpetrated violence. I am so convinced that services that are available are for women, children and other people who can be trusted when lodging complaints, not us men”.

Hines and Douglas (2009) further posit that when men try to seek help, it is possible that they may experience resistance from helping professionals. A response from one of the participants who was asked how services affect their decision to disclose was as follows:

“Male victims of violence do not have the same access to services as compared to women. It is difficult for me as a man to approach helping professionals for help while I know that the possibility is that I may be turned away. The sad part is that helping professionals may even take a woman's side. How often does it happen that a woman gets arrested for fighting a man? It is very rare and discouraging. But should there be a case whereby she approaches them playing a victim, they will be running around looking for me. I may even get arrested for something I did not do”.

Some of the participants have highlighted that they fear possible rejection from helping professionals, and that this could limit their chances of accessing services. Simon and Wallace (2018) proved that help-seeking is affected by accessibility to professional

services, possible rejection from service providers and professionals' reaction towards men who disclose their experiences. One participant reported:

"I do not feel comfortable to speak about my experiences. I am looking at the fact male victims of violence are never taken seriously. They will not believe me; besides they will not have strength to help me since victimisation against men is uncommon".

Some of the male victims believe that since their victimisation is uncommon, their cries cannot be heard. On the other hand, others think that they will not be believed when they lay a complaint or when they decide to call for help (Deshpande, 2019).

4.3.3.2 Subtheme: Fear of ridicule from helping professionals

This study has revealed that men do not consider informing helping professionals about their victimisation. All the men in the current study reported that they do not disclose to helping professionals to avoid mockery. Some of these participants were quoted as saying:

"Though I consider trying to seek help from helping professionals, my biggest fear is that they may laugh at me".

Another said:

"I feel like I am trapped in a dark hole. When I am a man and I tell another man that my wife is abusing me, there is a high possibility that the whole matter can turn into a joke. When I check there are more men at the police station and that increases my chances of reporting my issues to them, no man will take me seriously when I report such incident".

This view indicates that some men are not comfortable sharing their problems with other men. A study by Huntley *et al.* (2019) argued that men prefer to disclose and discuss their victimisation with female professionals instead.

4.3.3.3 Subtheme: Helplessness

Responses from study participants indicated that some of the men feel that support service agents or helping professionals cannot help male victims of IPV. The following denotes what was said by some of the participants.

“I do not feel free to consult them about this kind of a problem. I see professionals as people who fight for women rights. There is no help I am going to get from them even if I try to speak out”.

Another said:

“I know someone who tried to seek help. That person even today was not assisted. The government does not look at men as victims, we look like we can sort ourselves out without their intervention and that is totally wrong. In this country as a man you cannot try to fix it, for as long there is a woman involved... obviously as a man I am going to be on the wrong side of the law”.

4.3.3.4 Subtheme: Confidentiality

Some of the participants have been found to have perceptions that differ from those of others. The issue of maintaining confidentiality among helping professionals was mentioned by several participants in the study. Some of the participants said:

“I have no problem in seeking help. What pains me is if I seek help and later my problem is known in the community. I plead for assurance that my issues will be kept a secret before I go out to seek help”.

“I do not trust the level of confidentiality in helping professionals. Imagine I share my problems in the office, later I go out with friends for refreshments and boom, my problems are known even by a child on the street. This then put me in an awkward position”.

4.3.3.5 Subtheme: Media

Some of the participants of this study have shown that media influence their decisions to seek professional help.

“I do not think it is wise to seek professional help. It once appeared to me on social media when a man tried to seek help and his problems turned in to a joke. I will not have strength to seek help. Instead, I prefer to conform to the adage “monna ke nku o llela teng”.

Another participant said:

“I have seen on Television how they always make us look horrible by punching women. Most stories view men using physical strength to abuse their weak and helpless women. If you check even TV adverts that warn against violence.... It is always about the woman as a victim of domestic violence. I have never seen an organisation supporting male victims advertised on TV, ... why is that? I honestly cannot expect the helping organisations to believe me”.

A study by O'Connor (2020) found that the media portrays violence as something that is inflicted by males over women. In most cases, women are viewed as victims of men abuse.

4.3.4 Theme 4: Views about seeking help from informal networks

During the interview, participants were asked: other than seeking help from helping professionals, please share your views about seeking help from friends, family members, relatives, elders from the in-laws and colleagues. One of the participants said:

“There is no one I trust with problems I have with my partner; it can do more harm than good. Her family could get furious and make me look less of a man. A man who could not provide but only make their daughter look bad. As for my family members, I can lose respect and I do not want to disappoint my father”.

Results of a study conducted by Thobejane and Luthada (2019) show that when men are battered by women, they follow advice from religious leaders, which encourages them to focus on God's intervention rather than disclosing to the general public. One of the participants said the following with regard to perceptions about seeking help from informal networks.

