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WESTERN CAPE

FACULTY OF COMMUNITY AND HEALTH SCIENCES

Department of Psychology

**Exploring the identity and belonging experiences of Black men who have undertaken training in
professional psychology programmes at a South African university**

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ABSTRACT

The study explores the identity and belonging experiences of Black men who have undertaken training in professional psychology master's programmes at a South African university. Contemporary perspectives reveal that in the field of psychology, there appears to be an underrepresentation of Black male and/or men psychologists, and that their experiences are largely absent from the research. The study adopts a qualitative approach with an exploratory design. Purposive sampling and snowballing sampling methods were utilised for participant recruitment. Following the pilot interview, for quality checking and credibility purposes, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight participants who identified as Black men who had received professional masters-level training in either clinical, counselling, or research psychology. Participants were required to reflect on their experiences of psychology training and professional practice. Approval for the study was received from the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee at the University of the Western Cape. Ethical principles were upheld in data collection through participants' informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, privacy, and safe storage of personal information and data. Interview data were analysed thematically, and both social identity theory and professional identity theory were employed as a lens through which to understand identity and belonging experiences. The findings indicated that developing a sense of identity and belonging is crucial for Black male psychologists to perform psychological practices in ways that are meaningful and strategic to the communities that they serve. Motivators to enter or stay in the field, which were expressed as contributors towards identity and belonging in the psychology profession, include the importance of representation as a Black man, and the power of shared experience in being able to reach minority groups like Black and LGBTQIA+ communities.

Challenges to professional identity and belonging included economic concerns, racism and incompetency stigma attached to Black men in practice, gendered discrimination and marginalisation, and the exclusion or minimal coverage of indigenous knowledge systems in supporting African experiences. Supervision and mentorship, community grounding and connections, and the duty to decolonise psychology, were indicated as protective strategies to support professional identity development and perform psychological practices with a sense of purpose. This research contributes

positively to the literature that problematises the exclusion of Black men in psychology. Recommendations emanating from this research highlight the roles of psychology training in higher education, internship sites, and ethical regulators like the HPCSA. Suggested intervention strategies include the need to address diversity gaps in professional training through the inclusion of Black male candidates, greater financial support for students in postgraduate (psychology) training programmes, the inclusion of indigenous knowledge in training curricula, the appointment of complementary supervisors, and the implementation of policies and interventions to deal with racial discrimination and practices.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOSSARY LIST	xi
CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Psychology: A History of Exclusion	1
1.2 The Current State of Psychology Practice	3
1.3 Problem statement	6
1.4 Aims and objectives.....	7
1.5 Research questions	7
1.6 Overview of the thesis	8
CHAPTER 2	10
LITERATURE REVIEW	10
2. Introduction	10
2.1 Theorising Masculinities	10
2.2 Masculinities in a South African context	12
2.3. Alternate Masculinities and Caring Masculinities.....	15
2.4. Psychology as a field of work.....	17
2.5 Inclusion and the experiences of Black male psychologists in professional psychology practices	18
2.6 Theoretical framework	21
2.6.1 Professional identity formation	21
2.6.2 Social identity theory	24
2.7 Summary of the chapter.....	27
CHAPTER 3	29
METHODOLOGY	29

3.	Introduction	29
3.1	Research Design	29
3.2	Research setting	30
3.3	Participants and sampling	31
3.4	Data collection	33
3.5	Data analysis	35
3.6	Researcher reflexivity	40
3.7	Trustworthiness	42
3.8	Ethics	43
3.9	Summary of the chapter	45
CHAPTER 4		46
RESULTS		46
4.	Introduction	46
4.1	The research questions and summative overview of main themes:.....	46
4.2	General description of the participants	48
4.3	Research findings	50
4.3.1	The experience of professional identity and belonging amongst Black male psychologists.....	50
4.3.1.1	The narrative of professional identity.....	50
4.3.1.2	The drivers/motivators to enter the profession or stay in the profession.....	53
4.3.1.2.1	Importance of representation	53
4.3.1.2.1.1	Stigma and mental health.....	54
4.3.1.2.1.2	Modelling positive Black masculinities.....	56
4.3.1.2.2	The power of shared experience	59
4.3.1.2.2.1	Shared Experience: history of personal trauma	59
4.3.1.2.2.2	Shared Experience: “Black people, know Black people”	61
4.3.1.3	The drawbacks and challenges	63

4.3.1.3.1 Economic concerns	64
4.3.1.3.2 The prevailing “culture of whiteness” and Western practice.....	65
4.3.1.3.3 Stigma and questions of competency as a Black man	69
4.3.1.3.4 Discrimination to men in the field (‘moffie’)	72
4.4 How Black male psychologists develop their professional identity.....	73
4.4.1 Supervision and mentorship	74
4.4.2 Community grounding and connections.....	76
4.4.3 Decolonising Psychology	79
4.5 Summary of the chapter.....	81
CHAPTER 5	83
DISCUSSION	83
5. Introduction.....	83
5.1.1 Defining a narrative of professional identity	83
5.1.2 The drivers/motivators to enter the profession or stay in the profession.....	85
5.1.2.1 Stigma and mental health	85
5.1.2.2 Modelling positive Black masculinities	86
5.1.2.3 The power of shared experience	88
5.1.2.3.1 Shared experience: history of personal trauma.....	88
5.1.2.3.2 Shared experience: “Black people, know Black people”	90
5.1.3 The drawbacks and challenges to identity and belonging in the field.....	91
5.1.3.1. Economic concerns.....	91
5.1.3.2. The prevailing “culture of whiteness” in training and workspaces	92
5.1.3.3. Stigma and questions of competency as a Black man	93
5.1.3.4. Discrimination and negative stereotypes in the area of sexual identity.	96
5.2. How Black male psychologists develop their professional identity.....	96
5.2.1. Supervision and mentorship	96
5.2.2. Community grounding and connections.....	98

5.2.3.	Decolonising psychology	100
5.2.4.	Summary of the chapter.....	101
CHAPTER 6		103
LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION		103
6.	Introduction	103
6.1.	Contribution of the study	103
6.2.	Limitations of the study	104
6.3.	Implications	105
6.4.	Suggestions for future research	106
6.5.	Recommendations for Policy and Practice	107
6.6.	Conclusion.....	109
REFERENCES		111
APPENDICES		133
Appendix A: Email Advert for Participation		133
Appendix B: Information sheet (English, Afrikaans, Xhosa version)		134
Appendix C: Informed consent forms (English, Afrikaans, isiXhosa).....		143
Appendix D: Interview Guide – Demographic profile (English, Afrikaans, Xhosa)		146
Appendix E: Interview Guide – Researcher Questions		149
Appendix F: Ethics approval (HS21/7/45)		155
Appendix G: Permission to conduct research.....		156

LIST OF TABLES/ FIGURES

Table 3.5.1: An illustration of final codes

Table 4.2.1: Participants' demographics

Figure 4.1.1: Flow chart for Question 1: The experience of professional identity and belonging amongst Black male psychologists.

Figure 4.1.2: Flow chart for Question 2: How Black male psychologists develop their professional identity

GLOSSARY LIST

A sense of belonging: Questions about formal membership and relations outside of the self that bring about inclusion, and acceptance (Anthias, 2018).

Adapting psychology: The processes to change the way psychology is practised and taught in South Africa and develop a new body of knowledge for African experiences (Kelly & Davis, 2021). To ultimately develop culturally sensitive assessments that readdress historical injustices in psychology.

African male notions: Traditional understandings that are attached to the gender roles of men and their masculinities (Ratele, 2015).

Cultural hegemony: Refers to the dominance of a culturally diverse society whereby those in power manipulate the culture of that society, so their worldview, values, norms, ideas, expectations and behaviour becomes the accepted cultural norm (Cole, 2020).

Culture of whiteness: A description of psychological practice which adopts Westernised models to African experiences. Whiteness refers to workspaces that represent White demographics and the application of Eurocentric understanding as the only 'truth' (Turpin & Coleman, 2010).

Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA): A statutory body established in terms of the Health Professions Act, 1974. Its mission is to promote the health of all people in South Africa (Dhai & Mkhize, 2006).

Hegemonic masculinity: Refers to the configuration of masculine gender practice that is culturally supported, and upholds the dominance of specific groups of men, the legitimacy of male authority, and the subordination of women (Turner et al., 1979).

Mainstream Psychology: Refers to a psychology approach that is supported by the majority of psychologists and distinguished by its ontological and epistemological characteristics (Toomela, 2020).

M1: The formal academic year of a professional psychology master's programme. This year constitutes academic coursework and a mini dissertation (research project). The M1 year precedes the M2 year, which is focused on an HPCSA-accredited internship (HPCSA, 2019; UWC, 2024). Many students may continue to work on their mini dissertation (research project) during their M2 year, and beyond. The demarcation of what constitutes an M1 or M2 year may vary across institutions, and in accordance with the proposed relinking of higher education institutions and internship sites (HPCSA, 2020).

Professional Master's Psychology Training Programme: The organised postgraduate programme for trainees to qualify as professional psychologists in the different psychology categories offered by respective universities. The training programme includes M1- a year of coursework, a mini-dissertation, and M2- a year of internship. Clinical Psychology graduates are to complete an additional year in the form of Community Service (HPCSA, 2019; UWC, 2024).

Social Identity Theory: A theory that was developed to explain how individuals cement and recognise their place in society (Tajfel, 1974).

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

The present study illuminates the identity and belonging experiences of Black men in psychology during training and practice. In this chapter, I introduce a historical trajectory of Black men's enroll in professional psychology training programmes in South Africa. Chapter 1 provides the context of the global and local trends in psychology, as a field of practice, to highlight the overlooked experiences of Black¹ men in the profession. The chapter presents the rationale of the study and the problem statement, the research aims, as well as the outline of the thesis.

1.1 Psychology: A History of Exclusion

Historically, psychology was shaped by White male academics. According to Okazaki et al. (2008), the different schools of thought and frameworks in psychology were largely influenced by colonialism, which valued individualism and the promotion or superiority of the self over community. Eurocentric ideas dominated psychology and racist notions in psychology led to the exclusion of

¹ The study acknowledges that racial categories are contested, and these categorisations were historically imposed through processes of racial and cultural domination. However, 'race' as a category of identification is a significant meaning that individuals ascribe to themselves (Bernard et al., 2018). In the proposed study, the identified Black Psychologists refer to the categories of Black, Coloured, and Indian.

Black voices and perspectives (Hook, 2012). White supremacy gave little attention to the marginalised experiences and contributions of non-Whites and in the development of psychological perspectives failed to account for the experiences of all people, cultural differences, and diverse backgrounds, which led to historical biases in psychological practices and research (Okazaki et al., 2008). These biases played a significant role in the oppression of non-Whites, and psychology was a tool that was used to advance colonial interests and racial capitalism.

In South Africa, unfair psychological assessments and practices contributed to segregation, intellectual discrimination, enforced migrant labour systems, forced removals, and pass laws (Bowman et al., 2010). In the apartheid era, the White middle-class dominated across registered categories in psychology and there was a history of exclusion of Black men (Beasley et al., 2015). Higher education prohibited and excluded non-White individuals from psychology programmes (Ratele et al., 2018). The minority of Blacks in professional psychology training during apartheid reported experiences of Eurocentric bias in training, issues of professionalism, and insensitivity to background issues of Blacks (Abrahams, 1992).

The socio-political history of South Africa has had a significant impact on higher education, resulting in practices such as the exclusion of students of colour from admission into institutions (Kumalo, 2021). Consequently, the higher education sector was marked by historical racial imbalances and the sector's transformation is still ongoing within postgraduate student populations (Meela et al., 2021), including the field of psychology. In the post-apartheid era, South Africa shifted a focus to a more inclusive demographic profile within the psychology field, and this process of decolonising psychology is still in its early stage (MacLeod et al., 2020; Ratele, 2017).

The exclusion of women in psychology was also evident in the dominant White male representation. Generally, the contributions of women were minimised and overlooked due to gender biases and stereotypes (Graziano & Raulin, 1992). At that time, there were observations that sanctioned beliefs about women that suggested men to be far more superior to withstand the intellectual, emotional, and physical demands of academia, while it was universally accepted that

women were less intelligent, less physically able, and more emotionally fragile and unpredictable (Graziano & Raulin, 1992). Therefore, women were deemed incapable of mastering higher education and subsequently were denied enrolment in universities and declined academic positions, based on this male bias (Okazaki et al., 2008). These notions were later challenged by feminist critiques which aimed to preserve and document the voices and contributions of women in psychology and contest sexism in science (Gavey, 1989). This shift led to economic factors (e.g., salaries) and societal changes regarding the application and status of psychology for men, which led men to pursue other interests that presumably preserve their masculinities. The 'feminization', as referred to by feminist psychology, of this helping profession has been an increasing trend within the field of psychology (Skinner & Louw, 2009). This may be driven by socialised beliefs that gender-atypical fields impose threat and peer questioning in terms of gender identity, gender beliefs, and sexual orientation (Marrulanda & Radke, 2019; Wester & Vogel, 2002). Therefore, the scarcity of men in female-dominated fields is argued to be driven by the fact that some career fields are labelled as “women work” in society (Simpson, 2004).

1.2 The Current State of Psychology Practice

Even though psychology has historically been criticised for favouring male interests in its practice and knowledge production, recent statistics show that this is changing, at least within the discipline's professional practice (Malherbe & Ratele, 2022). In recent years, research suggests that even on a global scale, females dominate higher education and obtain more qualifications in masters, doctoral and baccalaureate degrees (Isacco et al., 2016). A study conducted by Townsend (2013) indicates that this trend of females dominating higher education has progressed even higher in the field of psychology, with only 22% of males awarded master's degree qualifications in South Africa since 2002.

The most recent National Survey of registered psychology practitioners in South Africa, as released by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA, 2017), indicates that 78.8% of psychology practitioners identify as female, as White (73.8%), or as English-speaking (70.4%). Only

25.4% of the population of psychology practitioners identify as Black, and of this, a smaller proportion may identify as Black male, although it is difficult to ascertain exact figures. In general, Black Africans fall between 5% and 13% across the different professional psychology categories, except in the registered counsellor's category which indicated 24.7% of Black African practitioners, and more of those being females (HPCSA, 2017). A recent article by Padmanabhanunni et al. (2022) indicated that most registered psychologists in South Africa continue to be White and female, and at most 17% are Black Africans. Few men who excel in the field then pursue post-graduate training to become registered as professional psychologists (Sanders et al., 2009). According to Carolissen et al. (2015), Black psychologists continue to be underrepresented and this stems from a frequent decline of Black students enrolled in postgraduate training compared to White students from advantaged communities.

Factors contributing to the underrepresentation of Black students in higher education may be related to a lack of financial assistance to fund a degree from undergraduate to postgraduate training (Mbaleki & Mbodila, 2022). According to Turpin and Coleman (2010), a shortage of Black psychologists may be due to social class limitations, which impact exposure to psychological services and promoting psychology as a career, as well as the uncertainty of the career route and duration of study of the degree. Other factors that were suggested for the underrepresentation of Black males in professional psychology were “the relative low pay and [that] students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds seek employment as soon as possible in order to pay off student debt and start the process of social mobility” (Turpin & Coleman, 2010, p.21).

Furthermore, Carolissen et al. (2015), posit that this underrepresentation of Black psychologists may be due to the fact that the current psychology curriculum includes fewer African worldviews and remains largely dominated by Westernised methods. This is concerning, since there is a need for psychologists to be culturally competent in their service delivery, especially in diverse settings such as South Africa. Furthermore, a psychology curriculum focused on “African psychology” that moves to de-Westernise psychology, may be more inclusive of Black African experiences (Carolissen et al., 2015).

The consequence of exclusion according to race leads to racially skewed and linguistically incompetent practices in South Africa (Ratele et al., 2018). Therefore, Ratele et al. (2018) call for 'Blackening psychology' in increasing the number of Black students in the field of psychology across levels of education in tertiary institutions. The term "Blackening" psychology refers to the growing proportion of Black students in the field, which helps to decolonise and uproot the pervasive "Whiteness" in practice and study (Ratele et al., 2018). Although it is crucial to have a discipline that is more diverse in terms of race and language, progress cannot stop there (Ratele et al., 2018). One of the most notable post-apartheid higher education transformation successes is the expansion of Black people's engagement in higher education overall, toward a more diversified set of students (Ratele et al., 2018). However, even though Black students now make up the majority in many South African institutions of higher learning, these establishments continue to be deeply ingrained in a culture of "Whiteness" (Ratele et al., 2018).

The idea of decolonising South African psychology is a move away from mainstream psychology towards "Africanising" psychology that is more relevant and contextually grounded in terms of recognising mental illness and treatment that meets the needs of South Africans (Cooper, 2013). This type of psychology will allow Black men, who have been previously excluded from the field of psychology, to situate themselves within this discipline in relation to Africa (Ratele, 2017a). It will further allow Black men by placing them in their cultural contexts, and understanding how the world works from their own cultural perspective (Ratele, 2017b).

The study explores the experiences of Black men who chose to pursue a qualification in psychology as a profession. The rationale for this research is to delineate the importance of identity and belonging experiences in shaping professional identity formation. Identity and belonging experiences inform an individual's shared beliefs, values, and practices founded on social interactions in communities (Sibanda & Baisai, 2021). These features of identity and belonging may play a role in the development and foundation of professional identity formation. Black men in psychology may integrate their developed features of identity and belonging to practice psychology in ways that are self-assured and meaningful, which is important for their development and acquiring knowledge as

psychologists, thus contributing to professional identity. According to Alves and Gazzola (2011), obscure professional identity might not only have implications for one's personal growth but can affect the service delivery provided to those who are rendered the service. Unclear professional identity is dangerous in practice since it impedes work roles, boundaries, activities, and overall satisfaction with the profession.

1.3 Problem statement

Existing literature suggests a limited coverage of the experiences of Black men in psychology professions in South Africa and recognises the underrepresentation of Black men in the profession of psychology (Beasley et al., 2015). This study addresses this gap by exploring the professional identity formation of Black men who are formerly² enrolled in professional psychology master's training programmes at a South African university. The study focuses on Black men's experiences in both professional practice and during master's training in psychology. Previous studies have investigated masculinities within psychology training but overlooked racial identities (Isacco et al., 2016; Townsend, 2013). Thus, this research contributes to the literature that problematises the exclusion of Black men in psychology.

In the matrix of decolonising psychology (Sher & Long, 2012), the study provides an opportunity for Black men to present their identity experiences in the field, while defining a Black man who is free from traditional personifications of what constitutes Black men in society. The study explores the gaps in the exclusion of Black men who may redefine cultural hegemony norms according to the changing societal demands, to form a professional identity that is conducive to facilitating psychology services in South Africa. The inclusion and support of Black men in training

² Use of the term "formerly enrolled" in the study title, refers to psychology professionals who have completed the M1 coursework component of their professional training. Participants in this study no longer attend university-based classes for their professional training, but may still be registered students, should they still be completing internship training and the thesis component of their formal qualification.

programmes may assist in closing the diversity gap in the field and in the provisioning of interventions that are respectful of cultural traditions and norms (Jordan et al., 2001).

1.4 Aims and objectives

The overall aim of the research study is to explore the identity and belonging experiences of Black male psychologists, who have undertaken training and completed at least their M1 year in the professional (clinical, counselling, and research) master's psychology training programmes at a South African university. The objectives of the research are to:

- a) Describe the identity and belonging experiences of Black male psychologists during training and in practice.
- b) Explore how gender and race shape the identity and belonging experiences of Black male psychologists during training and in practice.
- c) Understand how Black male psychologists, who have undertaken training in a professional Masters psychology training programmes at a South African university, understand and develop their professional identities during their training and in practice.

1.5 Research questions

To address the previously stated aims and objectives, the following research questions were specified:

1. What are the experiences of Black male psychologists, who have undertaken training in a professional master's in psychology training programmes at a South African university, in terms of their identity and sense of belonging in the field?
2. How do Black male psychologists, who have undertaken training in a professional master's in psychology training programmes at a South African university, develop their professional identities?

1.6 Overview of the thesis

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter introduces a discussion around Black men enrolled in professional psychology training programmes, as discussed in literature. It also presents the problem statement and the rationale of the study, as well as the outline of the thesis.

Chapter Two: Literature review

This chapter discusses the literature relevant to the topic of this study. The literature review covers a discussion on Black Men and work in South Africa, it speaks to theories of masculinity and articulates the extent to which men possess cultural traits defined as masculine. It further provides a discussion on professional identity formation.

This chapter also introduces the theoretical framework that guided this study, i.e., Social Identity Theory. It shows how the theoretical framework provides a structure that supports the aim and objectives of this study. Furthermore, it provides an understanding as to why the research problem that needs to be addressed exists. Lastly, a summary of the chapter is presented.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodological approach employed in the study. It provides an overview of the research design, demographic characteristics of the participants, sampling method, data collection strategies, and the data analysis techniques utilised to analyse the qualitative data in the study. Additionally, it touches on researcher reflexivity and trustworthiness, as well as the ethical considerations that were followed throughout the research process. Finally, it provides a summary of the entire chapter.