"I am a Christian and I obey to religious norms. As a true believer I believe God hears and answers our prayers. I view marriage as a sacred union.....religious teachings always teach us to give God any kind of problems and challenges we encounter in our lives. I cannot go around the community and preach about my problems whereas my God is always there, that will just look like I have little faith in Him".

4.3.5 Theme 5: Suggestions to improve gender-based violence services

This theme involves ways suggested to improve existing gender-based violence services by participants of the study, with the following concepts as salient subthemes.

4.3.5.1 Subtheme: Recognition of vulnerability of men

When participants were asked to give opinions on how services for victims of gender-based violence could be improved to promote disclosure among male victims, some said:

"Professionals from organisations that offer help to victims of violence should know that men can also be victims of violence. How can we disclose when they are against us? They should also believe us when we bring our problems to their attention".

"The public should know that men can also be victims of female perpetrated violence. People should be re-educated about this matter".

"To reshape the stereotypes that view men as only the perpetrators of violence, helping professionals, political leaders of the country and any other group of people

working towards ending violence should raise awareness about violence perpetrated against men. It exists and people must acknowledge that”.

And another said:

“The South African government has made a mark in the fight against violence perpetrated towards women, why not try to balance between the genders as the South African government policies strives for gender equality. The gender equity paradigm must be enforced; we want to see it so that us men can feel protected too”.

These views correspond with findings by Tsui (2014), who noted that services can be improved through increased awareness of IPV against men and through advocacy tailored at gender inclusive practice. Laws and policies must be reviewed, and there should be increased availability of resources. McCarrick *et al.* (2016) further add that the development of more services that are accessible to men to increase support and tailored to respond to their needs is important.

4.3.5.2 Subtheme: Application of confidentiality principle

This subtheme talks about confidentiality among helping professionals. Suggestions to improve services were as follows:

“New policies have to be developed by the government. People should have the right qualifications to be employed as helping professionals and they should be arrested should they not maintain confidentiality when helping people”.

“what I plead for, is that professionals should keep our issues a secret, I do not really trust them with my problems ... especially this one, unless if consulting from an office that is far from home could help”.

“I think it will be better if I disclose to people who do not know me so that they will not find any reason to discuss my problems with other people.....people who help us should not know us personally”.

In line with this content, Tsui (2014) posits that there should be clear emphasis on anonymity in service provision.

4.4 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study aimed at exploring men's non-disclosure of intimate partner violence through qualitative thematic data analysis processes. This section discusses major findings of the study.

4.4.1 Men's views about disclosing violence

The results of this study revealed that men prefer to hide their situations than to disclose them to their significant others. Huntley *et al.* (2019) purport that men are most likely afraid of disclosing their victimisation. This may be due to myths placed on them. Men do not want to be considered weak (Campbell-Hawkins, 2019; Thobejane & Luthada, 2019). Domestic violence remains a private matter for as long the society deems it normal or private (Srivastava, 2016).

4.4.2 Determinants of non-disclosure

Costs and benefits as determining factors of disclosure

According to Strong *et al.* (2010), victims of violence may not disclose their experiences if the costs will be greater than benefits and rewards after disclosure. This study has revealed that socioeconomic status and relationship dynamics between the victim and the perpetrator inform decisions by the victim to disclose the violence. The findings of this study generally confirm other studies that men experiencing partner violence prefer to prioritise care, support and protection for their children (Kumar, 2012; Thobejane *et al.*, 2018; Deshpande, 2019; Lysova *et al.*, 2020a).

Male victims may not disclose their abusive experiences because of fear of losing custody of their children if the couple separates as a result of the reported abuse (Dim & Lysova, 2021). This is because women seem to have greater chances of obtaining

custody (Hines & Malley-Morrison, 2001). This study also proved that men prefer to save their relationship with the perpetrator in order to keep up with daily living (in most cases where the perpetrator is the breadwinner in the family) and if the victim relies on the perpetrator for other support other than financial support (Kumar, 2012; Laing *et al.*, 2013).

Masculinity factors

The major subtheme of this study is that abused men are reluctant to disclose their experiences because of masculinity factors that view men as strong (Thobejane *et al.*, 2018). These factors come with expectations and implications on gender roles, which then makes it difficult for the society to recognise men as victims of violence. This prevents men from attaining the victim status (Munirkazmi & Mohyuddin, 2012; Roebuck *et al.*, 2020). Madzivhandila (2015) maintains that men are groomed to act like men and not express their sufferings through crying. Amongst other factors, abused men are portrayed as strong. This could explain why abused husbands find it difficult to talk about their experiences (Barkhuizen, 2010).

This study further found that gender roles and expectations had an impact in men's non-disclosure of violence. Their agony remains invisible because men are culturally perceived to be masculine and strong. This is viewed as an expectation for them to suppress the pain endured (Simon & Wallace, 2018). It is through masculinity factors that men are assumed to have enough power to protect themselves from violence perpetrated by women (Pagelow, 1985) as quoted by Allen-Collinson, (2009).

Personal feelings

Participants of this study have indicated that they fear being ridiculed and shame that may come after disclosure of violence. Feelings of embarrassment seem to cloud judgement of their situations. They believe that people will make fun of their situations, and in return, they will feel ashamed. Roebuck *et al.* (2020) found that men had

difficulty in disclosing their experiences to peers. They avoid being teased as violence is viewed as something that does not happen to men. Men are not expected to appear weak, instead they are assumed to be strong and are expected to lead their families.

Research findings from various sources indicate that men are exposed to ridicule in societies when they appear as victims of violence. As a result, they opt to conceal their experiences (Adebayo, 2014; Brooks *et al.*, 2017; Vernon, 2017). Lysova *et al.* (2020a) maintain that men experience feelings of embarrassment and shame when victimised by women. These feelings promote silence as they prevent men from disclosing their suffering to anyone (Lysova & Dim, 2020).

Societal expectations

Results of this study clearly indicate that societal perceptions about men abuse impact the disclosure of violence by male victims. O'Connor (2020) found that most men feel that they are faced with negative perceptions by society. They feel societal inequalities of gender that are associated with being a victim of partner violence. These inequalities are drawn from societal beliefs around gender roles. The society can hardly recognise female perpetrated violence towards men because much attention is placed on men's physical strength (McCarrick *et al.*, 2016). In addition, Philpott and O'Connor (2020) posit that abused men expressed feelings of anger and frustration about gender inequalities that they experience from communities through experiences of the legal system and support services.

Male victims are unable to raise their problems due to society's lack of interest in their voices because these voices are raised by men. The society view men as abusers other than victims (Bates, 2019). According to Thobejane *et al.* (2018), Thobejane and Luthada (2019) and Roebuck *et al.* (2020), in a patriarchal society, stigma influenced by societal expectations towards male victims view men as strong, preventing them from attaining victim status. It is believed that since women's violence is unlikely to cause severe injuries, the violence they perpetrate towards their partners becomes accepted in patriarchal society than violence perpetrated by men (Carmo, Grams &

Magalhães, 2011). Consequently, this prevents male victims from disclosing their victimisation.

Cultural norms

This study has found that cultural norms make it difficult for men to cry for help. There are cultural patriarchal beliefs that view women as weak, submissive and obedient. Consequently, women are mostly viewed as victims compared to men. This is why men are not able to admit that they are abused by their female partners (Thobejane & Luthada, 2019). Victor and Olive (2019) found that the belief that men are not supposed to show emotional pain publicly had an impact on men who live in the closet. The adage “monna ke nku o llela teng” forbids men from crying. In this sense, it becomes hard to identify and reach abused men.

4.4.3 Views about seeking professional help

Responses from this study indicated that men are reluctant to seek professional help since they are not aware of support services that are available and accessible. Studies have revealed that male victims are not aware of services that support them when they need such support or could not know where to look for support. Some of these victims assume that services are tailored to meet the needs of female victims instead (Tsui, Cheung & Leung, 2010; Tsui, 2014; Adebayo, 2014; O'Connor, 2020; Roebuck *et al.*, 2020). Roebuck *et al.* (2020) proved that most services for victims of IPV are accessed by women, and that there are not enough resources that are geared to respond to the needs of male victims. A study by Lysova and Dim (2020) has found that lack of supportive services for male victims of IPV from formal support system could have an effect on help-seeking behaviour of abused men. When men could not access resources, it becomes an overwhelming situation to them as it increases psychological distress (Campbell-Hawkins, 2019).

Participants have reported to fear seeking professional help on the belief that they may not be believed and will be assumed to be perpetrators rather than victims. According to Roebuck *et al.* (2020), abused men are discriminated against or met with resistance when they require services; they are not believed (Bates, 2019; O'Connor, 2020) and mostly assumed to be aggressors (Park *et al.*, 2020; Dim & Lysova, 2021). In consensus, Lysova *et al.* (2020a) has found that most men avoid seeking help since they personally fear being arrested, and consequently falsely prosecuted. This fear has been rooted in the belief that professionals offering services to victims of partner violence are biased about the likelihood of men being victims in a heterosexual intimate relationship. Gender expectations are identified as barriers to recognition and acceptance of male victimisation (Wallace *et al.*, 2018).

This study further found that most of the participants have indicated, through their responses, that they do not disclose their victimisation to helping professionals in order to avoid mockery. Numerous studies (Adebayo, 2014; Tsui, 2014; Thobejane *et al.*, 2018; Thobejane & Luthada, 2019; Deshpande, 2019) revealed that men do not want to be ridiculed and therefore conceal violence that they experience in order to protect their ego. Lysova *et al.* (2020b) and Scotts-Bahle (2020) allude that abused men's adherence to hegemonic masculine stereotypes and embarrassment associated with being abused by a woman can hamper help-seeking behaviour of male victims.