Chapter Four: Results

This chapter reports on the main results of the study. It elaborates on the findings of the study by referring to the research questions set out in chapter one of the study. This chapter further presents

the main themes with illustrative extracts that emerged from the thematic analysis. Lastly, a summary of the chapter is presented.

Chapter Five: Discussion

The chapter presents a detailed discussion of the findings in relation to the relevant literature discussed in chapter two, as well as the Social Identity theoretical framework. It also discusses the findings in relation to the research aim of the study, objectives, and the research questions. This chapter concludes with a summary of the main findings of the study.

Chapter Six: Conclusion, Limitations, recommendations

This chapter concludes the study by summarising the key findings, while also reporting on the limitations in study design. The significance of the research is explored, along with recommendations for further research and practice

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2. *Introduction*

An overview of the relevant literature is included in this chapter. Firstly, the historical context of the socialisation of masculinity for Black men and boys is discussed. Theories of masculinities articulate the extent to which men possess cultural traits defined as masculine, which align with male gender roles that exhibit power, rationality, and authority. This section also attempts to elucidate the literature that concerns a legacy of colonialism in forming hegemonic masculinities that subsequently attach gender roles and traits to both men and women, which later in society may be a factor in the underrepresentation of men in caring professional fields. This has implications for men in caring professions to develop a sense of identity and belonging, and a viable professional identity which altogether constitutes various benefits, for example, a practitioner's confidence, a purpose, and a sense of self to perform and knowing what one stands for in the profession. Lastly, social identity and professional identity frameworks are employed to describe how individuals recognise and define their place in society. This is the meaning individuals attach to themselves which forms a sense of identity and belonging. Both theories are used as a guide to understanding the identity and belonging and professional experiences of Black male psychologists in training and practice.

2.1 *Theorising Masculinities*

Theories of masculinities articulate the extent to which men possess cultural traits defined as masculine. Traits of dominance, physical aggression, competitiveness, toughness, being heterosexual, the avoidance of femininity, and the inability to emotionally express themselves have often been aligned with traditional male gender roles (Levant et al., 2003; Pleck, 1993; Wedgwood et al., 2023; Wester & Vogel, 2002). Masculinity, from a social constructionist perspective, is grounded in cultural beliefs on how boys and men should feel, think, and behave (Levant & Wong, 2013). This means that various dialogues on 'being masculine in particular ways' are engraved on individuals through human activity and interactions (Pasura & Christou, 2018).

Hegemonic masculinity, a term coined by Connell (2017), was initially adopted from cultural hegemony, written by Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci, who discussed political hegemony as a way of the ruling-class imposing and validating cultural norms to manipulate society. The development and repression of hegemony models served men in patriarchal settings who acceded to notions that convinced them that they were superior and had myriad privileges, for instance, inherent rights to dominate (Morrell et al., 2012). Hegemonic masculinity maintains the legitimacy of the interests of the powerful while marginalising and subordinating other groups (Jewkes et al., 2015). In essence, hegemonic masculinity constitutes the dominant form of male power, renowned for less respected masculinities and enabling overall subordination of others, particularly women. Hegemonic masculinity offers its own form of masculinity as the only “truth” of how men should behave as the cultural ideal.

Hegemonic masculinity is operationalised in various social or institutional contexts. For example, male-dominated industries with traditional gendered norms may impose expectations on men to have authority and exercise toughness. In such industries, like the military and defense forces, men may choose gendered power and status while sacrificing help-seeking, good health care, and safety precautions (Ratele, 2015). In male-dominated workplaces, men are inclined to maintain emotional coolness to declare their position in the masculine hierarchy. Therefore, hegemonic masculinity can be considered a relational concept, since it is a “relational way to manufacture gender order through patterns of practice” (Nayak, 2023, p.171).

There are challenges in the use of the concept of hegemonic masculinity, due to its association with violence and coercion, which perpetuates toxic masculinity. Toxic masculinity can be understood as the social subordination of women, other men, and identities (Harrington, 2021). These are men who practice power and derogatory actions over women simply because they are men, for example, domestic violence, dehumanising, and use of weapons to control others (Pearson, 2019). Certain literature views toxic masculinity as a failure of hegemony since Gramsci’s definitions of hegemony are in relation to ruling by consent and social dominance exercised by cultural means (Wedgwood et al., 2023).

The work of Connell (2016) expanded and reconceptualised hegemonic masculinities to include sociocultural processes. According to Connell (2015), it is not sufficient to say hegemonic masculinity is men merely conforming to societal norms, he argues that masculine characters are not given, rather there are many possible styles of practising hegemonic masculinity which is unique for each person in different cultures and historical periods. To emphasise, masculinities are not a fixed notion, but socially constructed, unstable, and always changing (Mohamed, 2011).

This process of reconfigurations of masculinities to incorporate subordinated masculinities and femininities can be called hybrid masculinity i.e., to combine ideals of discrete gender performances from subordinate masculinities to define a fluid performance of masculinity that aligns with an individual's context and gender identity (Kluczyńska, 2021). In this instance, subordinate masculinity, a type of lesser form of masculinities in comparison to hegemonic masculinity, refers to qualities that oppose hegemonic masculinity and are ranked lower on the gender hierarchy (Connell, 1987; Connell, 1995). Hybrid masculinity gives comprehension to the processes of how men rearrange their masculine identities to mould their gender performances (Ben, 2018). Therefore, it is not equivocal to assert that descriptions of masculinities are socially constructed and follow trends on which masculinity types are distinguished (Kluczyńska, 2021).

2.2 Masculinities in a South African context

In the South African context, hegemonic masculinity or hegemonic masculinities is used to illuminate hierarchies of gender power, viewed in conjunction within a historical landscape of segregation along lines of social class and race (Morrell et al., 2012). Generally, what is depicted of Black men is linked to a pervasive image of violence, sexism, and abuse (Curry, 2018). Hegemonic masculinities in South Africa have been linked to the subordination of women and a display of men exercising power and violence over women across cultures and races (Morrell, 2001; Van Niekerk & Boonzaier, 2016). According to Nayak (2023), this “power is not only enacted against women, but also by some men over other “subordinated masculinities”—for example, gay, effeminate, racialised, or unemployed men” (pp.171-172).

Shefer et al. (2014) describe hegemonic masculinities as representing a *binary oppositional logic*, where men are prescribed qualities of dominance, assertiveness, competitiveness, and emotional restriction, while women are socialised to opposite qualities. According to Masitha (2012), the binary oppositional logic perpetuates the social norm that to be regarded as a *real man*, feminine features must be avoided. According to Ratele (2014), in South Africa, African hegemonic masculinities perpetuate homophobia, since men who subscribe to subversions of masculinity (i.e., rejection of violence and male domination) are often not regarded as real men in society and considered feeble and the dominant male position is violence. Hence this research gives attention to the social construction of masculinities and social identity but also draws caution in the various dialogues that Black men psychologists tap into, in order to negotiate their identities since traditional masculinity stereotypes in general depict men as emotionally reticent, self-standing, and seldomly assumes the active role of a carer.

In Southern Africa, the practice of hegemonic masculinities was engraved in the labour system where male mobility was granted and female mobility was deemed “unrespectable” (Ouzgane & Morrell, 2005; Pasura, & Christou, 2018). Hegemonic African masculinities operated on the doctrine that positioned men above women; and for most African men, financial stability, starting a family, and employment were preconditions for successful masculinity and central to a sense of manhood (Ratele, 2014). Therefore, historically, and culturally, employment became gendered for males, and domesticity and reproduction were gendered for females, this was processed in racialised societies that promoted the supremacy of race (Morrell et al., 2012).

Black masculinity literature was generated in South Africa to dignify and understand the lived experiences of Black men and boys rather than viewing these individuals as *victims of racism* (Morrell, 1998; Morrell et al., 2012). In understanding African culture, Black masculinity was reduced to a working-class status, as evidenced by the term *Boy* which reflected a workplace reality for African Black men. In consequence, servitude became a feature of Black masculinity (Malton, 2016; Morrell, 1998). According to Malton (2016), in the colonial era, a signifier of the masculinity of a Black man relied on the category of work performed, and wage labour provided affirmation to man’s

perception of himself as the *breadwinner* and acted as a channel to marriage. The concept of a breadwinner is coined to the financial responsibility assigned to a family member, who is capable to cater for basic needs that are essential to the family (Madhavan et al., 2008). Pasura and Christou (2018) added that the breadwinner concept is a colonial creation achieved through the labour system which suppressed men of colour into a racially segmented labour market that is exploitative and low-paying for the economic growth of colonial administrators – the ruling party. Pasura and Christou (2018) further stipulated that “the notion of a male breadwinner was reinforced as considerable numbers of Africans converted to Christianity, which stressed monogamous marriage in which the man was the household head and breadwinner” (p. 526). Urban Black masculinity comprised Black men entering the labour force, which demanded endurance and physical strength, and reaffirming their manhood and rural roots in urban conditions through establishing ethics and codes of masculine conduct. Men assumed the breadwinner and *head* of family roles and accumulation of livestock, while women remained in homesteads to perform home duties (Young Jr, 2021). These ideas are pertinent to the study since it is an exploration of the identity experiences of Black men in their context.

Ratele (2014) problematises the application of hegemonic masculinities in South Africa since it is unattainable by majority of men in the country due to structural inequities in socioeconomic in race and class. He explains that hegemonic practices are the root of their own subjugation since they look for advancement through “the context of hegemonic capitalist patriarchal Whiteness” (Ratele, 2014, p. 118), imbued with racism, violence, homophobic ideologies, capitalism, and patriarchy. In South Africa, a significant number of men encounter challenges in accomplishing what might be regarded as successful masculinity, thus homophobia and gender-based violence actions are enacted displacement of failure in attaining hegemonic African masculinity (Ratele, 2013; 2015). Ratele (2015) explained that in a South African context, to engage boys and men towards progressive and healthy African masculinities, economic inequalities that categorise society cannot be overlooked, since this will collapse efforts to persuade Black men of the value of gender equality. Therefore, failure in reformulating masculinities is infused with the inability of the South African government to meet socioeconomic development obligations that would aid to create opportunities for decent work,

and income (Ratele, 2014). In South Africa, transforming men and boys to healthier or respectable forms of masculinity, requires consideration of economic, cultural and racial well-being.

2.3. *Alternate Masculinities and Caring Masculinities*

Masculinities are not a fixed notion and are socially constructed, hence they can be reconfigured based on societal demands and on what are the required traits to define men/masculinity at the time (Morrell et al., 2012). These ideas in relation to men in psychology, may help understand how men re-construct and perform their masculinities within traditional caring professions. According to Carlsson (2020), men in professional careers such as nursing or psychology engage in “caring masculinities”. Caring masculinities can be understood as masculinities that are against domination and substitute patriarchal notions with ideals of care (Nayak, 2023). Men who practice caring professions meticulously enact, perform, and contest gendered roles and identities that are considered atypical for men in society (Ben, 2018; Pasura & Christou, 2018). The idea of caring masculinities is to bring dominating forms of masculinities into question and promote gender equality since care is seen as obligatory for women and optional for men (Jordan, 2020). Thus, caring masculinity theory is hopeful in the potential to alter dominant gender relations and assumptions (Elliott, 2016).

According to Wedgwood et al. (2023), men in caring professions and those who subscribe to other subordinated forms of masculinities, for example, LGBTQIA+, encounter unavoidable tension in heteronormative contexts and find themselves having to constantly negotiate their masculinities due to toxicity directed towards their identities. Bartfay et al. (2010) report that a general perception of men in caring roles such as nursing suggests that it is a more suitable career for women than men and that men in such career fields are perceived as effeminate. Negative stereotypes may impact the recruitment of men in salient caring professional fields and programmes. This is problematic, as there is a need for more positive male role models to address the shortage of skilled helpers and promote diverse professions. The operation of caring masculinities for men is an act against the socialised hegemonic masculinity identities. These men operationalise caring masculinities through their performance in care competence. Such care competence is presumed to bring feelings of respect, and self-esteem, since some young men encounter challenges in accomplishing the hegemonic qualities of

being a “sole provider” and therefore reformulate their masculinities through care (Elliott, 2016; Nayak, 2023). Exclusion and underrepresentation in professional fields may have implications in developing a sense of belonging and identity (Beasley et al., 2015; Conwill, 2009). Therefore, according to Ratele (2014; 2015), there should be intentional interventions to engage young men and boys into healthy, caring, and progressive masculinities to build resistance against oppressive structures and hetero-sexist masculinity.

In a study conducted by Pasura and Christou (2018), they focused on how caring masculinity is operationalised and transnational migration intersects to disrupt any fixed notion of gendered identities for African migrants in the United Kingdom (UK). The study found that African men renegotiate and reconfigure their masculinities in an unfamiliar social context (diaspora) through interrelations in neighbourly African spaces, these may be cultural and religious spaces to recoup their social position and identification as Africans. According to Pasura and Christou (2018), these men perform respectable forms of masculinity such as adapting to a way of life that is different from African masculinities such as sharing household duties; and for some men, withdrawal and resistance is a way to preserve their values and principles as stand-up family providers.

Nayak (2023) added that care can be infused with hegemonic masculinity without disrupting male authority. Such male caregiving practices “has the potential to challenge, refigure and transform gender relations” (Nayak, 2023, p. 179). According to Isacco et al. (2016), masculinity for men in helping professions like Psychology, concerns being emotionally invested in helping others. For these men, refashioning their masculinities may be imperative to practise their discipline in significant ways. Furthermore, these men attempt to explore the diverse notions of masculinity as their gender identities are being challenged, reaffirmed, and reconfigured to suit different contexts, such as the professional workplace, community, and family (Pasura & Christou, 2018). As such, the degree to which men resist and redefine hegemonic qualities may be fostered by their professional identity within their chosen field of practice (Townsend, 2013). These ideas are reflected in the current study which seeks to understand how Black men psychologists adopt to reconfigure their masculinities to carry out psychological practices in ways that are of assistance, and that retain hegemonic credibility.

2.4. Psychology as a field of work

Historically several theorists were involved in the discovery of psychology as a field of work. Wilhelm Wundt is considered by many as an important founder and figure in the pioneering of psychology as a unique science, as he founded the first experimental psychology laboratory (Wehbe & Shackelford, 2021). Wundt believed in introspection as a means to assist in the alleviation of mental health disturbances or symptoms through promotion of self-awareness, to develop insight that allows one to make a connection between experiences and the occurring reactions, thoughts, and emotions (Brock, 2018). Definitions of psychology have changed over time; however, the dominant consensus is that psychology is “the study of the mind” or “consciousness”, and “behaviour” (Buss, 2019). Psychologists present different views of what to study and how to study it, based on the different theoretical orientations to which they subscribe, such as structuralism, behaviourism, cognitive psychology, and psychoanalysis, among others (Brock, 2018).

In terms of professional Psychology training in South Africa, there are many fields of recognised psychology practice, including clinical, counselling, research, educational, industrial, neuropsychology, and forensic psychology. This study focuses on students in the first three categories. Clinical and counselling psychology is generally concerned with managing forms of psychopathology and psychological distress through psychotherapy, conducting assessments, and making diagnoses to design effective treatments and interventions. (Spring, 2007). Research psychology involves conducting psychological research and developing evaluation procedures and psychometric instruments for the betterment of individuals and societies (Bauer, 2007).

Psychologists acquire a myriad of skills through their training in a professional psychology master’s degree programme at accredited higher education institutions. Master’s training programmes include rigorous integrated assessments that are both formative and summative throughout the qualification programme to ensure critical requirements are met (HPCSA, 2019). The two-year programme seeks to train psychologists to be competent in various tasks, for example, the ability to develop theoretical and aetiological formulations to diagnose psychological disorders based on assessments and clinical skills, perform psychological assessments, generate individualised treatment

plans, provide comprehensive case management, and adhere to professional standards, etc. (HPCSA, 2019). Additionally, competency in major psychological disorders is critical for practitioners to make a distinction between normal and abnormal thinking or behaviour for accurate diagnoses. Successful completion of the training programme allows psychologists to perform a range of psychological interventions for individuals or groups with psychiatric, medical, and neurocognitive conditions in professional practice and clinical settings (van der Zeijst et al., 2021).

2.5 *Inclusion and the experiences of Black male psychologists in professional psychology practices*

Historically, professions such as psychology and medicine (psychiatry), were aligned with male gender roles that exhibited power, rationality, and authority (Pion et al., 1996). Other professional roles such as teaching and nursing were more aligned with female gender roles considered to have less power and were linked to emotional presence, empathy, and motherly care (Marulanda & Radtke, 2019; Pion et al., 1996). The revolution of feminist theorists such as Karen Horney, who was an advocate for the contributions of women in the school of psychology to be recognised at a time when the work of women was often overlooked and ignored (Pion et al., 1996), led to changes in the mental health workforce and more women began practicing as psychiatrists and psychologists in the Western world. Over some time, there appears to have been a shift in female gender roles possessing greater presence and authority in the field of psychology (Pion et al., 1996).

Contemporary literature debates whether the field of psychology has been increasingly feminised and whether the mental health needs of males are sufficiently prioritised or catered for (Himmerich, 2019; Marulanda & Radtke, 2019). These views of psychology being regarded as a ‘female field’, pose identity and belonging implications for the minority of males in psychological practice. From an essentialist point of view, being a psychologist has been linked with a female aptitude towards caring, whereas men are assumed to be less proficient in their ability to possess empathy and handle emotions (Harton & Lyons, 2003). Therefore, given the nature of the field of psychology being potentially biased towards female practitioners, exploration of the experiences of

males practicing in psychology is pivotal in determining potential strategies and support structures that aid men to practice psychology with confidence and assurance.

The urgency to increase diversity in psychology tends to be broad and general for example, “across underrepresented racial and ethnic minorities; the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender [LGBTQIA+] community” (Beasley et al., 2015, p.706). In this instance, calls to diversify the mental health workforce focus on the shortage of Black men in professional psychology. The under-representation of men, especially Black men in psychological practices has been a focal debate in recent years (Himmerich, 2019). Part of the issue of the exclusion of Black men in psychology may be the view that psychology is a feminised discipline, which serves to amplify the idea that men who enter the discipline are “soft” and fragile (Curry, 2018).

According to Kelly and Davis (2021), the inclusion of Black males in professional psychology has a significant impact on the quest to improve the well-being and liveliness of Black communities. Black communities are confronted with vast social issues such as poverty, violence, fatherless homes, high unemployment rates, and environmental stressors that contribute to psychological issues (for example depression), therefore in consideration of these issues, many Black boys and men could benefit from the interventions of culturally competent mental health professionals (Beasley et al., 2015). Black male psychologists are well suited to this role as they possess the shared experiences and racial and cultural understanding that White psychologists may not possess (Christian et al., 2002). Therefore, the inclination for a racially similar and culturally attuned psychotherapist may be of importance to assimilate the experiences of Black individuals.

According to Beasley et al. (2015), gender norms may restrict men in their ability to share their vulnerabilities with other men, but the advantage of a Black male psychologist is that “Black men view other Black men as their brothers” (Beasley et al., 2015, p.708) who can connect with their experiences, and who are sensitive to issues of masculinity. A study by Himmerich (2019) suggests that gender or sex matching of clients and therapists often leads to favourable treatment outcomes. The suggested idea by Himmerich (2019) that “men go better with men and women go better with women” and matching of clients and therapists, is not narrowed to gender; this simply supports the

notion that the greater resemblance between client and therapist is a bearer for favourable clinical outcomes. Furthermore, the inclusion of Black men in the psychology profession is significant to offer a male perspective that represents the experiences of men, designing clinical interventions that are culturally sensitive and possess indigenous knowledge, and an African lens (Kelly & Davis, 2021). The addition of indigenous knowledge advocates for an integrated health perspective that considers ethnic backgrounds and reduces mental health stigma, and misdiagnosis of Africans in clinical settings (Chitindingu & Mkhize, 2016).

In a study by Chitindingu and Mkhize (2016), which explored Black African intern psychologists' experiences of academic and social inclusion during their professional training, the participants in this study expressed a deep sense of isolation during their professional training in Psychology. "This sense of cultural isolation and lack of belonging echoes the findings that have been observed with minority (mainly African) students in historically White universities" (Chitindingu & Mkhize, 2016, p.88). The challenges expressed by Black men and women in psychology professional training concerned little coverage of indigenous knowledge systems in their training, and minimised exposure to psychological perspectives that extract from African-centred theoretical structures, and a predominantly White staff (Chitindingu & Mkhize, 2016). Furthermore, another challenge was the language barrier, which was the use of English as the language of instruction, both in terms of their understanding of psychological concepts and their ability to translate these concepts into practice. As Turpin and Coleman (2010) stated, the practice of only Eurocentric concepts in indigenous spaces presents challenges as it neglects cultural considerations and therefore may lead to inaccurate diagnosis. A lack of understanding of the kind of work a clinician performs may result in young psychologists experiencing difficulties with their professional identity during and after training (Trede & McEwen, 2012).