Apart from fear of being ridiculed, other participants reported to have felt helpless in their situations. A study by Hines *et al.* (2007) revealed that one of the male victims of partner violence felt helpless when he tried to access temporary shelter or resources for victims of domestic violence. The help that he got was a referral to a programme for batterers. Furthermore, participants reported that they do not believe that professionals can help them. It is therefore pointless for them to seek help (Lysova *et al.*, 2020a), especially when the violence happened between them and a female perpetrator. Some participants' responses indicated that they cannot seek help because they are concerned about confidentiality amongst helping professionals. They doubt professional's ability to keep their information safe.

This study further revealed that men do not prefer support services from service providers, public servants and law enforcement agencies due to media influence on disclosure. Bates (2019) found that the media plays a role in constructing violence as

a men thing; most stories that are in the media view men as abusive. Television shows that focus on issues of domestic violence are likely to view men as aggressors. This in turn affects disclosure of female perpetrated violence against men.

4.4.4 Seeking help from informal networks

Responses from participants indicated that they do not consider asking for help from informal networks such as friends, family members, neighbours and in-laws. Men fear that they may experience negative feedback from friends and families (Huntley *et al.* 2019). Thobejane and Luthada (2019) further allude that relatives and friends who possibly expect the couple to work out their problems or to make the relationship work are part of the reason that promote reluctance by men to seek informal help. In contrast, a study by Lysova *et al.* (2020a) indicates that men in other instances may not seek help because of their own personal wish to fix their relationships.

Participants have also shown concern to preserve the respect they have of their loved ones. They could not trust their families, friends and the in-laws with their personal problems; instead they preferred not to tell them about their victimisation, more especially because they are abused by women. A study by Park *et al.* (2020) established that male victims of partner violence are judged to be less of a man by people close to them. They are expected to handle it like men. Some of the informal relations seem not to take the victimisation as a serious matter, in fact the whole problem can be treated as a joke.

Based on the findings of this study, religion-based norms seem to have an influence on men's silence when they are abused by their intimate partners. Victims of IPV may feel pressure from religious organisations to maintain their family relationships no matter the circumstances of this relationship. Religion-based prohibitions may discourage those who believe and conform to religious norms to speak about their experiences (Murray & Graves, 2013). Dim and Lysova (2021) avow that male victims may avoid sharing their experiences with others hoping that they will find personal ways to address their victimisation without attracting public attention.

4.4.5 Suggested ways to improve existing services

Recognition of vulnerability of men

Most of the participants from this current study indicated that it must be acknowledged that men are also victims of violence perpetrated by women. This is to say that men are unable to disclose the problems because professionals and the general public do not see them as vulnerable to violence. Park *et al.* (2020) extrapolated that there is a need to make the public aware that men are also victims of IPV.

In Kubai (2015), research participants believed that the government turns a blind eye when it comes to male victims of violence as it does not recognise their victimisation. Park *et al.* (2020) posit that several societies tend to associate the term of partner violence with women as victims; which then influences the absence of policies for male victims. Deshpande (2019) contends that there is a need to include both men and women in issues of gender equality to equally enjoy the benefits of human rights. Legislative frameworks and policy adjustments that promote gender equality for both male and female victims of violence are, among others, suggested ways of improving services for male victims.

Implementation and compliance of the confidentiality principle

This study has revealed that men do not consider seeking help with a view that confidentiality may be lacking from helping professionals. Most participants have proved to lack trust from helping professionals with regard to anonymity of their shared problems. Huntley *et al.* (2019) noted that it is important for service provision that ensures confidentiality and trust for male victims of violence.

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has analysed and interpreted data from research participants. Data was presented through themes and subthemes. A brief discussion of data presented was given. The overall responses of participants generally confirmed views put forward by the literature. Male victims of intimate partner violence are reluctant to disclose their victimisation and to seek help from both formal and informal networks. All participants have shown to prefer to suffer in silence in order to preserve their dignity in the communities in which they live.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, focus will be on highlighting the findings of the study, drawing conclusions and making recommendations about the study. Bless *et al.* (2013) argue that after interpreting findings, it is useful to summarise the aims of the research and to compare them with the findings, thereby drawing conclusions as to how and in what manner the aims have been achieved. Accordingly, this chapter will outline a re-statement of the aim and objectives of the study, summary of major findings, conclusions and recommendations.

5.2 RE-STATEMENT OF MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

The researcher was motivated to conduct this study among South African participants, since there is a dearth of literature on the phenomenon within the South African context. This could mean that findings from other studies hardly represent South Africans since people of different geographical areas, societies or cultures may have different world views (Nicholas *et al.*, 2010).

The second motive for the researcher to conduct this study was based on the realisation that partner violence against men exists and is not well documented. The researcher was of the view that extensive research has been conducted on intimate partner violence against women where men are regarded as perpetrators than victims. Perryman and Appleton (2016) assert that intimate partner violence against men is under-explored since the abuse has been mostly viewed as male to female violence. The study has indicated that most men are victims of female perpetrated physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse. The researcher also noticed lack of

statistical data of abused men in South Africa. This could mean that violence against men is less recognised or is not viewed as a social problem by the public.

5.3 RE-STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Lien and Lorentzen (2019) allude that men are subjected to psychological violence, severe physical violence accompanied by threats, economic violence, controlling behaviour and sexual harassment from their female partners. The study further highlighted that one of the victims had suffered life-threatening physical injuries from female violence, which consequently required extensive treatment. Ovens and Barkhuizen (2012) argue that female perpetrated violence against men should be considered a global social problem of domestic violence as it has influence on policies and social perceptions. For instance, shelters that provide services for abused men in Limpopo Province are scarce, and those that are available are limited to women. Since most services are not available for male victims of intimate partner violence, men are not aware of the services that could be of use when experiencing violence (Tsui, 2014; Hines *et al.*, 2007). This may contribute to the problem of men concealing the abuse.

In patriarchal societies, men are expected to dominate women. The ideal image of abused men is unusual due to societal stereotypes of masculinity that are placed on male victims of female perpetrated violence. Men are portrayed as strong. This prevents them from disclosing their experiences (Barkhuizen, 2010; Ovens & Barkhuizen, 2012). Men are also exposed to ridicule in societies in which they live when they appear as victims of violence. As a result, they conceal their experiences until the situation worsens (Adebayo, 2014; Brooks *et al.*, 2017; Vernon, 2017).

When men do not disclose their experiences, there is a high possibility for them to start abusing substances in order to cope with the traumatic experience (Hines & Douglas, 2009; Perryman & Appleton, 2016). Kubai (2014) asserts that most men suffer from psychological and emotional distress due to violence. Others suffer from depression, which could also contribute to loss of employment through absenteeism at work (Davis, 2010; Nicholas *et al.*, 2010; Tilbrook *et al.*, 2010; Kumar, 2012).

5.4 RE-STATEMENT OF AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

5.4.1 Re-statement of the aim of the study

This study was aimed at exploring men's non-disclosure of intimate partner violence at Ga-Masemola, Sekhukhune District in Limpopo Province.

5.4.2 Re-statement of objectives of the study

To achieve the aim of the study, the objectives of the study were:

- To establish men's views about disclosing violence experienced from their intimate partners.

This objective was successfully met. The study revealed that men are afraid of disclosing their experiences to friends, families, colleagues and other persons. The core reasons behind this is that they do not trust other people with their problems. They prefer to keep the violence to themselves as they view it as a private issue. The general idea put forward was that male victims feel that they can lose respect if people knew about their victimisation.

- To identify determinants of men's non-disclosure of intimate partner violence. This objective was properly met.

The study found that male victims of intimate partner violence encounter factors which prevent them from disclosing the violence experienced. Men do not disclose their experiences because they feel embarrassed about their experiences, and they do not want to be ridiculed by people close to them. Costs and benefits following disclosure, masculinity factors, societal expectations and cultural norms are found to be factors that make men suffer in silence.

- To determine men's views about seeking help as victims of intimate partner violence.

Results of the study have proved that men do not consider seeking help from helping professionals and organisations that serve victims of gender-based violence. Reluctance to seek professional help was influenced by men's perceptions of services for victims of violence as illustrated in 4.3.3.1. As discussed in 4.3.3.2, fear of possible ridicule from those offering support services also had an impact that fosters reluctance to seek help. Feelings of helplessness, perceived lack of confidentiality among professionals and influence of the media hampered help-seeking behaviour of most men in the study. It has also been established in 4.3.4 that male victims are reluctant to seek support from informal networks such as friends, family members, colleagues and their in-laws. They reported that they do not trust the informal support system. Some participants stressed that they are trying to avoid negative expressions that may come from family members and friends. Most men opt to conceal their experiences to maintain the respect they currently receive from their loved ones.

- To help improve services for male victims of gender-based violence.

This objective was achieved in 4.3.5.1, which indicates that gender-based violence services need not be one-sided or focus on only women as victims of violence. Men plead to helping professionals to see them as vulnerable to violence as well. On the other hand, 4.3.5.2 indicated that application and adherence to the confidentiality principle by helping professionals may encourage disclosure of violence by male victims; for they need assurance that their problems will be kept confidential.