The discussion around the experiences of Black men in professional psychology includes, globally, issues of overt and covert experiences of racism, encountering problematic relationships with professors or supervisors, unfair discrimination, questioned competency, and lower expectations for people of colour (Chitindingu & Mkhize, 2016). Similarly, in South Africa, the experiences of

Black men in the psychology profession are those concerned with the inability of academic institutions to facilitate multiracial competencies, racial dynamics, social isolation which hinders a sense of identity and belonging due to a lack of diversity and application of indigenous knowledge to practice psychology in ways that are relevant to the context of South African (Bantjes et al., 2016; Chitindingu & Mkhize, 2016; Nair, 2008). To minimise these experiences, Beasley et al., (2015) propose the inclusion of a more diversified staff in the professional training of psychologists. Black male faculty staff members can act as mentors for Black men to give assistance or modelling of how fellow Black men can negotiate a sense of identity and belonging, and construct professional identity in mainstream settings while maintaining their cultural identity and connections to practice psychology in relevant contextual ways (Bantjes et al., 2016).

2.6 Theoretical framework

Professional identity and social identity theory guided the study in describing the identity and belonging experiences and professional identity of Black male psychologists in terms of their perceived category (as psychologists) and respective role identities (for example clinical, counselling, and research roles). Professional identity and social identity theory are intertwined in the constituents that bring about a sense of identity and belonging for individuals. Therefore, these concepts served as guides in understanding the construction of Black male psychologist's sense of self and belonging in professional psychology from their respective category and roles, since these provide them with a sense of who they are and how to behave.

2.6.1 Professional identity formation

In this study, the term "profession" is used to distinguish different types of employment, that are inclusive of the required knowledge and skill achieved through advanced training (Caza & Creary, 2016). Professional identity informs one's attitudes and behaviours toward the occupation. This may be considered a fluid identity, as it is constructed through experiences, the expression of ideas of self, and characterised by professional conditions, situations, and specific ways of acting (Fitzgerald, 2020). Professional identity can be considered work identities that individuals assign to themselves within the professional context. This is an interactive process that individuals have with others about

their work. Therefore, the concept of professional identity is formed through social interactions (Caza & Creary, 2016).

The definition of professional identity varies across the literature. Some definitions are primarily concerned with the kinds of activities that professionals perform, thereby implying that professional identity is defined by unique professional roles and responsibilities (Emerson, 2010; Nolan, 2019). Generally, in higher education, a profession includes tertiary education, scholarly research, defined professional knowledge and skills, a code of ethical and professional conduct, professional autonomy, practical experience, and accountability to society and the profession (Trede & McEwen, 2012). Professional identity for both clinical/counselling and research psychologists is the composite of motives, values, and experiences, and possessing a sound knowledge of the scope of practice and ethics of the profession (Emerson, 2010; Kaplan & Flum, 2012). Across programmes there is practice-based teaching and learning which assists in shaping a unique professional identity and helps practitioners to self-identify as belonging to the psychology profession. Nolan (2019) asserts that professional identity is largely observed and evaluated by others in the workspace, based on the individual's unique characteristics. Graduate training, individual dispositions, as well as the field in terms of a theoretical paradigm and workspace, may influence the professional identity of Black psychologists (Caza & Creary, 2016; Tomlinson & Jackson, 2021). The professional identity of Black psychologists may also embody engaging in professional work that addresses social issues that stem from their environmental background, thus becoming active subjects who are agents of change (Nolan, 2019; Tomlinson & Jackson, 2021).

Identity formation is crucial for professional socialisation and may assist to strengthen a sense of agency in practice and allows practitioners to develop purpose and a sense of self to perform psychological practice in ways that are significant and competent (Trede & McEwen, 2012). Socialisation is a transformative process where practitioners begin to form identification with their new professional roles (Caza & Creary, 2016). Identity means the ability and conscious decision, i.e., a reflexive consciousness, to identify with a certain group and a set of practices, which is an important element of becoming a member of any profession. As Caza and Creary (2016) stated, personal identity

and professional identity are interlinked and individuals draw from knowing what one stands for – “who they are”, i.e., a composite of their social roles, personal values, motives, attributes, beliefs, and memberships to allot meaning to who they are and what they do in the workplace. Emerson (2010), states that professional identity development is a conscious and purpose-driven identity that helps practitioners understand who they are and how they practice. Trede and McEwen (2012) argue that an appropriate and healthy professional identity is aligned with one’s interests, values, and intentions and, therefore is not isolation from personal identity, while Scott (2018) argues that professional identity develops during graduate training.

Professional identity formation involves disintegration, and an emergence of a new identity, and belonging. For example, this process turns individuals into specialists, which constitutes confidence in what one stands for in the profession (Fitzgerald 2020; Trede & McEwen, 2012). This takes place through the processes of mentoring (i.e., learning, relearning, unlearning), modelling, and academic training by other experienced psychology educators who assume the role of a supervisor. Trede and McEwen (2012) pointed out that qualified professionals in learning spaces should possess a professional identity since students see them as role models.

Gazzola et al. (2011) contend that what constitutes professional identity for psychology students is attaining membership in the mental health profession. A collective professional identity within the psychology profession is important for practitioners to negotiate their position within their field of practice and solidify this position, including the importance of the services rendered to the public (Emerson, 2010). When training conditions are not a match to the trainee’s goals and an inconsistency of instructions is sent by the faculty in training, implications on professional identity may occur. Therefore, to mobilise such obstacles in training, future psychologists, together with mentors, must possess a vigorous professional identity to convey professional practice (Scott, 2018).

The benefit of developing a viable professional identity is to help practitioners to recognise “where and when changes can happen; to prevent burnout and increase their sense of control and voice within their professions, to develop a strong sense of belonging, hence a sense of identity” (Trede & McEwen, 2012, p.12) and to gain the benefits of a positive work identity. Challenges to a

professional identity formation are those related to a focus on summative assessment of learning and absorption with risk management which prioritises compliance; resistance or reluctance by trainees to express themselves frankly when trainees suspect that they are being assessed against norms and logical criterion presents a challenge; mentors who are not invested in the critical development of trainees; and quarterly assessments that focus on confirming what a trainee has learnt rather than making a judgment on learning capabilities (Caza & Creary, 2016).

As highlighted by Trede and McEwen, (2012) professional identity formation is a transformative process for students, in essence, its social construction includes a core self, a socially-constructed relational self, and a fragmented, constantly-reforming-through-dialogue self. These processes together prompt students to generate answers to the following questions “who I am; how I fit in with others and how to negotiate my fit with others; how to actively identify with others and/or differentiate myself from others” (Trede & McEwen, 2012, p. 8). Professional settings provide opportunities for trainees to learn about all facets of practice, including how to actively engage their “self” in practice and to exercise autonomy in decision-making (Trede & McEwen, 2012). In an article written by Trede and McEwen (2012), students reported that practical learning and workplace experiences aid in the development of their self-assurance, self-confidence, and self-awareness. Training institutions offer trainees preparation for practice, to learn about professional roles, and therefore professional identity formation can be initiated. During this learning process, trainees are guided and trusted with appropriate responsibility. Professional identity formation is a reflective and critical approach that is to help students grow from ‘mirroring’ their teacher’s style of practising into developing a sense of confidence and ownership in their own style of practice (Eslamdoost & Tajeddin, 2020; Trede & McEwen, 2012). This learning process is a transformation of students from being passive problem solvers, into demonstrating critical thinking and depth in their interpretation of problems.

2.6.2 Social identity theory

Social identity theory is a theory that was developed to explain how individuals affirm and recognise their place in society and as a theory to explain intergroup relations, conflict, and

cooperation between groups (Hogg, 2016; Tajfel, 1974). The core tenets of social identity theory were derived from Tajfel's passion for the analyses of social perception, categorisation, discrimination, prejudice, and intergroup conflict (Hogg, 2016). Individuals acquire a part of their self-concept from their membership in social groups, this is a sense of who they are established in their group membership (Huddy, 2001). Social groups assign a shared identity to their members, that provides them with a sense of knowledge of who they are and how they should behave; consequently, social groups emphasise the distinction between in-group and out-group in a given social context (Hogg, 2016). According to Jenkins (2014), three components reported by Turner and Tajfel are paramount to identity formulation: social categorisation, social comparison, and social identification. Social categorisation is the inclination for individuals to devote themselves to social groups (Stets & Burke, 2000). A social group is individuals who possess a customary social identification in association with a particular society, place, or set of circumstances. Individuals of a social group recognise themselves as members of the same social category. Tajfel (1974) defines a group as a collection of individuals who understand themselves to be members of the same social category, who share some emotional involvement that is common with themselves, and together achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their membership.

After categorising and identifying with a group, social comparison is necessary to derive sociological self-esteem. Social comparison is a process where individuals build a sense of self through self-introspection and evaluation of their own opinions, contributions, and abilities in comparison with others (Jenkins, 2014). However, these social identities are unique for each person's self-concept (Stets & Burke, 2000). Stets and Burke (2000) elucidated that "through a social comparison process, persons who are similar to the self are categorised with the self and are labelled the in-group; persons who differ from the self are categorised as the out-group" (p.225). In essence, individuals define themselves through in-group, and out-group categorisations to distinguish and enhance the self (Islam, 2014). Individuals develop self-esteem from in-group favouritism. In other words, an individual builds self-esteem from attaining membership of a group and views their group as superior to others and this level of self-esteem is maintained by social comparison (Hogg, 2016).

Therefore, social identity theory is concerned with one's views of self to in-group members and how they come to understand and identify themselves and solidify their sense of belonging to the social world through groups (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012). Thus, social identity is concerned with intergroup relations and the social competition between groups (Hogg, 2016).

Social representations are shared beliefs and practices held by society that act as cultural schemas that form the identity of a group and create the foundation for social cognition (Davis et al., 2019; Turner et al., 1979). For example, professional identity can be considered as a social identity, given that associating oneself with a profession grants access to a particular community made up of individuals who share a common code of conduct or approach to a particular scope of practice or category of work (Caza & Creary, 2016). Individuals take from their own interests, values, personal attributes, social group membership and professional roles to attach meaning to "who they are and what they do" in the professional context. However, social groups or categories and membership may be associated with positive or negative value alliances. Therefore, social identity is susceptible to both a positive and negative image based on the evaluations of those groups that contribute to an individual's social identity (Jenkins, 2014; Tajfel, 1974).

Identity is the valuable meaning that individuals attach to roles and groups in society, that forms a sense of belonging in individuals (Stets & Burke, 2000; Stets & Serpe, 2013). Social identity is crucial because it is secondary to how individuals assign meaning to themselves and helps to shape work attitudes, affect, and behaviour. In social identity theory, the process of identity construction occurs through self-categorisation, the knowledge that an individual belongs to a social group or holds a social identity with members in the same social category (Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019; Trepte & Loy, 2017). A social identity perspective asserts that men enact their masculinities through social roles and their relation amongst themselves, and identities are established as not only different from women but also from other men since different groups uphold certain collective images of themselves (Barry, 2018). This theory is important for this study in understanding how Black male psychologists conceptualise their identities through their unique roles and contributions in clinical/counselling and research streams. Practice Identity, in this sense, is tied to a specific role that influences an

individual's sense of self or identity. The individual behaves in accordance to this role identity and is regulated by it, in order to gain verification of the identity (Farmer et al., 2003).

According to Seife (2021), identity and belonging formation are inextricably linked with inherent traits and social relations. Belonging is “a relaxed attitude toward oneself and one’s surroundings that is achieved through the use of relational and negotiated processes of identification and recognition” (Seife, 2021, p.277). Similarly, Peers and Fler (2014) assert that the characteristics or definitions of identity hold a group boundary that can be static and permanent over time for example, language and sex, are challenging to change. However, identity is intertwined with being and belonging, as an individual becomes a member of a group due to certain traits that one possesses and may belong to a group through social relations that lead to genuine connections (Kirloskar-Steinbach, 2010). The ideas of Black masculinity, identity, and belonging therefore provide an understanding and a background of where Black men come from, while the proposed study provides insight as to where these men are moving towards.

2.7 Summary of the chapter

The chapter provided literature that discussed the socialised gender roles of men based on traditional masculine ideals which uphold a patriarchal society. Traditional masculine ideals may be normalised in society, leading to the subordination of alternate masculinities, for example, caring masculinities. These forms of masculinities may be problematised through negative stereotypes and discrimination which may in turn impact the recruitment of men in salient caring professional fields and programmes. Men who practice professional psychology may enact, perform, and contest gendered roles and identities that are considered atypical for men in society, and may have successfully redefined cultural hegemony norms to form a professional identity that is viable to practice psychology services. Therefore, social identity and professional identity frameworks are employed as pathways to comprehend and describe the experiences of Black male psychologists in prompting a sense of identity and belonging despite the negative gender stereotypes associated with a field that demands a caring aptitude. Consequently, features of identity and belonging may play a role

in the development and foundation for professional identity formation, and to practice psychology in ways that are self-assuring and meaningful.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3. Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology and methods employed to answer the research questions and will address matters related to research design, research setting, inclusion criteria for participants, and sampling strategy. The chapter further discusses data collection, data analysis techniques, and procedures, as well as trustworthiness and reflexivity in the research process. Finally, the chapter details the ethical aspects of the research that were considered and maintained throughout the entire project.

3.1 Research Design

A research design is the overall framework or strategy that is employed to gather all the elements of a research study (Brown, 2016). In this study, a qualitative exploratory research design was employed to explore participant's perceptions 'in their appearing' on socialised masculine identities. Exploratory research helps us to possess a better understanding of the problem through further exploration of an existing problem (Boru, 2018; Brown, 2016; Nattrass, 2020). Exploratory designs explore the research topic with varying levels of depth (Boru, 2018; Stebbins, 2001; Swedberg, 2018). As such, a qualitative exploratory research design aligns with the aims and objectives of this study, to explore the identity perceptions of participants.

This study also utilised qualitative methods of research. According to Aspers and Corte (2019), qualitative research is an interpretative and explorative approach that attempts to make sense of a phenomenon through the meanings and lived experiences shared by the identified respondents. Qualitative research concerns studying individuals in their natural settings and through the use of various empirical materials such as interviews, personal experience, introspection, and interaction (Aspers & Corte, 2019). This approach was therefore deemed appropriate for the research objectives, to gain further insight into the subjective experiences of participants in the psychology profession, in both practice and training.

3.2 *Research setting*

The research setting is referred to as a social, physical, or experimental context in which the study is conducted by the researcher (Fonseca, 2023; Zarestky, 2023). The research setting takes into consideration the population, location, time period, and environmental factors. In this study, the University of the Western Cape (UWC), and the related Department of Psychology, provide an important context to locate and shape the experiences of participants, as they interrogate issues of race, identity, and professional belonging within training and professional practice.

UWC is a public higher education institution located in the Northern suburbs of Cape Town, in the Western Cape province of South Africa. UWC is home to more than 23 000 students, enrolled in studies across seven different faculties with various departments (UWC, 2024). UWC is an appropriate platform for participant recruitment in this study, as it is a historically disadvantaged university that was initially established during apartheid to cater for the inclusion of Black populations³ in academic training (UWC, 2024). UWC is well-known today for its active voice against oppression, apartheid, and discrimination, and the promotion of inclusive and transformative education. The university is committed to nurturing and building on the existing diverse cultural image (UWC, 2024).

The Department of Psychology is one of UWC's longstanding departments, reflecting a diverse staff and student profile in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, and other social identifiers. The UWC Department of Psychology offers a psychology master's degree by full thesis, as well as HPCSA-accredited professional master's degrees in clinical psychology and research psychology. Historically, UWC Psychology also offered an applied master's in counselling psychology, but this programme was discontinued (UWC, 2024). The professional master's programmes, which are the focus of this study, require the completion of an M1 year, constituting academic coursework and a mini dissertation (research project), as well as the completion of an M2 year focused on an HPCSA-

³ 'Black populations' is an inclusive term. The first cohort of students enrolled in the University College of the Western Cape in the 1960s were classified as members of the "Coloured" community (UWC, 2024).

accredited internship. In addition, Clinical Psychology graduates are then required to complete their Community Service. The content and outcomes of professional psychology programmes are reviewed and audited regularly to uphold uniform standards, key competencies, and professional accreditation (HPCSA, 2019). However, there may be differences in the subjective experience of these training programmes, from the perspectives of staff and students alike.

As a trainee Psychology practitioner from UWC, there was both a practical and conceptual rationale to focus on this space. Firstly, due to my familiarity with the context, there was a personal awareness that I could secure a sample for this study, based on the number of Black males trained within the UWC professional psychology programmes. Secondly, I wanted to understand the experience of a cohort of male psychologists from a single institution, rather than sampling across various institutes, to understand how the unique socio-political landscape and training, may have grounded the participant reflections and self-understanding. Lastly, while there was no geographical limitation on where participants could be based at the time of the study, due to the online nature of data collection, it is noteworthy that the majority of participants continued to reside in Cape Town, South Africa.

3.3 *Participants and sampling*

The sample of interest in this study was Black male psychologists who have previously received training in the professional psychology masters programmes at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). Due to the smaller population of individuals meeting the inclusion criteria, a time frame was not imposed on when participants completed their coursework training year (M1) at UWC, in the relevant fields. The study focused on psychologists (i.e., registered intern psychologists, psychologists in community service, and independent registered psychologists in practice). As noted previously, some participants may have completed their M1 year and M2 year (internship) but had not formally graduated from UWC or completed the board exam, due to the need to complete their mini-thesis. The decision to exclude students currently enrolled in the M1 year of their degree was to focus on professional identity that is developed within the practice setting and not limited to the experiences

during the coursework component of the degree. Remaining within the field of psychology was an inclusion criterion, while being a South African resident was not a key feature.

In terms of the race criteria for participation, it is acknowledged that race is a social construct that is open to negotiation. According to Berat (2014), the Black race encompasses a certain identity in skin colour, cultural traditions, and language. For example, in South Africa 'Black' people may include Black Africans, Indians, and Coloureds due to their distinct and similar socio-political experiences, physical characteristics, and cultural practices (Berat, 2014). Prospective participants included only those who 'self-identified' as Black, as indicated in the advertisement (Appendix A) and information sheet (Appendix B). Furthermore, while the consent forms were available in English, Afrikaans, and isiXhosa (see Appendix B), it was indicated on these documents that English was the preferred language for interviews, in terms of the researcher's competency. Participants are practitioners who attained qualifications in English-oriented training programmes, with English as a medium of instruction.

Alase (2017) and Moody et al. (2010) report that a researcher should recruit between 5-10 participants for qualitative interviews. A sample of eight to ten participants was proposed for this study, with eight individuals agreeing to participate. Data saturation was achieved by the eighth participant, which is aligned with Malterud et al. (2016) guidelines that saturation for a qualitative study may be obtained between the sixth and eighth participant interviews.

Purposive sampling and snowballing were adopted to source suitable participants congruent to the purpose of the study (Moody et al., 2010). According to Etikan et al. (2016), purposive sampling and snowballing sampling are non-probability sampling techniques that a researcher employs to approach a specific sample of subjects from a population. The predetermined characteristics or qualities of the participants that suited the purpose of the study (Etikan et al., 2016) were previously registered Black male students in the clinical, research, and counselling psychology masters training programmes at the University of the Western Cape.

Successfully recruited participants provided the gateway to other participants via snowballing sampling (Handcock & Gile, 2011). Snowballing sampling is a process whereby a researcher invites a participant to take part in the study, “the agreeable participants are then asked to recommend other contacts who fit the research criteria and who potentially might also be willing participants, who then, in turn, recommend other potential participants, and so on” (Parker et al., 2019, p. 3). For this study, snowballing was achieved primarily through the assistance of the first participant, to aid in identifying other participants who possess the qualities necessary for participation in this study. This participant played a vital role in reaching out to others who met the study criteria and distributing the study information.

3.4 Data collection

Prospective participants and male alumni from the professional Masters in Psychology training programmes at UWC, were contacted by the Department of Psychology via email, to inform them of the study and the researcher’s contact details. The distribution of study details was coordinated by the authorised departmental academic administrator, and no personal details of UWC graduates were distributed to the researcher, in compliance with the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013. Participation in the study was also advertised via the UWC Psychology social media platforms of Facebook and Twitter, through the posting of the study advert (Appendix A). Once prospective participants confirmed their interest in the study, further telephonic or email communication was initiated by the researcher to confirm the study process and secure a date and time for the interview.