5.5 SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The following are findings of the study:

- Male victims of partner violence prefer to conceal the abuse and handle it as a private matter.
- They compare things that they will lose with those that they may gain in their relationship with partners if they decide to disclose the abuse.
- The outcomes of the study show that men fear that their masculinity will diminish if the abuse becomes known in the society.
- It has emerged that men do not disclose their abuse due to fear of ridicule and shame for being victims of partner violence.
- Cultural norms and proverbs used by Pedi people at Ga-Masemola promote silence among male victims of intimate partner violence.
- The study also found that men fear to experience mockery if they try to seek help.
- Religious beliefs encourage men to give their problems to God rather than seeking help from informal networks, organisations and helping professions.
- Men fear being rejected, disbelieved and accused by helping professionals, law enforcements and others to be aggressors.
- Abused men are not aware of services available to them, and those who are aware fear possible exclusion and rejection from helping professionals when they seek help.
- To improve services, men suggest that their vulnerability to violence should be recognised.
- The confidentiality principle needs to be observed to encourage disclosure of abuse by male victims.

5.6 CONCLUSIONS FROM THE STUDY

This study has confirmed that male victims of partner violence generally fear disclosing their experiences to people around them. The study has identified obstacles that

prevent disclosure of men's victimisation, which included cultural norms, societal expectations, hegemonic masculine stereotypes, custody of children and dependency over the abusive partner. Fear of ridicule resulted in both disclosure and help-seeking behaviour of male victims. Accessibility of services, shortage of resources, fear of being rejected, disbelieved and accused by helping professionals and law enforcements added to reasons that discourage men from seeking professional help. Male victims seem not interested in seeking help from informal networks as well (i.e. friends, family members, colleagues and the in laws). The study managed to procure participants' suggestions on how services can be improved to promote disclosure among male victims.

5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher recommends the following:

- To address the masculinity factors that impact on men's disclosure of violence, misconceptions about masculinity and vulnerability of men should be challenged.
- To promote accessibility of services, it is essential that people are well informed about services and resources available. They should be equipped with information on how to access them and about who can benefit, so that everyone, including male victims of domestic violence, can easily access them.
- To improve the quality of services offered by public servants, men should be included as part of vulnerable groups in policies and aspects of service delivery for gender-based violence.
- All relevant stakeholders and helping professionals offering support to victims of violence should strive to implement policies on gender neutrality regardless of the victims' gender.
- To improve services for male victims of violence, it is recommended that policy amendments should be made, and services should be gender-neutral. There should also be specialised services that are tailored to support the needs of

males when it comes to issues of domestic violence. Continuous workshops to help public servants and general helping professionals should be conducted to help improve current services offered to victims of violence.

- There should be greater advocacy for male victims of violence by educating the public about the existence of violence against men through integrated efforts from stakeholders in government and non-government agencies that offer support services to victims of violence.
- Confidentiality of helping professionals was, amongst others, the main concern to male victims. To improve existing services to victims of IPV, it is recommended that all professional bodies involved in addressing violence problems ensure that helping professionals prioritise the implementation of the confidentiality principle, value of acceptance and non-judgemental attitude.
- This study revealed that most men are not aware of services intended for victims of violence. To address this problem, services for victims of violence need to be advertised to the general public using relevant marketing strategies. The same effort, amount of resources and publicity used by governmental and non-governmental organisations to educate the society and create awareness about victims of domestic violence should be used to educate society and to create awareness of domestic violence with men as victims.
- More research on experiences, needs and effective intervention processes of male victims of partner violence should be conducted to add more literature and knowledge about abuse of men.

5.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has highlighted the summary of major findings of the study, drawn conclusions and made recommendations about the study. The chapter re-stated the motivation to the study, research problem, aim and objectives of the study. To prove whether the study has met the aim of the study, objectives were re-stated, and it was indicated how each objective was met.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A: LETTER TO LOCAL TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES

Masemola Traditional Council
Ga-Masemola
P.O. Box 510
Masemola
1060

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO ACCESS AND INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS AT GA-MASEMOLA VILLAGE FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES.

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a student at the University of Limpopo studying a degree in Master of Social Work. I hereby request for your permission to access information from Ga-Masemola residents for the purpose of my research study. The title of the research is men's non-disclosure of intimate partner violence: A case study of Ga-Masemola, Sekhukhune District in Limpopo Province. This study aims to explore men's non-disclosure of intimate partner violence with the following objectives.

- i.** To establish men's views about disclosing violence experienced from their intimate partners.
- ii.** To identify determinants of men's non-disclosure of intimate partner violence.
- iii.** To determine men's views about seeking help as victims of intimate partner violence.
- iv.** To help improve services for male victims of gender-based violence.

The targeted population of this study is heterosexual male victims of intimate partner violence of ages 18 and above who reside at Ga-Masemola village. The research will resume once the researcher has been granted permission from Masemola Traditional

Council and has obtained an ethical clearance certificate from Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) which permits the researcher to conduct the research under certain ethical considerations.