The English version of the information sheet (Appendix B), and consent form (Appendix C) were distributed via email for review and to attain participant’s signatures before commencing the virtual interview. Translated versions of the information sheet, informed consent form, and interview guide in isiXhosa and Afrikaans, were available upon request (Appendix B). Participants were required to return the completed and signed consent form and interview guide (Appendix D) prior to the scheduled interview. The information sheet (Appendix B) provided a summary of the research

and its aims, outlining the research processes, reasons for conducting the research, how long participation may take, benefits of the research, and explaining the ethical processes involved for safe keeping of data and what will happen to the information shared.

The data collection procedures were conceptualised in response to the COVID-19 health and safety protocols of the time, with a focus on limiting physical contact and engaging with participants via online platforms. Participants were required to indicate which online platform was most preferable for the interview. Google Meets was considered as a first preference by all participants. Should participants have struggled with data coverage for internet connection, interviews were to be conducted telephonically, and audio recorded, however, this was not required, as all interviews were conducted on Google Meets. Before the commencement of the interview, each participant was allowed to ask questions regarding the requested documents, and clarifications were provided when necessary. An interview guide (Appendix D) was also distributed to collect basic demographic information and to create a profile of each participant.

In this study, each participant was required to participate in an individual semi-structured interview. A semi-structured interview is the collection of meaningful data from a personal level, with open-ended questions to facilitate the participant's active responses during the ongoing interview (Horton et al., 2004; Wilson et al., 2000; Wilson et al., 2016). Research suggests that semi-structured interviews are more appropriate for exploratory research (Cavaco et al., 2005). The primary benefit of employing semi-structured interviews is to allow the researcher to gain an in-depth and broader understanding of the identity and belonging, and professional identity formation experiences of Black male psychologists during training and professional psychology practice. The role of participants in these interviews was to take an active role: to be good listeners in following instructions, comprehend questions well and ask important questions that open discussions about what the study is attempting to answer, and fully share their thoughts and opinions liberally regarding the topic.

The semi-structured interview guide comprised open-ended questions that allowed for a discussion with the researcher (see Appendix E). The interview guide was strategically designed to

ask questions informed by the review of academic literature concerning race, professional identity, and masculinities. The literature of Kallio et al. (2016) was also utilised to inform the structure and design of questions. A pilot interview was conducted for quality checking and credibility, this was executed with an individual who met the participation criteria. The pilot interview was not included in the final sample and results of the study.

The duration of the interviews was approximately between 45-60 minutes. All interviews were conducted online, audio recorded, and transcribed verbatim. Interviews were conducted in English and no participants expressed the need or preference for an alternate language as the primary medium for the interview. Some participants did utilise expressions and phrasing from their own preferred language to emphasise their aspects of their interview responses.

3.5 Data analysis

Qualitative research findings are predominantly transcribed data from in-depth interviews and are descriptive and exploratory (Guest et al., 2012). Thematic analysis was used to analyse the raw data collected from the interviews with participants. This approach enables the grouping of data into different clusters, to report constructive findings from the raw data (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Newson, 2022). Thematic analysis is particularly suited for exploratory studies, given that both thematic analysis and exploratory design allow the researcher to read and reread the data. According to Yanto (2023), and Braun and Clarke (2021), a thematic analysis method is consistent with an exploratory approach which is based on the fundamental ideas that a researcher directly observes raw data.

A thematic analysis approach applies to identifying categories from the participant's responses to questions that the researcher is hopeful to answer (Alase, 2017; Kiger & Virgo, 2020). In this instance, I was preoccupied with answering the question of how Black males in psychology training programmes construct their identities, respectively in the clinical, counselling, and research professional streams of training at the University of the Western Cape. According to Guest et al. (2012), thematic analysis is feasible for presenting participant's voiced experiences in a manner that is

accurate and comprehensive. These procedures are rigorous and inductive and are a blueprint for examining themes from textual data in a way that is transparent and credible.

For this study, the analytic process adopted reflexive thematic analysis procedures, where I consistently questioned and queried the assumptions in describing and coding the data. According to Braun and Clarke (2019), at the core of the reflexive thematic analysis is the researcher's role in knowledge production, subjectivity, reflective and thoughtful engagement with the data, and reflexive and thoughtful engagement with the analytic process. Braun and Clarke (2021) delineate six specific phases and steps to perform thematic analysis.

Phase 1: Familiarising yourself with the data

Familiarisation with the data allows the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the data and recognise points of interest linked to the research questions. This step entailed transcribing interview audio recordings, with a combination of analytical reading, and making notes while rereading (Braun & Clarke, 2021; 2023; Newson, 2022).

As previously indicated, the interview audio recordings were transcribed to have a sense of understanding in terms of how the participants reacted to the presented phenomena or issues posed by the researcher. Both manual transcription and Otter software convention were used to convert audio to text. Otter transcription software has been deemed reliable and attractive in the transcription of audio-recorded interviews in qualitative research as it can produce an 80% match to the audio file (Louw, 2021). Additionally, it was helpful to review the electronic transcription and manually transcribe audio recordings into text, since it strengthened the ability to comprehend the data and collect initial points of interest.

Thereafter, the final transcripts were uploaded onto ATLAS.ti software version 7.10.1 (qualitative analytical software) for data management and initial coding. Careful reading and rereading of the data itself were made in conjunction with sensitive listening of the audio recordings. Objective reading of the data was necessary to exempt prior knowledge and experiences of the researcher in the field. Data were presented descriptively, and during this process, points of interest

were highlighted and constantly cross-referenced to the research questions for relevancy and inclusion (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Newson, 2022). Active engagement with the data in this manner was crucial to becoming entirely immersed in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2021; 2023). Memoing, which is a procedure in qualitative research to elaborate on ideas or concepts through writing notes, thoughts, interpretations, and insights (Reyes et al., 2024), was also used to supplement the research process. This procedure was necessary to develop a sense of the data and to make sense of the participants through their own shared personal experiences.

This initial phase of thematic analysis allowed the researcher to explore the type of themes and the number of themes that might emerge from the data.

Phase 2: Generating initial codes

This phase involved the systematic analysis of the data through coding and generating latent codes to offer a conceptual interpretation of the data and to provide a summary of the transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2021; 2023). This step consisted of identifying labels for the data, by drawing on the initial ideas about codes that were determined from the completion of Phase 1. Therefore, each segment of the data in the transcripts that was interesting or relevant to the research question was coded. Open coding of the data was conducted. That means the researcher did not have pre-set codes but developed and modified codes as he worked through the coding process (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

The ATLAS.ti coding software enabled multiple codes to be applied by selecting sentences or paragraphs that were of interest, relevant to the study, or specifically addressed the research questions. Initially, one transcript was coded separately through the preliminary ideas about codes that were achieved in Phase 1. After coding one transcript, it was necessary to discuss and modify the emerging codes before moving onto the rest of the transcripts. All the transcripts were coded separately after reading the transcripts carefully several times (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Several codes were generated, containing one or more sentences. After completion of separate coding of the transcripts, it was necessary to cross reference, compare codes, and discuss with supervisors and as we worked

through the codes, we generated new codes and sometimes modified existing codes (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). This was achieved through the ATLAS.ti software, where the data was highlighted, labelled, and coded. A full report of the codes was downloaded in Microsoft Excel from the ATLAS.ti software. *Table 3.5.1* shows the eleven codes that were generated from the data, each code was revised leading to the final code. Thereafter final codes were grouped into themes, this is discussed in Phase 3.

Initial codes 1	Revised codes 2	Revised codes 3	Final codes
1. To belong in psychology	Doing something important in psychology/desire to succeed	Challenge stigma of social image of Black men and psychology discipline for “Blacks”	Black representation in the field
2. LGBTQIA+ experiences/minority groups	different identities (LGBTQIA+)	Inclusion of LGBTQIA+ community	Representation of sexual identities in psychology
3. Racism/doubts/stigma	Challenges in training/practice	Barriers to practice and training programmes	Culture of whiteness. Economic concerns Competency stigma Discrimination/intersectionality
4. Reason/motivation for psychology	Offering a male perspective	Offering a male perspective	Present men as helpers
5. Benefits of psychology	Healing others	Healing and context-based skills	Contextual identity Healing: generational trauma
6. Soft masculinity	Altered masculinities	Caring masculinities	Skills considered “weakness”
7. Adapting psychology	Decolonisation of education Diversity in psychology	Decolonising psychology curriculum Decolonisation of psychology: history, practices, inclusion, and structures	Transformation of practice, training, and education Decolonising psychology
8. Professional identity development	Definition of professional identity	Understanding the professional identity concept	A unified standard for professional helpers
9. Positive influence	Support/supervision	Impact of training/mentoring	Exposure to role models and supervised training
10. Race and Gender in PI	Gender and race in professional context	Role of Gender and race in PI	Ability to connect with the shared lived experiences of other Black people
11. Community psychology lens	Community centred psychology	Holistic/contextual help	Being community grounded

			Self-proclaimed agencies of change
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Table 3.5.1: An illustration of final codes

Phase 3: Search for themes

This active process involved reviewing the coded data to identify areas of similarity and in search of potential themes that are of significance. As Braun and Clarke (2023) indicated that “a theme captures something important about the data in relation to a research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (p.82). The primary focus in this phase is to identify the patterns and relationships between and across the entire data set (Braun & Clarke, 2021; 2023). In this phase, the researcher combined multiple codes to generate themes that specifically address the research questions, and all the data extracts of each theme were collected. The themes were mostly descriptive, in that they explained patterns in the data based on relevancy to the research questions. It was necessary to cross-reference themes to the literature review and reread the literature to recognise potential themes in the dataset. It was important to work with the themes that were most prevalent in the data. The ATLAS.ti software was used to cluster/group all the codes, and a thematic map was considered to structure the data. The themes were prepared for review in the next phase.

Phase 4: Reviewing potential themes

This step entailed cross-referencing themes to the data. The purpose of this phase was to gather all the data that is relevant to each theme. In this phase, a Microsoft Word document was necessary to use the themes as headings and include extracts under each theme. The data that was associated with each theme was carefully read and its relevance to the research questions was thoroughly analysed. After discussions with supervisors and rereading of the themes, existing themes were modified, and further sub-themes were generated to explore the layered meanings in the data.

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes

This phase involved determining the distinction of each theme and what each theme captures in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2021; 2023). An analysis of each theme was necessary to determine what aspect of the data each theme represents, and the relevance of each theme to the broader overall story of the data and to make certain that there is no overlap between the themes (Dawadi, 2021). Braun and Clarke (2023) explained that what is shared and unites the observations in the theme, is ‘meaning’. This is the notion that themes developed during the analysis phase can be understood as interpretative stories since they are built around uniting meaning and carrying diversity but capturing a core idea that unifies diversity. Understanding and developing codes as ‘themes-as-meaning-unified-interpretative-stories’ is to move beyond superficial meanings in the data to develop in-depth understanding, to think creatively and reflexively about the data (Braun & Clarke, 2023).

Phase 6: Producing the report

During this final phase, a complex, compelling, and coherent story of the data is produced to answer the research question logically and meaningfully. A concise and logical account of the data was provided in the format of this thesis, with sufficient evidence that captured the essence of the point the researcher was demonstrating. These findings are descriptively presented in Chapter 4 and an overall description of the findings is included. It was necessary to include a description or introduction of each theme to provide a coherent and logical account of the story that each theme represented.

3.6 Researcher reflexivity

Reflexivity is a concept that is central to the world of qualitative social research and is understood as a way of ensuring rigour and a self-reflection process (Gillam & Gullemin, 2018). As such, my own experiences as a Black male postgraduate psychology student are recognised and will be explored in this section of the report (Gillam & Gullemin, 2018; Townsend, 2013).

Firstly, my primary motive for this study was to provide an opportunity for Black males’ experiences in psychology to be represented in literature since previous studies lacked diversity in their recruitment for participants. It was a difficult and exhaustive process to recruit participants since

the study was focused on a limited number of individuals, namely those who identify as Black males that have completed their master's degree training in psychology at the University of the Western Cape. While the cohort of students selected into a professional Masters programmes remains small (6-10 students per programme) in any given year, the difficulties in accessing a sample for this study, speak to broader considerations regarding the diversity of candidates who apply and are selected to the professional Psychology programmes.

During the interview process, I was able to connect and resonate with the different experiences and viewpoints shared by the participants. As a Black male psychologist in training, I recognise that I shared various social identifiers with the participants. The shared identity in 'colour', career choice, similarities in upbringing experiences e.g., township living, educational system, culture, and family structure, created trust and a connection with participants to share experiences in a manner that is honest, and meaningful to the study. I recognise the positive impact of my identity as a Black male in the psychology profession, to encourage participants to disclose openly because they may have felt that their experiences were represented by an individual who is one of their own and can understand and resonate with personal experiences.

Since the nature of this research is personal, it evoked challenging emotions and experiences within participants that linked to their identity being questioned, negative remarks on their competency as Black psychologists, and racial issues. However, participants were confident and encouraged to express their thoughts in detail. There were times when participants decided to actively conceal information that was sensitive and revealing of their identity, which was embraced and respected. During this process, it was necessary to probe to encourage participants to share willingly and omit information that caused a level of discomfort. Nonetheless, participants were not forced to share unwillingly. It was important to make the participants feel free to utter their thoughts without judgement, and to encourage participants to share experiences that are on a deeper level. However, this strategy tended to prolong the interviews to be over-inclusive, which exhausted time and led to repetition in some of the responses.

Participants also shared experiences that were previously unknown to me, such as encountering racial issues and or having one's professional capacity being cross-examined as a Black professional. In both training and practice, I have not encountered the aforementioned issues; therefore, these were concerning to me as a Black male who is still learning and anchoring myself in professional psychology. However, this was also a learning experience and educational space to find progressive, healthy, and advancing ways to navigate through such shared difficulties. Some participants reflected on their sexual orientation and gender identities; therefore, as an individual who self-identifies as a Black heterosexual male, there were notable challenges for me to navigate due to discourses about sexuality and gender identities being a sensitive subject for me. However, I remained curious and probed further to learn from the participants. This was an insightful engagement and led to new perspectives on the topic of sexuality and gender identities, therefore it was necessary to remain open-minded, and flexible.

As much as my shared identifiers as a Black male psychologist were a benefit to participant disclosure, it was important to acknowledge and evaluate my thoughts and feelings on the content being generated, and to understand my role as a researcher. At times, it was difficult to remain objective without influencing the responses of participants, however, reflexivity was the guiding tool to recognise and suspend my ideas and experiences. A reflexive mindset and critical reflection persistently reminded me to separate my ideas and personal experiences and to treat the interview process as an inquisitive and educational process. To work towards this, I engaged in conversations in supervision, jotted down notes in each supervision, and critically monitored my subjectivity, biases, and personal experiences during the research process.

3.7 *Trustworthiness*

The trustworthiness of a qualitative study is often questioned through the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Gunawan, 2015; Shenton, 2004). To establish quality and confidence in the credibility of the study, frequent debriefing sessions, a pilot study, an audit trail, iterative questioning, and the adoption of well-established research methods were

pursued (Stahl & King, 2020). During the process of the interviews, member checking was necessary to achieve credibility through interpretive validity (Haq et al., 2023). To achieve interpretive validity, I requested feedback and clarifications during the interviewing processes to actively verify if interpretations and inferences made accurately reflected the meaning or experiences of participants. Participants were able to judge and correct the accuracy of the interpreted data during data collection-on the spot. Hand-written summary notes of each interview were kept (Stahl & King, 2020). This was an ongoing process during the interviews across all participants. Furthermore, to establish confirmability, the researcher engaged in supervision and objectively rechecked the presented data to ensure that it is free of any bias and only represents the views or information that was provided by the participants, and that interpretations are not invented by the researcher (Hadi & Closs, 2016). To achieve dependability, themes resulting from the analysis were checked for modifications, accuracy and concordance, and supervision was necessary to evaluate the veracity of the interpretations of the data and to conclude whether the final interpretations produced are supported by the accumulated data (Shenton, 2004). Furthermore, written notes were conducted to verify and reflect on the decisions that led to the findings (Morse et al., 2002). To achieve reliability when implementing exploratory design, the process was honest; transparent; and self-reflexive to execute validity (Brown, 2006).

3.8 Ethics

Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) at the University of the Western Cape (HS21/7/45) (Appendix F). As this study involved students who may have still been registered with UWC, while they complete the thesis components of their degree requirement, permission was also sought from the UWC Registrar's Office (Appendix G). The research adhered to the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 in the process of recruiting potential participants suitable for the research objectives. The purpose of the POPI Act 4 of 2013 is to ensure that all South African institutions responsibly conduct themselves when collecting, processing, storing and sharing another entity's personal information by holding them accountable should they abuse or compromise your personal information in any way (Information Regulator-South Africa, 2023).

The informed consent form (Appendix C) that was distributed to all participants, explained their voluntary participation and their rights to withdraw from the study at any stage. Informed consent involved ongoing engagement with participants about the elements of the research study and what their participation would entail (Arifin, 2018). Consent stipulated the intent to audio record and transcribe the interview. Participants were also informed that aspects of the findings from this study may be presented in research publications. Privacy and confidentiality of the interview environment were upheld through ensuring a safe environment during ongoing interviews. Interviews took place online and the researcher was in a private personal space/room without any interruptions. A debriefing session was conducted after each interview. Referral to psychological services via the UWC counselling centre (CSSS) for registered students, was to be provided if needed. No participants indicated this need. Resource information for other off-site counselling services was provided on the participant information sheet (Appendix B).

Confidentiality is the mutual agreement of the researcher to handle, store and make use of information gathered from participants in ways that are considered appropriate and to confirm that disclosure will not prejudice participants (Arifin, 2018). To uphold anonymity, pseudonyms were assigned to interview transcripts, personal information of participants was edited from transcripts, and limited identifying information was utilised in the reporting of results. Compliance with the Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act and the Data Management Policy of the University of the Western Cape was ensured, to secure the confidentiality and privacy of participants' data.

The onus was on the researcher to store data in encrypted and password-protected devices during data collection and completion of the study; this was prioritised and achieved. All electronic information, audio recordings and transcripts were stored on a password-protected personal computer and kept in a secure file on the device which was exclusively accessible to the primary researcher. Audio recordings were permanently deleted from the original recording devices following the transfer. All the documents remained in a secure folder on the computer, which was only accessible to the primary researcher and supervisors. Data is to be stored for a minimum period of five years, after which it will be discarded.

3.9 *Summary of the chapter*

The current chapter provides a detailed review of the qualitative methods and procedures which were followed in the study, with the quest to investigate and explore the identity and belonging experiences of Black male psychologists who have undertaken training in professional psychology training programmes at a South African university. For this study, the researcher interviewed a total of eight participants and created a comprehensive profile of each participant. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed electronically and manually. Thematic analysis was employed to provide sufficient evidence of each theme and formulated thematic analysis steps were followed to provide a full report. In closing, multiple ethical considerations were identified and adhered to. A thorough self-reflection process was necessary for the researcher to reflect on the actions, feelings, thoughts, and decisions taken during the completion of the research study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4. Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings from the analysis stage. The findings presented in this chapter are aligned with the two research questions which informed and guided the study. In this chapter, the biographical information of the participants is kept anonymous in order to adhere to the POPI Act 4 of 2013. Numbered pseudonyms (i.e. Participant 1) have been used to demarcate the eight different participants and their contributions to the excerpts that follow.

4.1 *The research questions and summative overview of main themes:*

- 1) What are the experiences of Black male psychologists, who have undertaken training in professional master's in psychology training programmes at a South African university, in terms of their professional identity and belonging?
- 2) How do Black male psychologists, who have undertaken training in a professional master's in psychology training programmes at a South African university, develop their professional identities?

The two figures presented below indicate the themes that were generated through the thematic analysis conventions of Braun and Clarke (2023). Themes were derived in relation to the primary research questions. The first main theme (*Figure 4.1.1*) describes the different professional identity experiences of Black psychologists. In this theme, the experiences of Black psychologists are inclusive of the “expected” professional standard; their motivations to practice psychology as a profession, and the challenges that they encounter in psychological practice. The second theme (*Figure 4.1.2*), accounts for “how” Black psychologists come to identify themselves in professional psychology. Supervision, mentoring, and training; community grounding and shared connections; meaningful contributions and decolonising psychology were explained as ways to develop a sound identity as a Black psychologist in the profession of psychology.

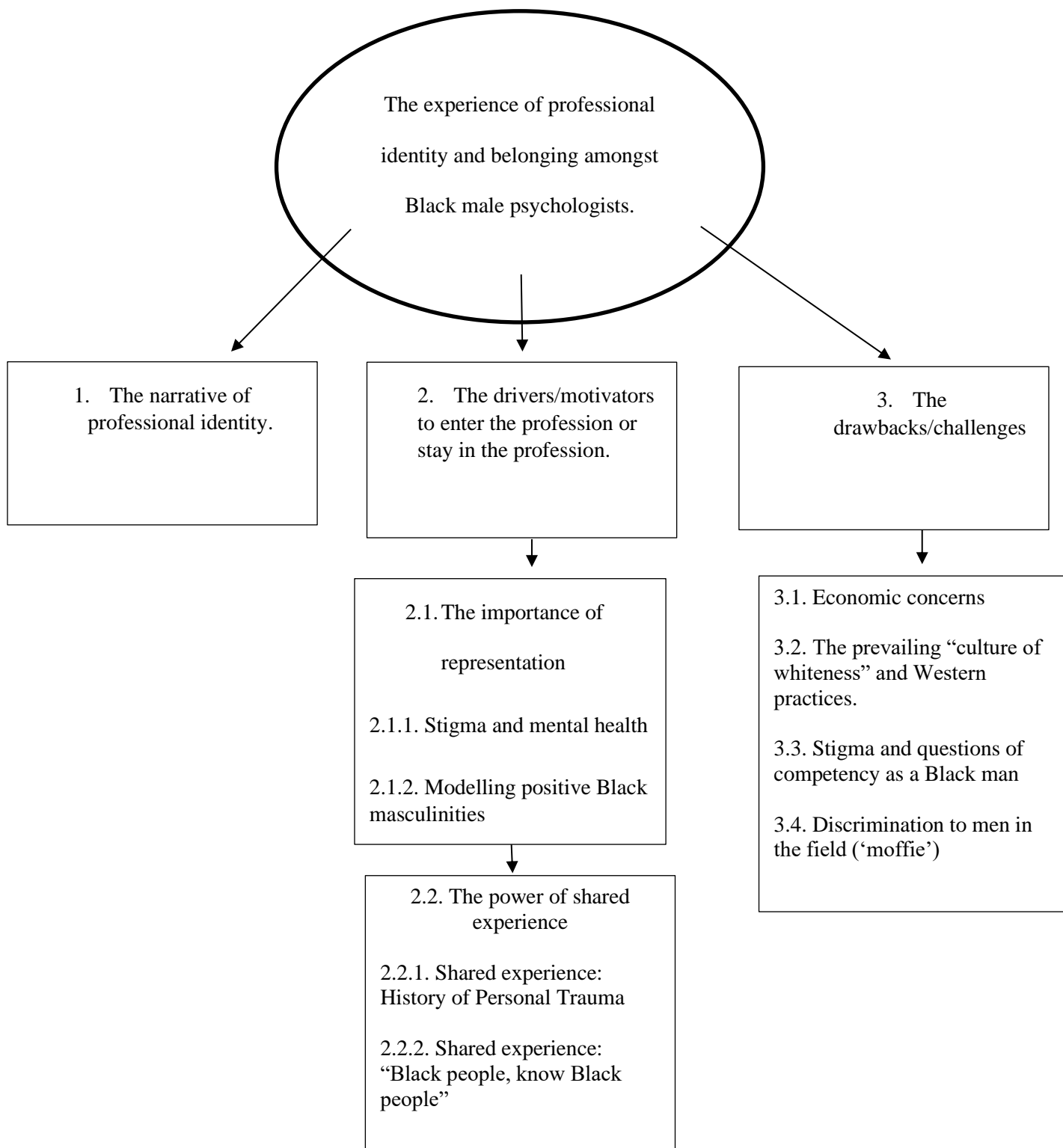


Figure 4.1.1: Flow chart for Question 1: The experience of professional identity and belonging amongst Black male psychologists

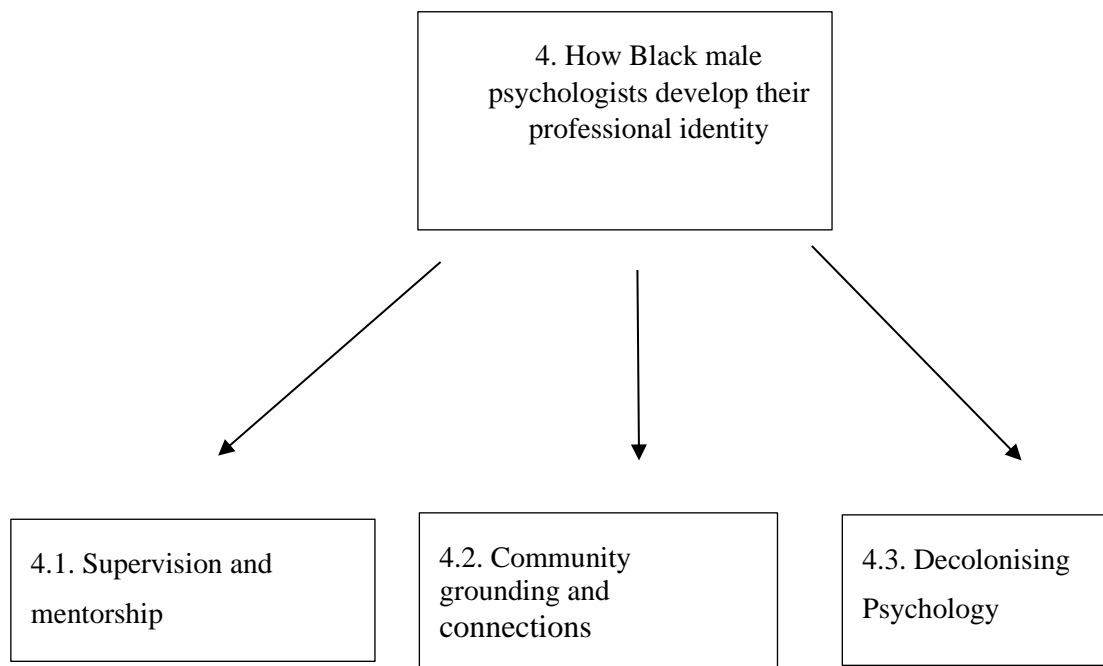


Figure 4.1.2: Flow chart for Question 2: How Black male psychologists develop their professional identity.

4.2 General description of the participants

The final sample consisted of eight participants, who all self-identified as “Black” men in terms of racial identity. The different participants were all asked to share and discuss their lived experiences concerning their identities, sense of belonging, and professional identity formation in the profession of psychology during graduate training and practice. The participants were all registered as either intern psychologists, or qualified psychologists in independent practice, representing the fields of research, clinical, and counselling psychology. The years of professional experience ranged from less than 12 months to 23 years, while the ages of the interviewed participants varied from 24 to 53 years, at the time of the interviews. Participants self-identified as heterosexual, cisgender, or as queer. Participants for the study could have been based anywhere in South Africa, however, the majority of participants continued to reside in Cape Town, Western Cape. Further information regarding the participant demographics is noted in Table 4.2.1 below.

Table 4.2.1: Participant demographics

Participant	Age	First language	Racial identity	Years of professional practice	Registration category	MA in Psychology or Still completing thesis
Participant 1	53	English	Coloured	6 years	Clinical psychologist	Master of Arts in Psychology
Participant 2	25	English	Coloured	3 years	Research psychologist (internship)	Still completing thesis
Participant 3	24	English	Black African	4 years	Clinical psychologist	Master of Arts in Psychology
Participant 4	undisclosed	Shona	Black African	8 years	Research psychologist	Master of Arts in Psychology
Participant 5	42	Afrikaans	Coloured	4 years	Intern Clinical psychologist	Still completing thesis
Participant 6	32	English	Coloured	2023- to complete	Research psychologist	Still completing thesis
Participant 7	51	Afrikaans	Coloured	23 years	Counselling psychologist	Master of Arts in Psychology
Participant 8	29	Afrikaans	Coloured	4 years	Research psychologist (UWC) and Clinical psychologist	Master of Arts in Psychology

4.3 Research findings

4.3.1 The experience of professional identity and belonging amongst Black male psychologists

In the findings, four major themes were generated, and these were linked to the two primary research questions that guided the study in the data collection and analysis processes. The following section represents the data from the four generated themes with the supported quotes from the participant's shared experiences.

4.3.1.1 The narrative of professional identity

This theme focuses on how participants define professional identity as a concept, and the ways that this concept manifests for Black male psychologists in professional practice. It was imperative to begin the interviews with a focus question on “professional identity” to evaluate the participants' understanding of the phenomenon, before delving into a deeper exploration.

Participants 5 and 7 defined professional identity as a way in which you practice within professional boundaries that are guided by ethical principles. The participants stated that developing a sense of identity as a clinical or counselling psychologist is guided by personal values, ethical regulations, continued learning, and the way you engage with clients. However, the participants challenged the notion of professional identity by placing professionals under the pressure of performance standards.

“To work in a certain way that ... you treat other people I think in psychology because of the ethical standards because you need to be consistent and to work in such a way, but I think it also puts so much pressure on you as a professional to work in that standard of ethics. (Participant 5)

“[...] people have this notion about professional identity and what a psychologist should be and when they speak about professional identity it has a lot to do with the frame and boundaries, etc. If I look at that, it comes a lot from your psychodynamic and psychoanalytic kind of things of ... frame it must be in the same office the same time once a week kind of sessions and the therapist is a clean

slate, etc. That's the notion of a psychologist with that kind of professional identity and we should always keep that kind of identity and boundaries". (Participant 7)

Participant 7 shared a similar idea with regards to maintaining professional boundaries and that is the expected professional identity in which a psychologist operates during the ongoing therapy and acts only within boundaries, i.e., through maintaining a blank slate. He further challenges the notion of professional identity and states that a psychologist should make the therapeutic process experiential through a genuine interaction that involves displaying vulnerability and emotions from the therapist. **Participant 5** presented with a similar idea, that a psychologist should incorporate their personal being in their professional approach. Both these participants questioned the idea of objectivity, as this idea may limit the helping process and ignore the humanity of the psychologist.

"We expect the client in front of us to be vulnerable, but we are saying a therapist cannot be vulnerable and then people equate it to breaking down. But if you empathize with somebody and you are very receptive of what they are telling you can you really not shed a tear?" (Participant 7)

"I think it is more about having your own values and not just upholding ethics but upholding those values and treating people with respect. [...] the way that I interact with people and kind of how I speak with my colleagues. What I basically want to say is, my personal values become my professional identity [...]" (Participant 5)

Participant 1 also alluded to the notion of congruence in personal being and professional approach as a professional psychologist. He reported that professional identity encompasses how you consistently represent yourself as a figure of mental health and highlighted the importance of how others view you as a psychologist. The importance of maintaining professionalism as a psychologist even outside of the therapeutic space and holding ethics as a guideline was reiterated.

"Okay, so professional identity encompasses how I present myself, how people see me when they see me for the first time, how they see me when they see me subsequent times after that, how they see me outside the scope of being in a therapeutic setting". "[...] So, your professional identity is not being a psychologist at the moment, in the therapeutic space, but it's about how you as a person, how

you live your life. Psychology isn't – what I – and you know, I think Carl Rogers also says that “you're not a psychologist in your therapeutic space, you're a psychologist from the moment you open your eyes to the moment you go to sleep at night”. There shouldn't be a difference in the space and outside the space. You should be the same all the way through”. (Participant 1)

Participant 8 stated that professional identity is the competence that a professional is expected to embody and that this competency is a guide for clinical practice. The participant also indicated that as a psychologist you need to obtain foundational skills that warrant you to be a qualified psychologist, but that professional identity itself may be complicated, as it is imposed on trainees, suggesting that this remains an area that needs to be negotiated in the broader career development.

“Okay so professional identity for me really is where you situate with yourself within your profession, right, and this whole thing of having to assimilate in a particular profession because profession holds, ... a particular way of being or particular set of values that you have to dispose as a particular professional, right? So, there are difficult practices and standards, and all of this surrounds your sense of professional identity and where you are at in terms of what is acceptable in the profession but also what is not acceptable. So, if I say I am a psychologist, there are particular things that I have to... espouse because that warrants me being a psychologist, like clinical practice and having a competency for helping people and the value of research and all those things but it's a bit of a complicated thing because at times I feel like professional identities are imposed on those studying it”. (Participant 8)

Overall, the participants shared various explanations of what constitutes professional identity in the profession of psychology in practice and training. Based on shared experiences, professional identity is a combination of what guides professionals in the process of performing their duties as professional psychologists in practice and training, this may include personal values, ethical principles, professional competency, personality, outstanding professional behaviour, and boundaries.

4.3.1.2 The drivers/motivators to enter the profession or stay in the profession

The second theme further probed into how participants come to develop a sense of identity and motivation in the field of psychology, as Black male psychologists. The participants shared various explanations of motives that led to developing a sense of “identity and belonging” in the field of psychology. The distinguished two sub-themes that emerged were the following (1) Importance of representation; and 2) The power of shared experience.

4.3.1.2.1 Importance of representation

Representation and public visibility were major drivers for entering the profession. This subtheme represents the different ideas shared by participants in the motivation for representing Black individuals in the profession of psychology. For **Participant 2**, the socialised image of a professional psychologist, based on the history of psychology theorists, is a heterosexual “White man”. As such, he noted the importance of psychology practitioners being inclusive of ‘people of colour’ and other sexual identities.

“There are a lot of older White men who are the founding fathers, like they say, of psychology. We rarely see any people of colour doing massive work in psychology, even though we know there are massive contributions in the field by people of colour, but they didn’t recognise them. So, the idea of a psychologist, if you walk up to anyone and speak to them, and you ask them...what does a psychologist look like to you? I’m sure they would say...it’s a White guy [...]. So, to have people of colour come into the space, and also women, and not necessarily just Cisgender women, but also maybe transwomen in gender non-conforming persons, each one of those people, they have their own lived experiences”. (Participant 2)

Public visibility was largely linked to challenging the stigma of Black men, spreading a positive story for Black men, and offering mentorship. The importance of representation of Black individuals in professional psychology was reflected in two sub-themes: 1) Stigma and mental health, and 2) Modelling positive Black masculinities.

4.3.1.2.1.1 *Stigma and mental health*

The participants shared various ideas of challenging the contemporary stigma of Mental health care in Black communities since it remains a restricted practice. There is a need for Black people to be present in mental health spaces, to challenge the notions that mental health is a taboo subject. Therefore, the addition/increase of Black male psychologists is highlighted in this section.

According to **Participant 7**, Black psychologists remain underrepresented in the field of psychology, and there is a need to address this gap and produce psychologists who can address the contextual stigma in mental health and speak to different cultural experiences.

“The difficulty in psychology, I think even having Black psychologists not even only speaking about females, is that traditionally psychologists were a lot of White females and you do need it. But the stigma around mental health and especially with Black people so therefore you do need more Black psychologists within the different cultural experiences and there is still a place for psychologists within all of that and that it’s okay if we see psychologists [as Black people] and the only people who can do that [for Black people] it is Black psychologists.” (Participant 7)

Participant 3 also reported that being an ambassador for Black men is rewarding and it is work that is needed to normalise psychological services amongst Black men who are strong believers of traditional norms that do not support showing emotions. He implied that mental health needs to be promoted as health that is not attached to gender but psychological issues that can be found across the genders. The key role for Black men is to promote mental health for other Black men and to act as mentors in this regard.

“I think my unique contribution is being an ambassador of mental, mental health amongst men. It’s also trying to draw together deferring sort of like, a lot of the time men and women like to view themselves as different entities, polar opposite ends, when in fact that’s not the case, and I think my, my job or my role is to make us realize that as well, that we’re fighting the same battle, mental health affects both genders”. [...] “ When they come [Black men] and then they see a Black male doing this kind of job, and them being motivated to work on themselves is also quite, quite rewarding,

because it basically allows the new and despite all the cultural expectations, despite all that they've learned over the many years of their life, they're still willing to engage with this process is also quite rewarding, because it makes other Black men less ashamed of going into this process, and I think for me personally, what has also made it work is uhm exactly what you said, "indlela engiziphatha ngayo", like acting in a very esteemed manner, being quite courteous, being respectful to other people". (Participant 3)

Participants 2 and 3 shared a similar idea in reporting that they have the power and opportunity as Black psychologists to empower Black communities and provide education on mental health issues to make psychological assistance or knowledge accessible in Black communities. They both drew on the issue of mental health stigma, suggesting that psychology services tend to be linked to negative connotations and that such labelling leads to a lack of knowledge for people to be aware of the psychological issues that affect them.

"[As a psychologist] you, you have the ability to educate the community. I think that's a very, very powerful thing". [...] "In a Black community, there's never really a big understanding of mental health, and it's almost always stigmatised. [For Black people] if you're going to see a psychologist, there's something wrong with you. I know this has been worn out over time this conversation, but it's still very true, but any...in this field as a Black person, you acquire the knowledge of mental health, and share this with your community, and normalise psychological issues". There's depression, there's anxiety, whether you want to accept it or not it's a reality that people go through stuff, whether it's labelled as depression or anxiety [...]. (Participant 2)

"[...] It's very easy for you to criticise or stigmatise something when you don't know it. Part of the reason why I went into psychology was to bring light because I genuinely believe that whether you're schizophrenic, or you have a personality disorder, or whatever the case is, you're still as human as the rest of us, and you deserve an equal opportunity to be heard, to be taken care of, to be respected, and that is what sort of drove me into being a therapist. So, that I can sort of be an advocate for individuals who are stigmatised". (Participant 3)

Participant 7 presented a solution in response to the quote above, he stated that Black professionals should be voluntarily involved in NGO work especially in Black communities to provide education in mental health issues. *“I think importantly for all Black male psychologists it’s to basically do a lot of advocacies around the demystifying of mental health and especially amongst Black man and we have a huge role to play around that and we should do that”*; *“I still do some NGO work ... community-based work. [...] and as Black men it can be about giving back in different contexts and building networks in different industries”*.

The different participants presented arguments that are intended to challenge the stigma that surrounds mental health in the Black community. Participants pointed out that, mental health is not appropriately promoted in Black communities, hence the stigma is due to little knowledge of the topic. In these discussions, Black men were encouraged to play a role in initiatives such as mental health NGOs to bring enlightenment of mental health for Black communities and change the narrative of psychological services for Black men, as Black men themselves, through such community outreach projects.

4.3.1.2.1.2 *Modelling positive Black masculinities*

In this subtheme, the participants highlighted the necessity to facilitate the support of Black men as helpers in professional psychology; and to change the view of Black men as the perpetrator and instigator for adversity in society.

Participants 1 and **5** describe how they lean into their differences and may actively use their race and gender within the therapeutic process. Their presence in the helping space challenges the view of Black men who are usually viewed as perpetrators in society. **Participant 5** explained the importance of offering a corrective emotional experience, by engaging in healing and productive conversations as a Black man, and as a Black male psychologist.

“I think that from a male perspective, you're coming with something different to what females are going to offer. As what you're going to have on the converse, where a female's perspective is going to come with something different than what a male can actually bring to psychology. I think

what I bring is, I bring the power of a male who is usually dominant in society and is usually the perpetrator in society, what I'm bringing is I'm bringing that difference". (Participant 1)

"I used "race" in the therapy room, I've used my gender I think especially when I was working with gender based-violence cases for them to experience an emotionally corrective experience, especially when you work in a population where there is so much poverty, and you work in a Coloured⁴ or Black community". (Participant 5)

To add, **Participant 7** problematised the negative identity and stigma that is automatically attached to a Black male, where he expressed that being a Black male psychologist is to offer a strong Black male voice and to be visible in addressing major social issues such as gender-based violence, substance use and addiction for Black communities.

"I bring the male perspective, remember males in this country are still seen as "gender-based violence" (perpetrators) you need a strong male voice in that and especially if it's from a strong male voice and I think the people who can bring that strong Black male voice is Black psychology males. And we have to play a huge role in terms of that ... in terms of violence ... substance, even in terms of addiction a lot of Black males are ... with addictive behaviours especially substance abuse so we need that because most of those Black males who are now psychologists come from communities with those kinds of issues around and therefore their role is quite clear." (Participant 7)

Furthermore, **Participant 1** emphasised the key roles for Black male psychologists to play for Black men who were victims of apartheid in Black communities, and the women and children suffering these consequences through the abuse of men who are attempting to regain their power and masculinity. This participant explained that Black male psychologists have access to vulnerable communities where these men are stationed and are well-positioned to assist with the trauma and restore dignity.

⁴ Coloureds are considered a multiracial ethnic group who are descendent from a "White" and "Black" or Asian ancestry as officially defined by the South African government from 1950 to 1991 (Van der Ross, 2015)

“Remember, this is a patriarchal system that we come from. This is where the male was dominant, the male was the leader of the household. Now the powers have been taken away from him, and the power for him to have over the woman is taken away from him. So how, if you think of this double, sort of double whammy that came, the man is even left with less power than what he had before. This is why I think, is where our research comes from, this is why we have the power struggle when it comes to men abusing women and children. They have the sense of the domination that needs to be inflicted on everyone else. So, we need more males in this profession to be able to deal with these challenges. I'm talking about coming down to Khayelitsha, Mitchell's Plain, Gugulethu and Lavender Hill. These are the areas that we need to get to. These are the areas where we need to get to men and be able to sit with men and have them understand that it doesn't mean because of what has happened in the past, reflects what they get to be in the future”. **(Participant 1)**

In the previous quotes, the participants stressed the importance of becoming motivators, mentors, and helpers for other Black men, children, and women who are affected by GBV in Black communities, to offer an alternate, empowering experience of a Black man. While **Participant 8** agrees with this responsibility to change the image of Black men in society, he also identified the practical challenges and sensitivities in occupying this space, and to be present in helping women who have been abused by Black men, while reflecting the image of the perpetrator.