Interviews will be conducted in a private space to ensure confidentiality. Consent forms will be presented to participants in their home language and signed if participants are willing to participate in the study. The maximum estimated period for the data collection process is two months.

This study will benefit male victims of intimate partner violence, public servants and the community in general as follows:

- i. Social work programmes and other professionals' programmes tailored to deal with gender-based violence issues may be shaped in such a way that they consider special needs of men who are victims of violence.
- ii. The findings of the study could contribute towards improving existing services that support victims of gender-based violence for the effective rendering of services in future.
- iii. This research could also help in establishing ways of encouraging abused men to disclose their experiences.
- iv. This study might challenge people's generally accepted stereotypes and myths about the concept of men abuse.

I will be very grateful if my request is taken into consideration. Your assistance will be highly appreciated. Thank you in advance.

Yours faithfully

Kgatle Mankwana Othilia

.....

Cellphone – 072 655 8752

Email address – othiliakgatle@gmail.com

ANNEXURE B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

University of Limpopo

Department of Social Work

Title of research project:

Men’s non-disclosure of intimate partner violence: A case study of Ga-Masemola, Sekhukhune District in Limpopo Province

Researcher: Kgatle Mankwana Othilia

I am a Master of Social Work student at the University of Limpopo. As a researcher, I hereby request your voluntary participation in this study. As a participant, you will be asked sets of questions relating to the study. Your responses will contribute to the construction of body of knowledge about the topic. The risk of the study is that answering the research questions may bring discomfort or emotional harm when you are reminded about your experiences. When this happens, feel free to inform the researcher about how you feel, or you may simply not answer the questions. There are professional intervention services that you will receive to help you deal with harm that you may experience.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and no compensation will be provided. However, the findings of the study may help bring solutions to the research problem. Most importantly, you are also allowed to refuse and withdraw your participation at any time without any penalty.

Every attempt will be made by the researcher to keep all information collected in this study strictly confidential, and if any publication results from this research, you will not be identified by name. By signing below, you agree that you have read and understood the consent form and that you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

Participant’s signature :

Date :

Researcher’s signature :

Date :

ANNEXURE C: PHETOLELO YA FOROMO YA TUMELELO GO SEPEDI

Foromo ya tumelelo

Yunibesithi ya Limpopo

Kgoro ya bodirela leago

Hlogo ya nyakišišo: Go se bolele ga banna go tlaišo ya molekani: taba ya motse wa Ga-Masemola, seleteng sa Sekhukhune, profenseng ya Limpopo.

Monyakišiši: Kgatle Mankwana Othilia

Ke moithuti wa Social Work thutong ya masters yunibesithing ya Limpopo. Bjalo ka monyakišiši, ke kgopela boithaopo bja gago go tšea karolo mo thutong ye. Bjalo ka motšearokaro, o tlo botšišwa dipotšišo mabapi le thuto ye, boiphetolelo bja gago bo tla thuša go bopa tsebo ka ga thuto ye.

Kotsi ya thuto ye ke gore o ka ba le kgonagalo ya go ama maikutlo a gago ge o araba dipotšišo tša thuto ka ge o tla be o gopotšwa ka ga tlaišo ye o fitilego go yona. Ge se se direga, o kgopelwa go lokologa ka go tsebiša monyakišiši ka maikutlo a gago ebile o ka no kgetha go se arabe dipotšišo tše o lebanego le tšona. Gona le moputso wa thušo ya ditsebi, yeo o tla e fiwago go o thuša go rarolla bohloko bjo o bilego le bjona.

Go tšea karolo gago mo thutong ye, ke boithaopo fela, ebile o dumela gore ga go moputso wo o tlogo go o hwetša morago ga go tšea karolo. Ntliha ya bohlokwa ke gore, o dumelelwa go gana le go tšwa mo porotšekeng nako ye nngwe le ye nngwe ntle le kotlo.

Monyakišiši o tla tšea kgato tša maleba go dira gore tshedimošo ye o e filego e ba sephiri. Ge o ka direga gore dipotšišo tša thuto ye di gatišwe, o ka se ke wa hlathwa ka leina.

Ka go saena ka mo fase, o dumela gore o badile ebile o kwešiša foromo ya tumelelo; gape ke boithaopo bja gago go dumela go tšea karolo mo thutong ye.

Tshaeno (motšeakarolo) :

Letšatši :

Tshaeno (monyakišiši) :

Letšatši :

ANNEXURE D: INTERVIEW GUIDE IN ENGLISH VERSION

Objective 1: To establish men's views about disclosing violence experienced from their intimate partners

Research questions

1.1 How would you describe your relationship with your partner?

1.2 What form of violence did you encounter?

1.3 When did you start experiencing intimate partner violence?

1.4 How often does it occur?

1.5 When experiencing this violence, how do you respond to it?

1.6 Please share your views about how you feel about disclosing your victimisation to friends, family members, colleagues and others close to you.