“..., you know relinquishing some of the powers [as a Black psychologist] in order to protect some people and this is mainly why in the practice where I work with women who have been abused. Gender-based violence is quite prevalent in our country. Me being a Black man sitting with a woman who has been abused by someone who fits the description exactly like me uhm... but also having your dignity taken away by a person like me but also having to restore that dignity also with a person like me, that is something that I am currently struggling with in terms of helping so there's a lot of rifts, a lot of resistances and difficulties it comes with helping woman, especially as a Black man”.

(Participant 8)

4.3.1.2.2 *The power of shared experience*

This second theme in the area of drivers for the profession, includes the matter of shared personal experience. This was captured as either a motivator to enter the profession or as a factor that supported or positively facilitated psychology practice. In this theme, shared experience was outlined as either a shared history of personal trauma that resonated with client cases or research topics; as well as the shared identification with Black communities, and the knowing and trust that emerges from a shared group identification.

4.3.1.2.2.1 *Shared Experience: history of personal trauma*

Firstly, participants reflected on the role of past trauma or hurt, as well as contextual realities that motivated them to enter the profession. Participants reflected on the societal and racial trauma of Apartheid, as well as the need to represent the mental health issues and experiences of individuals from the Black communities and other minority groups like the LGBTQIA+ community.

Participant 8 explained that in becoming a clinical psychologist he was largely influenced by the context of his environment and upbringing, particularly the identity of being an activist in a community in the Cape Flats. Psychology became a space in which he identified with advocating for poor and low-income communities and aligned with his need to understand how people are affected by their social adversities.

“I always had an interest in the social issues of [name of place]. I was quite active during my high school years in terms of, you know, activism for various reasons, but I needed something to explain what was going on at the time. It felt impulsive and I was following the crowd [...]. It was an impulsive decision really through activism. [...] This is what I want, I want to study psychology, especially in terms of people’s experiences in low-income countries, more specifically, in communities such as [name of place] and what they go through”. (**Participant 8**)

Participant 2 proudly identifies as queer. He reported that his sexual orientation had an influence on his motivation to pursue psychology as a career choice and to represent the Black minority queer groups. Identification as a queer individual was a motivation to change the negative

narratives about persons who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community, as experienced first-hand in his own personal history.

“I think my sexual orientation had a massive influence on wanting to do psychology; I do identify as a homosexual male, but my family is very conservative in the sense that a man should be with a woman, the transgender thing is all a sin. [...] “I would say my sexual orientation was definitely a factor because I grew up in a community where, if you were anything LGBTQ+, you're bullied, you're stigmatised, you're discriminated against, you were called names and all these things. [...] I wanted to go into clinical, and one of my goals was to counsel the LGBTQ+ youth at schools, [...]. I find it so unfair and disheartening that because of someone's characteristic, they are treated very differently and unfairly, and I think it's just sad”. (Participant 2)

Furthermore, **Participant 2** reported on the practicality that he possesses as a Black male psychologist, who identifies as queer, to individuals who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community. He implied that if help comes from a professional who subscribes to the same social identity or group membership i.e., LGBTQIA+, then it may foster a closer connection and understanding.

“Being a queer person of colour in a professional setting that I think adds value, in the sense of, I can speak to certain minority groups (LGBTQ), their lived experiences. And now being a person of colour, I can speak to a certain minority group. Like that, that intersectionality of being Black and queer...I can speak more than a Whitest person who is a professional trying to do research within the community [of Black people and those who are part of the LGBTQ-community], as...there's going to be the disconnect, but I feel like I would be able to build a better rapport with people of colour, and just get a bit more rich and raw information and data...”. (Participant 2)

While personal experiences can be a motivator for practice, they may also create additional pressures for the psychology practitioner. For example, **Participant 3** highlighted the issue of racism that his clients report: *“Racism is something that is a challenge for me, [...] when I encounter racism, for instance, the first part of me, the activist part of me wants to come out, but in a therapeutic context, that part of me can't come”.* (Participant 3)

As an activist who advocates for racial justice, it required great effort for him to prioritise the needs of the client and not let his personal bias hinder the therapeutic process.

The participants indicated the importance of being able to personally resonate with a patient or individual's experiences to offer healing and sensitive understanding in the helping process. This shared understanding was largely due to past experiences based on race, sexuality, and gender. However, it was also noted that the psychologists in this study had to negotiate difficult triggers in their professional work, like racial discrimination.

4.3.1.2.2.2 Shared Experience: “Black people, know Black people”

In addition to personal experience that motivated entry into the profession, participants also spoke about the richness of shared experience and identification in facilitating a meaningful psychology practice. Participants shared responses in possessing the fundamental experiences to provide help to the communities with whom they can identify with, in terms of background, race, gender, social issues, and language.

Participant 4 stressed that, there is a need for Black male psychologists to raise their voices on matters of mental health for Black people, as they ‘know Black people better’. This participant explained that Black psychologists are at an advantage in effectively working with Black communities since they have the contextual understanding and are better placed to echo the experiences of Black people in comparison to White psychologists.

“I think we need Black people [Black male psychologists], especially males that go to the communities. I think they understand. Understanding and knowing the context is important. I think they've [White psychologists and other races] seen clients who go to them to say, “I have a calling” and then don't know how to deal with them. So Black people, know Black people”. (**Participant 4**)

Similarly, for **Participant 7**, his need to be involved in psychology related to the message of the transformation of psychology, to address the trauma and damage that was imposed on the victims of the apartheid era. His message emphasised the importance of mental health in Black communities

to address generational trauma for Black men. He further emphasised the need for Black psychologists to be invested in this role, as they possess the first-hand fundamental ‘lived experience’ to help Black individuals who struggle post-apartheid.

“On a psychological level we haven’t really moved on and I can see it now even working with students at a university, [...] we can see the inter-generational trauma, especially on racism that is still there. And we cannot change that with laws and policies; we have to look at the psychological level of addressing that and for me who has to play that role is psychology, but then also a Black psychologist has to do that because I can’t see that a “White” can, not that they can’t help in the process but I think because of the fundamental experiences and living experiences I think they don’t have that and therefore a Black psychologist has to take that role.”. (Participant 7)

Participant 7 reported that Black representation for Black students is a rewarding activity. He explained that Black students at the university where he works feel sincerely represented by a Black male psychologist whom they can identify with racially and through familiarity of fundamental experiences and background.

“I look at my current role that I have to address a lot of students on different kinds of issues whether it is from racism or gender-based violence and mental health and for them it is coming from a Black male that in itself has an impact. Because it was a White male, and I am making an example, it is different because a lot of Black students, and we hear this, is that if it comes from a Black male, it lands differently, and I have seen this in different contexts but that for is what is rewarding [...] and that for me is the kinds of benefits and rewards of being a Black male psychologist in this country”.
(Participant 7)

For **Participant 2**, the promise of shared experience was often embedded in the physical appearance of a Black psychologist. In the following excerpt, he refers to the “Black on Black” experience, where as a Black individual, you may feel more at ease when you discern that your experiences are more relatable to the Black psychologist you are consulting with.

“If you see someone in this professional setting that looks the same like you, you will immediately feel more comfortable opening up, because you know, okay, this person will maybe not have a complete understanding, but at least a much better understanding of where I'm coming from, what my experience is...they might even be able to relate to some of my experiences more than a person different to what I look like will be able to. So, I think that relation can be built by having more people of colour in professional spaces”. **(Participant 2)**

This understanding of shared experience and the ability to connect was also embedded with various economic and class-based assumptions, as illustrated in the following excerpt:

[...] “So, if you are someone maybe living in Manenberg or Khayelitsha, a disadvantaged area...and you go see a White psychologist that grew up in Sea Point, Green Point or affluent area, there's going to be a hindrance to open up completely to their psychologist because they do not come from the same experience, they cannot relate to you on the same level”. **(Participant 2)**

Overall, on this issue (theme), participants shared similar views on Black identity relations playing an imperative role for Black psychologists. They explained the ability to be able to connect with individuals by virtue of possessing a similar background which encompasses indistinguishable conditions, and context.

4.3.1.3 The drawbacks and challenges

While the previous theme explored the factors that motivated entry into the profession or sustained involvement, participants also shared challenges and drawbacks related to their presence as a Black male psychologist. Four sub-themes were identified: i) funding-related issues in training and practice; ii) the prevailing ‘culture of whiteness’ and the minimising of African experiences in psychology modalities and diagnostic criteria; iii) the “doubts”, stigma and questions of professional competency as a Black man; and iv) discrimination and negative stereotypes in the area of sexual identity.

4.3.1.3.1 Economic concerns

This theme emerged as an indication of concerns highlighted by the participants regarding economic problems, that stemmed from lack of funding during training, or in using the qualification of psychology as a public status symbol since psychology remains a “prestigious” career and a “privilege” in society. **Participants 1 and 7** shared that a possible reason for the shortage of Black psychologists in the country was related to a lack of financial funding for trainees in psychology.

“Initially when I finished school, I didn't study immediately, because of social challenges, or family issues. I never had funding to do studies, I started working immediately”. (**Participant 1**)

“The difficulty is that the struggle to find Black males to come through in psychology is the one: if you look at it just economically Black people in this country if they need to get a degree ... coming into the degree we look to improving the economic status ... but what gets me there quicker if I study accounting and study it for 3 to 4 years and I work but with psychology I must study for 6 years and do a community service [...]” (**Participant 7**)

For **Participant 1**, access to higher education was delayed due to financial constraints and the need to work, while for **Participant 7**, Black individuals studying at a university may be motivated by improving the economic status of their family and therefore prefer shorter courses and seeking work immediately after undergraduate graduation. The pathway to qualifying as a psychologist is too time-consuming and therefore not a feasible option.

Participant 4 reiterated the issues of not being funded and not having the necessary resources during your training which can negatively impact progress and studies. He mentioned that historically as a Black individual, you are disadvantaged in possessing educational resources that are necessary for learning.

“But I think the struggles of resources. I think that is huge. Again, you can be aware, and I think we didn't have a laptop [...]. I think, in comparison to other people, I think if I look back, I was struggling in terms of the resources that I needed. For like - I didn't get funded as well, unfortunately,

... I think it is a historical problem whereby Black people don't have a lot. So, but it is [resources] important towards your professional development". (**Participant 4**)

While financial constraints were a major barrier to access to training, the promise of financial remuneration post-training, was also another barrier noted by **Participant 5**. He problematises that, the Black representation of psychology is often impacted by "status" and a financial benefit which impedes the values and reasons for being in the field of psychology to play a pivotal role in the Black culture. He emphasised the importance of remaining grounded in the reasons he became a psychologist.

*"I think the image [of Black representation] that I currently get, there is very much status [social status of being a Black psychologist] ... Like I said "prestige" and "status". I think that currently ... especially what I have noticed is that interns and community service that I have spoken to who are actually friends and colleagues who are also Black and Coloured are also recognising the status and the privileges. I think we are starting to have conversations about it in a sense ... to revisit the reasons why we actually entered this process and are we actually now also conforming to what psychology was at the beginning? It is imperative to have conversations in deconstructing what it is about psychology that draws us as Black men to the field". (**Participant 5**)*

Participant 5 problematises the given image and current presentation of Black men in psychological practice, linked to the challenges in having to navigate the privileges and the prestige of psychology as a career. He maintains the importance of remaining reflective and authentic to the motivators that bring Black men into the field, to offer psychology practices in ways that address the history of psychology and make a positive impact.

4.3.1.3.2 The prevailing "culture of whiteness" and Western practice

Various participants introduced the topic of decolonising psychology. Decolonising of psychology means making psychology adaptable and plausible to the issues of indigenous people and moving away from viewing Westernised knowledge as the only modality to help Black African people. The respondents highlighted that an exclusive Eurocentric understanding of psychology

misrepresents the experiences of Black African people since in developing treatments for mental disorders there was no consideration of the experiences of Black Africans to understand mental health disorders within their context.

Participants 5 and 8 explained that, in developing a sense of belonging and professional identity in the field of psychology, they have often been confronted with “pronounced whiteness” of practicing psychology. They explained that this sense of whiteness has often led to questioning their belonging in the psychology workspace.

“[...] where I did my community service was predominantly White and also the other professionals were mostly White that was kind of also quite challenging; there is an example that I can use where I was actually challenged or discriminated because of my race and colour [...]

(Participant 5)

“... Psychology has been practiced by White men in particular and this is the historical demographic of it all and I hold a different view in terms of that it’s not necessarily the White people that made up psychology for me but it’s a culture of whiteness that seems to foster the sense of belonging for White men in this profession and something that I currently struggle with today, it fluctuates based on the different spaces that I currently find myself in but I find today is that certain spaces in psychology make you feel like you don’t belong because of the pronounced whiteness not White people but whiteness so you can feel like you do not belong in this particular network of people or this working place in psychology, that makes it hard for me to know that I belong, [...] the profession has been colluding with whiteness [...]” **(Participant 8)**

For **Participant 5** the dominance of “whiteness” in the work environment created a range of gender and race-related challenges, where he reports experiences of racism and discrimination.

Participant 8 also acknowledged that his sense of professional belonging shifts according to the spaces that he is in, however, it was the training he received at his institution that assisted him in developing a contextual understanding of psychology that is community-oriented. He chooses not to surround himself with colleagues who subscribe to a similar perspective of practicing psychology.

The embeddedness of White supremacy in psychology was also interrogated by **Participant 7**, who reflected on the problematic naming of geographical spaces where psychology training takes place. He highlighted the damaging and exclusionary nature of keeping infrastructure that was named after individuals who played a key role in perpetuating racial and social injustices during apartheid.

“So, the point is that if you look at the concept of it [apartheid] and how it was developed was in the psychology department at a South African university - it was a psychologist, I mean there are archives at Stellenbosch University where those kinds of things are pictured out in terms of what they did therefore we had Wilcock, the other psychologists and ... Verwoerd in terms of the development of that [apartheid]. It is only ‘til recently that in the psychology department; for example, at a South African university the psychology building used to be called “Wilcock’s building” and it was named after Wilcock who played quite a huge role ... a psychologist with Verwoerd who developed apartheid ... in terms of the concept and how it eventually played out and it’s only recently that a South African university, I think two years ago where the building name was changed. Part of it was that we cannot build on the name of Wilcock’s when he was so instrumental in developing that [apartheid], they developed it in terms of ... especially in the psychological assessments; in terms of psychometrics were based along racial lines there within the psychology department in a South African university”. (**Participant 7**)

Participant 2 stated that it is crucial that training in psychology has a cultural context (“African or South African context”) and that this contextual understanding of psychology is applied in clinical work rather than adopting a Western approach to make sense of a case that requires contextual understanding. He problematised that training programmes require Western approaches as a standard method to conceptualise patients and this often takes away the rich understanding of client cases and the opportunity to help the client by applying sustainable methods.

“You know there were certain times even when we had to do presentations in training that certain people from other cultures couldn’t understand what a client was presenting with because it seemed more Westernised in explanation, but the case presenting issue was more like a kind of an

African sense. So, it is important to have that understanding [psychology in an African context] and have more training of culture specifically within the South African context”. (Participant 2)

Furthermore, **Participants 2** and 5 problematised the applicability of Eurocentric theoretical content. A call was made to include indigenous knowledge in the diagnostics of mental disorders, to gain a comprehension of the mental disorders within the African context. **Participant 2** indicated that African family systems present with different dynamics and contexts, therefore interventions that work for Western culture may not be plausible within an African context.

“UWC, where we have been trained in a sense ... is not to discard the DSM but we’re kind of understanding the DSM through deconstructing it in a critical kind of manner [decolonising the DSM, to add indigenous knowledge for understanding] ...and using critical thinking about certain disorders so I think being exposed in that kind of training [training that includes indigenous knowledge] I think that’s so much important” (Participant 5)

For me, the only challenge is the ability to relate wholeheartedly to a lot of the theory in psychology because it's very Westernised” [...] The Western understanding of mental health, yes, not all of is bad, there are a lot of valuable parts to it, but us giving that information and just learning it...I struggle with that because I just feel like the experiences of African people were never considered when these things were written down [...] “There's a lot of valuable information there (Western knowledge) ...but the context is very different and the welfare effects [...] (Participant 2)

Participant 2 also reported that certain Western explanations of mental disorders pathologise African experiences that are of the essence and normalised in the African context. He draws on the examples of depression and schizophrenia, to illustrate the value of Black psychologists in providing an alternate perspective to client distress.

“I think for me personally being part of a non-White community, it adds a whole different lens to how we perceive things. For example, I know with the diagnosis of Major Depressive Disorder, that's very similar to some conscious calling to become a Sangoma- [traditional healer]. That was never considered by Westerners. That's in a sense problematic. A lot of African spiritual

experiences will be deemed pathological by Western standards, but to us, it's not pathological, we know that this is just an experience It's a process someone's going through. It's not to say that this person has a mental illness, or this person is not well, ...if someone is speaking to the spiritual leader and hearing voices, or seeing visions, I'm very much convinced that the Westerner will probably turn that as schizophrenia or something". (Participant 2)

Overall, the participants shared their opinions on the importance of introducing African literature in both training and practice to increase patient care and psychological assistance that is suitable and practical to the needs of African people. Therefore, decolonising psychology, a task often given to Black psychologists, is being inclusive of indigenous knowledge and providing contextual understanding in the treatment processes.

4.3.1.3.3 Stigma and questions of competency as a Black man

This theme describes the negative social judgements that are deposited on Black male psychologists who chose psychology as a career. Participants shared their experiences in navigating the question marks of their professional abilities, brought onto them by assumptions and stigma based on race and/or gender. In terms of sex and gender, both **Participants 7** and **3** acknowledged that psychology is perceived as a female-dominated field.

"You still have a majority of ... in the profession of social workers, psychologists are mostly females and partly males because it's a profession that is considered to that of an emotional kind of profession, then they say that's more of a field for females. If I look at the year that I trained, we were 10 students, and I was the only male in the class, and that kind of thing plays a role and it does have an impact in terms of that". (Participant 7)

"I still think the prestige [about psychology] is still there, it's just that individuals view men as less competent". A lot of women have contributed to psychology since those times when men dominated, it's still quite a prestigious career, it's just that men almost have to work twice as hard to prove their worth, whereas women also have to work hard to prove their worth, but it feels like it's their field for a good reason.

For **Participant 7**, males have been under-represented in the training cohorts for allied health professions, as psychology tends to be viewed as an ‘emotional profession’ that is more naturally better suited for female candidates. **Participant 3** echoes this concern about competence, stating that men have to work relatively harder to prove their legitimacy and value. While these gendered concerns were noted by some participants, there was a much stronger and more pervasive response about experiences of stigma and questions of competency when related to one’s identity as a Black psychology professional.

Participant 8 reported on the challenge of Black male psychologists being racially profiled in the field of psychology and only recognised as “Black Psychologists” but not as professionals who earned the competency to be in the field.

”In terms of race, definitely... I have experienced micro-aggressions of racism; I have experienced exclusion [...] So, in terms of race there are some challenges that I have experienced, that made me feel like I don’t belong, [in training] I’m being introduced by my racial identity not even my [personal] identity just the colour of my skin, that’s the very first thing that I am being introduced by the rest just follows no matter how smart I am, how in tune I am, how dedicated I am. It’s just that it’s the first thing that people see, so that is a particular problem that I have experienced personally as a new-generation researcher or clinical psychologist and in my training as well. So, racism is a big thing”. (**Participant 8**)

He explained that repeated microaggressions lead to issues in developing a sense of belonging in the field of psychology. This sense of racial discrimination was shared by **Participant 2**, who outlines that the proficiency of Black psychologists is constantly evaluated based on their race. He explained that even in Black communities, people feel more comfortable consulting with a “White” professional since they are more convinced of the competency skills of a White professional relative to a Black professional.

“What I’ve experienced within my own community when people go to a counsellor, or a psychologist or even a medical doctor and especially a White doctor, [...], they feel more

comfortable, it's based on the colour of this person not skill, but when it's a Black doctor or doctor of colour, whether it's medical, clinical or counsellor, and then there's almost hesitation. So, I feel like, there's almost a bit of doubt when it comes to their skills or the knowledge and understanding ...I'm speaking from my experiences within the community, where I come from". [...] Black psychologists or Black professionals are not looked down, but they're looked at with a bit of doubt". (Participant 2)

Therefore **Participant 4** explained that Black professionals constantly have the pressure to perform because they have been racially profiled and made to feel privileged to be included, and not based on merit. He explained that due to such experiences, he has had to place pressure on himself as a Black professional in psychology for the representation of the Black community and to also minimise the stigma of incompetency attached to Black people.

"We have to prove ourselves [Black people] that we are competent, otherwise, the other race or other people, they think that you are in this profession because of your colour. But now because I've been in the field for long, I understand now, but if you are new, you can easily and easily negatively affect your progress and your professional identity. [...] Because I'm Black I don't want to disappoint anyone, like "Oh look at these Black people. Look at them now." So, I think I've pressured myself, like, "Okay, if I'm given a platform, it's not only for myself," [...] I'm standing for all the Black people ... but I don't think from a male perspective, I think as a Black person. ". [...] What I've observed, in comparison to the other races, they don't have that much pressure. But as a Black, you are going to feel a lot of pressure in comparison to the rest, because you are Black, you're a male. I think it affects that identity [professional identity formation] as you perform your roles. Yeah, a lot of eyes on you. I'm Black and know how it goes, if you're Black, you are scrutinized time and again, which as I think about it must change. (Participant 4)

In his account, **Participant 4** highlights various tensions. On one hand, it may be an advantage to enter the field as a part of a minority group, however, the disadvantage lies in practice, as you are constantly overlooked, your competence is brought into question, and you may be placed in

unfavourable situations. Further to this, there is an added pressure to affirm your competence and set an example for other Black professionals and trainees.

Feelings of self-doubt also extended beyond professional practice to the earlier experiences of psychology training and selections. **Participant 3** described the perceptions of the selection process for psychology postgraduate programmes in terms of racial quota systems. This introduced conflict in terms of one's appraisal of their own self-worth and competence versus statistical representation.

“What I've noticed with other universities as well, there is sort of like a quota that... [...] I felt that I had been sort of worthy of getting into the psychology programme, but it also felt at the same time that I was a statistical balance that I was put there, they had to have a Black male person on record, actually see that they have a Black male who's doing psychology with them. it makes you question whether you're worthy or not, whether you should be there or not, or whether you are selected by luck (Participant 3)

The shared experiences in this sub-theme highlight challenges of racial discrimination, racial profiling, and a negative stigma of incompetency attached to Black psychologists which perpetuates self-doubt and fuels a pressure to achieve.

4.3.1.3.4 Discrimination to men in the field ('moffie')

A further area of discrimination was the negative associations made in relation to studying or practicing Psychology, as a field in general. **Participant 5** describes how people who study in the field, may be perceived as 'crazy' themselves.

“I think coming from a Coloured community even the mindset in my community, that if you study psychology there is still a stigma or discrimination, there is an Afrikaans labelling that says “jy is mal” [which translates to “you are crazy/mad”] meaning you're crazy in clinical terms. [...]
(Participant 5)

However, men or Black men practicing psychology may be subject to an additional level of scrutiny, because Psychology is deemed an 'emotional field' reserved for women. **Participant 3** and

Participant 5 explained that men in psychology may be ridiculed for possessing “soft” masculinities, where they are negatively compared to other common male-dominated fields.

“The field is female –dominated there is this whole stigma attached that... For example, in the Coloured community, if you are attuned to your emotions, you are seen as less of a man. That masculinity is [ridiculed] and you are called names ... you are a “moffie”⁵ “You are gay, and you don’t know who you are” [...] “We are perceived as quite soft, less masculine, afraid of competition, emotionally weak”. (Participant 5)

“Men in psychology are perceived as quite soft by other men specifically, we’re perceived as not masculine as other men because there are so many male-dominated careers that we could have opted for, yet we opted for one which is mainly dominated by women at the moment. So, that image could represent to other people that we are afraid of competition in male-dominated spaces; that we’re just not fit enough to be part of other worlds because they’ll compare you to for example, why didn’t you just go for medicine? Why didn’t you be an accountant? Why didn’t you become a lawyer?” (Participant 3)

For **Participant 5**, men may be subject to homophobic slurs, and remarks that undermine their gendered identity. While for **Participant 3**, psychology is viewed as a profession for women, which has implications for how men are seen, in that they may either lack confidence in their abilities or lack the abilities altogether to compete with other men.

4.4 How Black male psychologists develop their professional identity

In addition to the various challenges towards their professional identity as Black male psychologists, participants highlighted various experiences that helped them to develop their professional identity as a psychologist, in their related fields. The following were the prominent themes that emerged from the interviews: 1) Supervision/mentorship/training; 2) Community

⁵ In South African language, a *Moffie* is a derogatory slang word pertaining to a man lacking in toughness, weak-spirited, or a man perceived to be unmanly or ‘delicate’ (Dictionary of South African English, 2023).

grounding and connections, related to internal resilience and being agents of change; and 3) Decolonising Psychology.

4.4.1 Supervision and mentorship

Participants indicated that an identity as a Black man in psychology is forged in training and practice, through supervision and mentorship. **Participants 8, 5 and 1** explained that role models are crucial in cultivating your character and skills to be suitable for the profession. Constructive engagements with supervisors were a major supporting factor, in engaging with vastly experienced professionals who may offer guidance and education in the developing phase of your career.

*[...] this is probably where supervision comes in, you have to learn and learn the ways of being a psychologist. That's the first thing you actually have to do, you have to figure out how this thing works, right? What is within the scope of practice, and what is not within the scope of practice? And that usually you get from your lecturers... in a sense, you are developing. I don't know if this is the right term, but you are developing a prototype of what a psychologist should be. So, there's a basis of identity and practices and also the scope that you have to learn [...] You'll have to find out what about this profession that you have to see. What is close to your experience? And what can you assimilate and what is further from your experience? [..]". (**Participant 8**)*

*"I think for me there were certain role models that I had particularly at UWC and in the community where I did my community service and I think my internship there were one or two males ... one or two Coloured males and a Black male who was a psychologist, that mentorship kind of assisted into shaping me and was part of the process of developing my professional identity as a psychologist". (**Participant 5**)*

"So, I think a big part of what created an identity for me, there were interactions I had with my supervisors, the lecturers. But it's the contact that you have with all the professionals who are there to support you, to guide you, to help you when you fall, that is when your identity starts.".

(Participant 1)

Participant 6 presented a different idea about the importance of emotional support during training which serves as part of your supportive factor in the formation of a professional identity and the development of resilience. He explained that emotional support is important in carrying you mentally and physically throughout the psychology training.

“Well, the lecturers were very supportive, so my master’s year was quite a dramatic one in 2019; so, the lecturers in the department were very helpful, very understanding [...]. One thing I really enjoyed is that every day we had a check-in with every lecturer which is important, you want to know how your students are doing. And all of those things, so that was very supportive, important ... and encourages you and pushes you to do better”. (**Participant 6**)

In addition to being the recipient of mentorship of supervision, **Participant 7** expressed that a sense of identity is ignited in assisting in the training; through the provision of mentoring and collectively creating supportive spaces. He stressed that these are the kinds of lived experiences of competency that are rewarding and continue to inform professional identity formation.

“ [...] A lot of my students I am still in touch with them and some are in practice themselves and they are Black psychologists, to offer that guidance and mentoring and keep in in touch so we can also look at things collectively what it is that we do from wherever it is where we work and that we also get the same kind of work and that is extremely rewarding for me”. (**Participant 7**)

In addition to these interactions, **Participants 2** and **3** reported that practical experiences during M1 and M2, assisted in the formation of a professional identity to create exposure to the real-life nature of the work.

“My internship, I would say that really also played a massive factor in my professional development; the internship site, really helps you grow because it’s one thing to sit in a classroom and learn all these things, but once you’re out in the field, whether clinical or research and real life is happening in front of you”. (**Participant 2**)

Participant 3: *“In terms of ... just being at a therapy room, and it’s feeling right, the transference, the countertransference, and just seeing a person genuinely become a better version of themselves, [...] I think for me, that is how I then developed a sense of belonging through my patients, through sort of feedback that I get through my patients and not verbal feedback per se, but just starting the therapy process [...] Feedback from supervisors ...that contributes the most to my professional identity”.*

In summary, the participants stressed that encouraging and mentoring other Black people, offering the education of community psychology, and receiving positive feedback as a Black psychologist affirms a sense of belonging in the field, in support of professional identity development. Black psychologists play a key role in empowering other Black men to be emotionally aware and change the trajectory that men are emotionally insensitive.

4.4.2 Community grounding and connections

This theme highlighted the importance of possessing a community-oriented approach in performing psychological services to offer help that is holistic and considers context. It also highlighted internal resilience and the social responsibility to be agents of change.

Participant 7 explained the benefit of utilising a community-guided perspective in his practice, which has had a significant positive impact on his work. As with the previous theme, he observed that his identification with community psychology was encouraged by his clinical supervisor and mentor, who aided in shaping his professional identity during the master’s training programme.

“My clinical supervisor in MI had a strong understanding of a Marxist understanding and I think the synergy was good in terms of supervision; for me, it was about holding on to community psychology values”; [...] “when working with the client, in terms of the interventions I make sure that it is a contextual intervention”. (**Participant 7**)

Participant 7 further explained that the identity he formed through political involvement before training in Psychology, made it challenging to conform to specific psychological theorists or to

ideas that were not aligned with this identity. He explained that his identity lies in provisioning psychological work that is holistic and not only a part of the individual but provides a focus on the community in which the individual inhabits.

“I came into the course with a very strong Marxist philosophy which means it’s a contextual understanding of how I see things and how I think. Because I had my particular identity and it is not psychology that gave that, so it was extremely challenging, especially having to almost conform to this kind of individual approach to doing things, individual therapy is the alfa omega to everything. It was very difficult for me to almost accept that I had to use psychological theory, whether it was psychoanalytic, whether it was behaviour therapy, simply because it was individualistic and therefore the attraction to community psychology was easier in that kind of way, and coming into the masters training, so I came in with that my identity is community psychology”. **(Participant 7)**

Participants 5 and 8 also reflected on the ways in which their training had introduced a stronger community-oriented way of practicing psychology. For **Participant 5**, this training took the form of seminars conducted in community settings, which for **Participant 8**, it was the grounding at UWC that helped develop a community-oriented way of practicing psychology, that is indigenous in approach and offers interventions that consider the broader context.

“For professional upliftment, for me what I have done is not just go for training but attending seminars and I attended seminars at the community itself for personal development. **(Participant 5)**

“[...] UWC has been especially important in my development in terms of thinking this way. If I surround myself with people who think the same way, especially in being community-oriented but also loaded experience and a real sense of what people go through, something that I can situate myself in, something that resonates with me; then that’s when I feel like I belong [...]”. **(Participant 8)**

Finally, **Participant 5** stressed that his identity and the values from his upbringing and the community, function as a guide to keep him grounded in the profession. He added that his

professional identity is also informed by the kind of work he performs in the community which compelled his decision to pursue a career in psychology.

“I think I have to look into my inner state, my resilience, and my community. I still live in the community that I came from, I don’t stay on the farm anymore but ... I still do go and revisit those places, and that sometimes opens up my mind ... to go visit those values and the goals that I set up for myself, so I think a set of the community looking at it and revisiting the values of that community that keeps me going in the psychology field and keeps me grounded in a sense”. (Participant 5)

The responsibility to be an agent of change in Black communities was a concept that resonated across participant accounts, as noted in the words of **Participants 1** and **5**.

“That is why more of us are needed. And I think my space over there is to make things different to make a change and fight and be the agent of change for what is to come”. (Participant 1)

“[...] see me as an agent of change. Being a role model for your community... so I think we’re (Black psychologists) kind of sometimes perceived as that and being a saviour for that community or of a particular race or for a particular culture that you stand for” (Participant 5)

The desire to be an agent of change and a role model for Black communities, was a factor that provided security and purpose in one’s professional identity through being community grounded. **Participant 2** also reflected on how the formation of a sense of belonging in psychology as a profession was through understanding the greater purpose being served. Such purpose was accessed through developing an understanding of ancestral origins and community grounding/upbringing. Feeling secure about his own identity, his origins, continued self-education, and being inquisitive, have continued to guide him into building a strong foundation in his career and having internal resilience. In this way, personal values and cultural upbringing can provide focus and direction to one’s professional identity – to be resilient in times of strain.

“I believe that the history, where we come from, who our ancestors were, who our communities were back then. I believe that’s vital to understanding where we find ourselves today,

and through that process, we know ourselves. Now we specialise in a field, we bring the two together. I believe that's a force to be reckoned with". [...] "The more I know where I come from, the more secure I feel in my identity, as an African person, and then move on to the professional space and educating myself in the field of psychology say, so then I have a very strong foundation of who I am, where I come from, and what my people stand for, and then I can approach psychology with a force instead of having psychology influenced me" (Participant 2)

In summary, the participants expressed that a community-oriented approach to psychology as a Black psychologist is a way of contributing to the Black community and offering psychological practice in a way that considers the experiences of Black people holistically so as to offer sustainable interventions. Participants also highlighted the internal resources that Black male psychologists draw on, in navigating their professional identity and the demands of the field of psychology.

4.4.3 Decolonising Psychology

Earlier, a culture of whiteness in psychology was explored, as a factor that challenges the professional identity experiences of Black psychologists. The following sub-theme speaks to how Black male psychologists actively negotiate this culture and promote decolonisation, to change the historical injustices of psychological practice in South Africa. This theme described the strategies which Black psychologists undertake to decolonise psychology in practice and training to offer psychology that is diverse in gender, race, and African experiences.

Participant 7 issued a call to be more intentional and focused in how psychology contributed to forging apartheid. As such, psychology needs to play a central role in assisting Black Africans to heal at a psychological level from the impacts of the apartheid.

"Political activism for me is quite a huge thing, remember even the struggle that we fought in this country was against racial capitalism although people speak about apartheid as a racial thing. But the racial part of that was developed by psychology; it's by the university I work for at the moment, and that is why we are involved in the transformation stuff at the moment. If psychology played a role in developing apartheid as we know it and came to know then psychology has to play a

role in looking at how we unpack and how we work through those kinds of things at the moment. And for me in the country at the moment is that ... so we move on from apartheid in terms of people who got to vote, and racism is not constitutionalized anymore, but as a nation, we haven't moved from a psychological level". (Participant 7)

Participant 2 echoes this call, for Psychology practitioners to be more active and purposeful in decolonising psychological theory and practice. He stressed that, there is room to build a body of knowledge that is very much needed for the African context, and that Black psychologists should not be passive with the psychology that has been offered, but actively engaged in making psychology applicable within the South African context.

"I feel like we indirectly pathologising ourselves when we learn and just accept this Western standard of psychology is being presented...of psychology...of the psychology that has been presented to us. So, we need a body of psychology that specifically focuses on our context. So, that's a massive opportunity for Black people to come in and say, okay, we here, we ready, this is what psychology says, but let's see how applicable it is here by us and then build on that body of knowledge. I think that is a good enough reason for anyone to want to pursue psychology in the South African context". (Participant 2)

Participant 2 also emphasised that Black practitioners should be at the forefront of making psychology applicable to Africans, and that "no outsider" should be facilitating this process, thereby highlighting the power and agency of 'insider' versus 'outsider' positionality.

"I think we need more people of colour in the field of psychology to add their different perspectives because no one else will be able to explain the African experience besides African people. No outsider can come in here and speak on behalf of African people, we can't allow that because it's going to be biased, it's going to be skewed. [...] conducting research from a person of Coloured perspective, and not from a White person perspective...". (Participant 2)

Similarly, **Participants 1** and **4** suggested that decolonising psychology requires a review of the syllabus in higher education and training, to include context that is relatable and familiar to the experiences of African groups.

“So decolonising is important, we need to get away from the Eurocentrism that is happening when it comes to our education system. Not to say that we do not teach it, what I’m saying is we need to add more African psychology as well, and we need to have content relatable to the people we’re serving. The majority of our people are Black people in this country. So how are we going to be able to do that? We need to change the way we teach; we need to change our syllabus.” (Participant 1)

“More Black people in psychology- But that’s no decolonisation, that’s a representation. Decolonisation of psychology means that we get away with those theories, not adding things on. Why are we referring to them? For what? Psychology is an important thing. To be true, decolonisation is transformation. If we think we can understand ourselves from here, let us use our forefathers, whatever. “Why are you using Freud 1904? For what? 1927? So, what are you decolonising there? Not the number of people? No, no, no, that's not decolonisation. [...]” (Participant 4)

Participant 4 stressed that including a few Black candidates in the selection for psychology programmes is not truly decolonising psychology, but that decolonising psychology is coming to understand ourselves as Africans, to a point where there is no use of Western approaches to help African people through psychology. He explained that decolonisation is developing new information that is relatable and adding African knowledge which will inevitably change the way of practicing psychological practice in Africa.

4.5 Summary of the chapter

The current chapter presented the main findings of the research study. The following were the main themes that emerged in the data: 1) The “expected” professional identity standard for a psychologist; 2) The drivers/motivators to enter the profession or stay in the profession; 3) The drawbacks or challenges in developing a professional identity as a Black male; and 4) the protective factors for professional identity development as a Black male psychologist. The next chapter will

present a comprehensive discussion of the research findings, which will include integration with literature and extended explanations of the results of this study.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5. *Introduction*

In the previous chapter, several themes were identified and described in relation to the eight participants' professional identity experiences as Black male psychologists. In this chapter, relevant literature related to the experiences of Black male psychologists in training and practice, as well as professional identity formation and social identity theory is consulted to guide the comprehension of the participant themes. The discussion is arranged to correspond with the four areas identified in the findings, namely defining a narrative of professional identity, the drivers/motivators to enter or stay in the profession; the drawbacks/challenges to identity and belonging in the field, and lastly how Black male psychologists develop their professional identity.

5.1.1 *Defining a narrative of professional identity*

In the initial interactions, participants were asked to define their understanding of a professional identity or identities. The results indicated that participants understood professional identity as an obligation, a way of behaving in work contexts, and an attitude for professionals in practice and training. These findings support the literature that elucidates professional identity as a work identity that individuals assume across professional contexts and relates to attitudes and behaviours toward the occupation (Nolan, 2019). To add, this further supports notions of social identity theory which explains that identity is crucial because it is how individuals assign meaning to themselves and helps to shape work attitudes, affect, and behaviour (Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019). Thus, these Black male psychologists find purpose and meaning in psychological practices that foster social justice, inclusion, and diversity.

Participants indicated that a qualified psychologist is expected to possess knowledge of the scope of practice and ethical principles required by the HPCSA. These are guidelines that explain the activities that one exercises within their professional role to ensure practice within safe, lawful, and

effective measures (Caza & Creary, 2016). These findings on the understanding of professional identity are in line with the insights of Kaplan and Flum (2012), who stipulate that professional identity is a combination of ethics of the profession, responsibilities, and standards that are aligned with practices accepted by the specific profession.

Participants also indicated that an individual's own personal values, continued education in the profession of psychology, and practical experience through applied work are some guiding tools in professional identity formation. According to Emerson (2010), professional identity for clinical, counselling, and research psychologists is informed by a composite of motives, values, expression of ideas of self, and experiences. This also includes possessing a sound knowledge of the scope of practice and familiarity with professional ethics. Practice-based learning assists in shaping a unique professional identity and helps practitioners to self-identify as belonging (Kaplan & Flum, 2012). A psychologist's own ideas, values, and interests are believed to be at the centre of professional identity formation. As Trede and McEwen (2012) point out, a healthy professional identity is aligned with one's interests, values, and intentions, and is not isolated from personal identity.

Put together, the responses suggest that a formed professional identity for a psychologist, affirms a sense of belonging. These ideas support those of social categorisation, a process through which individuals group themselves based on a common understanding/involvement. Social categorisation explains the inclinations for one to devote themselves to a certain group and a set of practices, which is an important element of becoming a member of any profession/social group (Hogg, 2016). This is similar to psychologists in their devotion to a certain set of practices in order to categorise themselves as belonging to professional psychology (Gazzola et al., 2011). These findings support the notions of social identity theory that to assume a social identity, an individual adheres to the principles and values of the group and is assigned a shared identity to give them a sense of knowledge of who they are and how they should behave (Hogg, 2016).

Participants also problematised professional identity in that the concept imposes pressure on professionals to perform with perfection and within predefined structures. In other words, professional

identity causes tension between the global objective standards of what a role entails as professional psychologists, against the lived reality of how the participants practice to maximise their services and skills. This perspective is in support of literature that problematises professional identity formation as a process of summative assessment of learning which prioritises compliance (Trede & McEwen, 2012). These findings may have implications for practice, since challenges to a professional identity may include difficulties in self-categorisation within a group which is crucial to forming a social identity with in-group members (Caza & Creary, 2016).

5.1.2 The drivers/motivators to enter the profession or stay in the profession

This section discusses the importance of representation and the power of shared experience as motivators for Black male psychologists in the profession. The following subthemes are discussed: 1) stigma and mental health; 2) modelling positive Black masculinities; and 3) The power of shared experience which includes a) history of personal trauma; and b) shared experience in background, and language.