Objective 2: To identify determinants of men's non-disclosure of intimate partner violence

Research question

2.1 Please share your views about factors that lead you to conceal violence perpetrated against you.

Objective 3: To determine men's views about seeking help as victims of intimate partner violence

Research questions

3.1 In your own opinion, is it useful to disclose your victimisation to helping professionals? Please motivate your answer.

3.2 Please share your views about how you feel about seeking help from helping professionals after experiencing intimate partner violence.

3.3 How would you describe factors that discourage you from seeking help from helping professionals and others close to you?

Objective 4: To help improve services for male victims of gender-based violence

Research questions

4.1 Please share your views on how services offered to victims of violence in your community can affect your decision to disclose violence perpetrated against you.

4.2 In your own opinions, what do you think can be done by service providers to facilitate disclosure among male victims of intimate partner violence?

4.3 Is there anything else that you would like to add?

...Thank you for your time and participation in this study...

ANNEXURE E: HLAHLO YA DIPOTŠIŠO KA LELEME SEPEDI

1. Naa, o ka hlaloša bjang kamano ya gago le molekani wa gago?
2. Ke mokgwa o fe wa tlaišego ye o bilego le yona?
3. E ka ba o thomile neng go tlaišwa ke molekani?
4. Naa e diragala morago ga lebaka le le kae?
5. Ge o tlaišwa ke molekani, naa o iphetolela bjang go seemo se sa tlaišo?
6. O kgopelwa go hlaloša maikutlo a gago mabapi le go tsebiša bagwera, meloko ya lapa la gago, bašomimmogo le motho mang le mang wa kgauswi le wena ka ga tlaišo ya gago.
7. O kgopelwa go fa mmono wa gago ka ga mabaka ao a dirago gore o se bolele ka go tlaišwa a gago.
8. Go ya le ka mmono wa gago, e ka ba o bona go le bohlokwa gore o lome ditsebi tša mathata a tlaišo tsebe mabapi le tlaišego ya gago?
9. O kgopelwa go hlaloša maikutlo a gago mabapi le go kgopela thušo go ditsebi tša mathata a tlaišo, ka morago a go tlaišwa ke molekani wa gago.
10. O kgopelwa go hlaloša mabaka ao a dirago gore o se kgone go kgopela thušo go ditsebi tša mathata a tlaišo goba mang le mang wa kgauswi le wena.
11. O kgopelwa go hlaloša gore ditirelo tšeo di fiwago batšwasehlabelo ba tlaišo mo motseng wa geno di ka ama bjang sephetho sa gago sa go bolela ka tlaišego yeo o bilego le yona.
12. Go ya ka kgopolo ya gago, ke eng se se ka dirwago ke baabi ba ditirelo go hlohleletša go bolela ga banna go tlaišo ya molekani?
13. E ka ba go na le se o ka ratago go se oketša mo poledišanong ye?

...Ke leboga nako le go tšea karolo a gago mo thutong ye...

ANNEXURE F: TURFLOOP CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



University of Limpopo

Department of Research Administration and Development

Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa

Tel: (015) 268 39 35, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email :makoetja.ramusi@ul.ac.za

TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

MEETING: 10 December 2020

PROJECT NUMBER: TREC/407/2020: PG

PROJECT:

Title: Men's non-disclosure of intimate partner violence: A case of Ga - Masemola, Sekhukhune district in Limpopo Province

Researcher : MO Kgatle

Supervisor : Dr MR Manganyi

Co-Supervisor/s: Ms P Mafa

School: Social Sciences

Degree: Master of Social Work

PROF P MASOKO

CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: **REC-0310111-031**

Note:

- i) This Ethics Clearance Certificate will be valid for one (1) year, as from the abovementioned date. Application for annual renewal (or annual review) need to be received by TREC one month before lapse of this period.
- ii) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee, together with the Application for Amendment form.
- iii) PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

ANNEXURE G: PERMISSION LETTER FROM GATE-KEEPERS

Masemola Traditional Council

Stand no: 1 Pshiring
P O Box 510
Masemola
1060



Phone: 083 864 8371/072 514 6732
Fax: 086 5168631
E-mail: masemolsto@webmail.co.za

Ref : CH 11/8/4-89
Enq : Maphutha M.T
Contact: 072 4123 525 maphuthamtg@gmail.com
Date : January 07, 2021

To whom it may concern

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT GA-MASEMOLA

This serves to confirm that Masemola Traditional Council has given Kgatle Mankwana Othilia ID No: [REDACTED] a student at the University of Limpopo studying a Degree in Master of Social Worker, a permission to access and interview participants within the area of our jurisdiction for the research purpose " Men's non-disclosure of intimate partner violence".

She will start with her research from 07/01/2021 until 07/03/2021 (Two months).

Thanking you in anticipation

Yours faithfully


Administrator