5.1.2.1 Stigma and mental health

Stigmatisation of psychology remains strong in Black communities due to its cultural biases inherent in assessments that dehumanised people of colour (Beasley et al., 2015). Most of the participants felt that as Black psychologists it is useful to have diversity in the number of qualified psychologists in the country. Therefore, they stressed the need for more Black psychologists to be trained for the representation of the lived experiences of vulnerable Black communities. According to Tomlinson and Jackson (2021), the professional identity formation of Black psychologists arises in the professional work that addresses social issues that stem from their environmental background thus becoming active subjects who are agents of change. Therefore, diversity in the inclusion of Black males in professional psychology has a significant impact on the quest to improve the well-being of Black communities (Kelly & Davis, 2021).

Some of the participants indicated that their goal as Black practitioners, with a background in Black communities, is to persuade the agenda that mental health is a health issue that is free of gender and is not a sign of weakness. These ideas are parallel to the studies of Beasley et al. (2015), and Kelly and Davis (2021), who concur that Black male psychologists are suited to play this role as mentors and teachers since they are sensitive to the “cultural expectations” assigned to Black men. Kelly and Davis (2021) further explained that early exposure of Black boys to school psychology may impact their future trajectory and increase the representation of Black men and boys in the field of psychology, to destigmatise the perspectives of mental health practices and Black men. It appears that a common goal for Black male psychologists is to elevate mental health practices and dispel the myths of mental health such as one shared by **Participant 2**: *“In a Black community there's never really a big understanding of mental health, and it's almost always stigmatised. [For Black people] if you're going to see a psychologist, there's something wrong with you”*. In terms of social identity theory, this common goal to destigmatise mental health can be understood as a Black psychologist’s collective social identification in the community. They presume themselves to possess social representations apparent in their shared beliefs and practices that serve to destigmatise the psychology profession, and increase mental health services. These social representations act as schemas that form their identity (Davis et al., 2019).

5.1.2.2 Modelling positive Black masculinities

The findings indicated that Black male psychologists are motivated to practice psychology in ways that change the societal narrative of Black men from being perpetrators of social issues such as gender-based violence, towards presenting Black men as helpers. According to Beasley et al. (2015), appropriately trained Black male psychologists offer positive change and well-being through empowerment within their communities, therefore being helpful. Results indicated that Black male psychologists enact caring masculinities, and offer a healthy male perspective. According to Isacco et al. (2016), challenging hegemonic masculinity norms through the operationalisation of caring masculinities may help redefine the image of a man in society and promote an inclusive and emotionally expressive notion of masculinity. Therefore, Black male psychologists help to generate

positive and productive members of the Black communities they serve, thus displaying a productive attitude toward men as helpers (Beasley et al., 2015). Therefore, men as helpers challenge earlier literature that views psychology as a feminine discipline for women and renders men as not suited for professional psychology (Marulanda & Radtke, 2019). Black male psychologists in this study are motivated to co-create a redefined masculinity that sensitises Black men to the receptivity of caring masculinities.

Literature indicates that the application of caring masculinities may be pivotal to gender equality, to build men who are sensitive to care and repress oppressive structures that socialise men and boys to seek power and meaning through the subjugation of others (Ratele, 2015). Thus, in reformulating masculinities, Black psychologists are determined to challenge and alter the hegemonic stigma of Black men in society (Carlsson, 2020). Such meaningful work is vital in the processes of professional identity formation as it brings about rich identity and belonging experiences (Tomlinson & Jackson, 2021).

Participants explained that their goal was to encourage willingness and openness for society/men to feel at ease to work with Black male psychologists who represent a strong voice for men. By doing this, Black male psychologists encourage and promote positive forms of masculinities. Such displays of masculinities (for example, men as helpers) can contribute meaningfully to the socialising of men and boys (Ratele, 2014). Therefore, a social identity and professional identity formation of “who they are and how they should behave” is pivotal to enacting meaningful social roles in society as a Black male psychologist (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012; Hogg, 2016). Thus, social categorisation takes place in this manner, this is the knowledge that an individual belongs to a social group through social roles or holds a social identity with members in the same social category (Trepte & Loy, 2017). Black male psychologists conceptualise their identities through unique roles and assume the responsibility of shifting the narrative of men as perpetrators towards being men as helpers (caring masculinities) thus modelling positive Black masculinities in society.

5.1.2.3 *The power of shared experience*

This section discusses the power of shared experiences as motivators/drivers for Black male psychologists in professional psychology. The subthemes of shared experience are discussed in relation to the history of personal trauma, the need for inclusivity, social justice, and shared understanding based on background, and language.

5.1.2.3.1 *Shared experience: history of personal trauma*

Findings indicated that it is key for Black psychologists to work with Black men who were exposed to early apartheid trauma in South Africa. In this case, apartheid trauma is racial trauma due to the socio-political circumstances, historical and epistemic violence, and oppression, which informed such trauma. Racial trauma refers to psychological distress due to systemic oppression and discrimination (Okazaki et al., 2008). The Black psychology movement emerged to advocate for the increase in representation of Black psychologists and to make psychology culturally relevant in the Black community (French et al., 2020). According to Beasley et al. (2015), as well as Cooper and Nicholas (2012), the Black psychology movement and Black male psychologists are sensitive to the transformation of psychology that addresses the impacts of racial matters/social injustice issues affecting Black people at a psychological level. The idea is to develop sensitive interventions that address racial trauma experienced by Black men. For that reason, Black psychologists may be motivated to provide healing that is based on context (Okazaki et al., 2008). This is supported by Carolissen et al. (2010), that the involvement of Black psychologists is to provide psychological treatments/healing that considers context to address racial trauma for Black communities and the reconstruction of the identity of Black men in the context of political struggle. Therefore, participants indicated that Black male psychologists are suited to facilitate healing and personal understanding for Black men to navigate their traumatic experiences in ways that do not perpetuate gender-based violence since Black male psychologists possess the shared racial and cultural understanding that White psychologists may not possess (Christian et al., 2002). In South Africa, gender-based violence remains a pervasive social issue. Black psychologists can play a vital role in developing culturally

sensitive interventions, and community-based approaches to promote social change, while challenging patriarchal norms and beliefs that perpetuate gender-based violence (Van Niekerk et al., 2016).

Contextual identity was emphasised as the idea is to present oneself in a way that is context fitting. According to Agarwal et al. (2009), contextual identity comprises personal context and shared context, these ideas assert that personal identity or an individual's identity is shaped by cultural, social, and historical events/context. This supports Fitzgerald's (2020) and Agarwal et al.'s (2009) notion that both contextual and professional identities are fluid and dynamic concepts and should adapt to different experiences to make sense of people, therefore these identities are not fixed but constantly negotiated and reconstructed. Thus, for participants in this study contextually situated psychological practice generates a sense of identity and belonging that contributes towards professional confidence. This identification is considered self-categorisation in social identity theory, which grants professionals knowledge that they belong to a social group and contributes towards social self-esteem (Jenkins, 2014).

There was also an indication that highlighted the importance of Black male psychologists to represent minority groups like the LGBTQIA+ community in mental health issues, to construct a voice for all individuals from different genders and sexualities. The representation of Black male psychology professionals who also identify with an LGBTQIA+ identity, is important to counter the potentially stigmatising view of the LGBTQIA+ community that is often portrayed in the literature as "wounded individuals whose victimization has produced deficits in their mental and physical health, academic achievement and identity development" (Domínguez et al., 2015, p.6). These findings support LGBTQIA+ cultural competence to provision help that is unprejudiced and normalises variations in sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression (Jones, 2022). In this case, social identity theory can be used to explain that through social categorisation, Black male psychologists who identify with LGBTQIA+ individuals (which is a specific social group), have a group membership that influences/shapes their social identity, therefore in-group favouritism that can be beneficial in working with LGBTQIA+ individuals.

5.1.2.3.2 *Shared experience: “Black people, know Black people”*

The majority of the Black psychologists in this study shared that, as Black individuals themselves, they possess accurate indigenous knowledge and recognise psychological issues in the context of their languages and backgrounds. For example, Participant 4 declared that *“I think we need Black people [Black male psychologists], especially males that go to the communities. I think they understand. Understanding and knowing the context is important. I think they've [White psychologists and other races] seen clients who go to them to say, “I have a calling” and then don't know how to deal with them. So Black people, know Black people”*. According to Chung et al. (2018) and Christian et al. (2002), Black psychologists are in a better position to translate the mental health experiences of Black clientele due to shared lived experiences. These findings correspond to those of Beasley et al. (2015), who state that a Black client seeing a psychologist who is White in racial identity may present with cultural barriers and implications in the process of therapy, because a White psychologist may not be able to develop the same rapport that stems from experiential relations. Literature by Steinfeldt et al. (2020), challenges these notions, instead arguing that racial matching may be considered for cultural competence, but that there is almost no benefit to treatment outcomes.

The respondents indicated that Black psychologists embrace traditional healing practices and explanations in psychological practice such as to *have a calling*; or a *Sangoma* and they may have a better understanding of such African practices for a client base who prefer to consult practitioners of similar backgrounds. This is supported by the findings of Padmanabhanunni et al. (2022) that 74% of the clientele of Black psychologists consists of Black individuals and that this may be due to the likeness of cultural and/or linguistics factors that may provision clients with a greater sense of community, validation and perceived understanding. Therefore, shared lived experiences are pertinent in the tailoring of Western methods and traditional practices to develop culturally competent treatments (van der Zeijst et al., 2021).

These findings correlate with social comparison in social identity theory. In terms of interactions with Black populations, Black psychologists may consider themselves as in-groups and

White psychologists as outgroups, who fall short in cultural competence (Hogg, 2016). Through lived shared experience, Black psychologists develop in-group favouritism and self-esteem and identify themselves as custodians of indigenous knowledge thus solidifying their sense of belonging in psychology (Hogg, 2016).

5.1.3 The drawbacks and challenges to identity and belonging in the field

This section draws on relevant theory and literature to discuss the challenges experienced by Black male psychologists in the process of navigating their identity and belonging experiences in professional psychology and the implications of these challenges for psychological practice. The challenges identified in this study included: 1) Economic concerns during training, i.e., lack of funding or even navigating the ‘privilege’ of one’s career when qualified; 2) The prevailing ‘culture of whiteness’ and Western theoretical models practice in training and practice; 3) Stigma and questions of competency as a Black man; also linked to perceived selection quotas; and 4) discrimination and negative stereotypes in the area of sexual identity.

5.1.3.1. Economic concerns

The research findings showed that based on the sociocultural context, a majority of Black students who come from disadvantaged families are confronted with economic concerns in their quest to fulfil academic requirements. According to a report by Naidoo (2021) and a study by Padmanabhanunni et al. (2022), there is threatening underfunding and insufficient governmental support for psychology professional degree studies in South Africa, and advocacy for better funding is highly emphasised. Generally, the South African higher education sector remains underfunded and the rising student enrolments put pressure on existing resources. For example, historically disadvantaged universities receive fewer resources. These economic disparities in higher education may be representative of large dropout rates because of funding issues and rising financial exclusion of underprivileged Black students. (Mbaleki & Mbodila, 2022; Salmi & D’Addio, 2020). Participants indicated these economic challenges as contributing to a shortage of qualified Black psychologists due to a lack of financial privileges to educational training for a professional degree. Machika and

Johnson (2015) noted that often economic concerns during training lead to barriers in training due to fewer educational resources which negatively impacts progress and professional development. This is a concern since graduate training is central to professional identity formation (Scott, 2018). A majority of disadvantaged students opt for career choices that are usually completed within a three-to-four-year period to be qualified professionals as soon as possible, in order to improve socioeconomic status and begin the process of social mobility (Turpin & Coleman, 2010).

Additionally, participants expressed the difficulty of newly trained psychologists in navigating the privileges and economic viability of professional psychology when qualified. According to Mpisane (2022), young Black African professionals experience ‘Black tax’ due to their professional qualifications, where there are social expectations to be successful and provide for family members and others. Therefore, misusing their professional privileges to achieve financial security may be perpetuated by societal pressures such as the ‘Black tax’ to mitigate economic disparities.

5.1.3.2. The prevailing “culture of whiteness” in training and workspaces

Many participants expressed their issues with the current image of psychological practice as it is dominated by *whiteness*. The issues raised do not imply that professional psychology is racially dominated by Whites, but rather that the standard of psychological practice is largely the application of Western models. The study of Turpin and Cole (2010) supports these findings in asserting that professional training in South Africa mostly includes a Eurocentric understanding of psychology as the absolute truth in practice. This has implications for professional psychologists who work with Africans, since this understanding of psychology is ‘partial’ in that it does not account for the experiences of Africans (Nair, 2008). Exclusion or minimal coverage of indigenous knowledge and a lack of incorporation of context-relevant values to accurately understand and treat Africans has implications for identity formation which may negatively impact service delivery (Beasley et al., 2015; Chitindingu & Mkhize, 2016). In essence, participants expressed that the context in which psychological practice is performed internalises *whiteness* that is not context relevant to the population of indigenous clients and the values of Black practitioners. This is consistent with an

argument by Painter and Terblanche (2004), who asserted that initially, Black identity in workspaces internalises White values which leads to self-issues and questioning of proficiency. As a result, a reconstruction of that identity is important to develop an alternative body of knowledge.

Existing psychological models should be culturally adapted for relevancy to the issues of Africans to maximise their viability in practice (Mabunda et al., 2022). For example, the heavy reliance on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) was critiqued by participants for consisting of White interpretations that pathologise African experiences. These findings are in line with a study by Van der Zeijst et al. (2020), which indicated that direct translations of African experiences are often characterised as psychosis (unusual perceptual experiences) and therefore, warrant medical forms of intervention in Western psychiatric systems. In South Africa, there are indications that an integrated paradigm (addition of indigenous knowledge) in psychological practice promotes recovery to mental illness and *ukuthwasa*- training to become a traditional health practitioner- provides individuals with a meaningful and respected role in society (Vogel, 2009).

5.1.3.3. Stigma and questions of competency as a Black man

Stigma and competency for Black men to work as psychologists were considered at the level of sex (being identified as male), race (being identified as Black), and a potential intersection of the two (race and sex). Generally, participants indicated that men are disqualified from psychology due to considerations that professional psychology is “work for women” and men are assumed to be emotionally reticent which raises eyebrows for those in psychological practice. According to Carolissen (2015), the view that psychology is an ‘emotional profession’ for women proves to be difficult for men who enter the field as their professional competency is encountered with pessimistic remarks. The majority of the participants indicated that during their professional training, most of the students were females. The scarcity of males in professional psychology may be due to their masculinities are associated with gender stereotypes; therefore, such male gender bias limits their opportunities in the field (Marulanda & Radtke, 2019).

Questions of competency in terms of race were also raised in participant accounts.

Participants explained that in the Black community, there is a higher level of comfort in consulting with a White professional, based on their race, resources, and educational opportunities, as opposed to a Black professional who may not have obtained similar privileges. This was declared by **Participant 2**, “*What I've experienced within my own community when people go to a counsellor, or a psychologist or even a medical doctor and especially a White doctor, [...], they feel more comfortable, it's based on the colour of this person not skill, but when it's a Black doctor or doctor of colour, whether it's medical, clinical or counsellor, and then there's almost hesitation*”. Therefore, there is hesitancy and doubts surrounding the practice of Black professionals to exceptionally perform in a predominately White field (Teasley et al., 2018). The doubts to view Black men as qualified professional psychologists may be due to the negative stigma attached to Black men and possibly seen as in-group members in the Black community (based on race) who may not possess the necessary background, privileges, or social identification to practice professionally (Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019).

Black males continue to navigate the selection quotas which are assumed to select Black males for professional psychology degree training based on racial inclusion that exempts merit. The issue raised is to address the problematic perceptions that Black psychologists benefited from a bias. Participants expressed unfairness because they are judged as incompetent due to their race and simply want their competency measured the same as their White and female counterparts. For example, **Participant 4** expressed that “*We have to prove ourselves [Black people] that we are competent, otherwise, the other race or other people, they think that you are in this profession because of your colour*”; **Participant 3** added, “*I felt ... that I was a statistical balance that I was put there, they had to have a Black male person on record, ... you are selected by luck*”. According to Dover et al. (2020), racial inclusion without merit has unintended consequences of competency that may have significant implications for effective care. There was an indication by participants that the inclusion of Black professionals based on statistical purposes and not competency may question their credibility and suitability in the field of psychology (Davis et al., 2020). However, the findings by Padmanabhanunni

et al. (2022) challenge these notions, as they indicated that the selection criteria in psychology professional training is a holistic process and balanced approach that includes both merit and diversity and cultural sensitivity training, thus ensuring competency in the output of professionals who can provide effective patient care.

Racial profiling and racism in professional psychology were also raised as an alarming issue by participants. Such racial microaggressions may impact the ability to form a sense of belonging in professional practice, which is crucial to social identity experiences for a sense of self-categorisation in relation to group membership (Jenkins, 2014; Teasley et al., 2018). For example, participant 8 expressed that *“In terms of race, I have experienced micro-aggressions of racism; I have experienced exclusion [...] So, in terms of race there are some challenges that I have experienced, that made me feel like I don’t belong. I’m being introduced by my racial identity not even my [personal] identity just the colour of my skin, that’s the very first thing that I am being introduced by the rest just follows no matter how smart I am, how in tune I am, how dedicated I am”*. The problematic history with regard to racism is not new, it has a historical legacy in psychology, where imperialist ideas were justified and perpetuated by early psychologists for the exclusion of non-Whites (Hook, 2012; Okazaki et al., 2008).

Participants disclosed that Black professionals are seen as afforded a golden opportunity to occupy a position in psychological practice. Therefore, their role goes beyond the scope of practice, to become an example of “Black excellence” - to highlight the collective success and progress of the Black community (St Vil, 2021). Through exceptional accomplishments and contributions of Black individuals, Black excellence aims to challenge systemic racism and oppression, break stereotypes and barriers, and promote a more just and equitable society (St Vil, 2021). This is supported by the findings of DeCuir-Gunby et al. (2020) who asserted that Black professionals face microaggressions and pressure to overperform in White dominated professions for validation of worthiness, and to combat stereotypes. Results indicated that racism in professional psychology remains a concern and there are further challenges in addressing this issue in professional spaces and within therapeutic

contexts, since for psychologists there is an ethical responsibility to act professionally and in the best interest of the client, therefore such issues remain unspoken in practice.

5.1.3.4. Discrimination and negative stereotypes in the area of sexual identity.

A further challenge noted by participants was that Black men are cross-examined and discriminated against in terms of gendered assumptions that do not qualify them for psychological practice. Some of the external discriminations arise from strong African notions in Black communities which assigns traditional gender roles for men. According to Harton and Lyons (2003), being a male psychologist has been associated with negative gender stereotypes. Such gender stereotypes consider men in the psychology profession as acting against their gender role identifications since men are assumed to lack the ability to possess empathy, or handling of emotions, and unconditional caring (Harton & Lyons, 2003). Participants also expressed that their masculinities are stereotyped in ways to categorise their manhood as weak, such as associations with alternate sexualities and derogatory labels ('moffie'), or a perceived lack of confidence and strength. These findings correspond with those of Gärtner et al. (2018), that men in career paths traditionally associated with women are considered less likeable and experience workplace bullying in comparison to female professionals. Notably, men in healthcare professions may be considered to be less competitive and experience a sense of inferiority (Curry, 2018).

5.2. How Black male psychologists develop their professional identity

The final area of discussion draws on literature and theory to consider how Black male psychologists come to develop a viable professional identity. The discussion focuses on supervision and mentoring, the importance of a community grounding, identification as an agent of change, and the drive to decolonise psychology.

5.2.1. Supervision and mentorship

The participants' responses indicated that training, including supervision, is a crucial part of acquiring the knowledge and skills demanded of professional psychology which form part of a

complementary professional identity in professional psychology. According to Scott (2018), training is professional exposure to learn the basis of an identity that a psychologist is supposed to assimilate, as well as the style of practice to be crafted. In consensus, Nair (2008) claimed that adequate training/preparation invites an openness to learn, and decreases anxiousness about the profession to reasonably confident professionals who have succeeded in developmental challenges to fulfil training requirements. Competency in the application of psychological frameworks affirms one's professional identity and that implementing such frameworks in ways that lead to the improvement of a client's well-being, brings a sense of belonging in the field of psychology. In social identity theory, such feelings of affirmation and competency may grant social identification, which imbues a self-concept that is based on the practitioner's membership in social groups/professions (Jenkins, 2014).

Moreover, training that proceeds from a community lens is valued by participants. Contextually situated training is valued as it aligns with offering healing that considers the interactions between individuals and their communities. Therefore, a community psychology perspective influences professional identity. These findings are supported by Chitindingu and Mkhize (2016), who explain that an application of psychology in context-specific ways contributes to providing a safe, and welcoming space for Black Africans seeking therapy, thus giving practitioners a sense of purpose that provides a sense of belonging and meaning in their work. Therefore, in offering context-specific psychology practices, Black male psychologists present their caring masculinities by offering psychology practices that create safe spaces for Black men to embrace vulnerability and develop emotional intelligence (Carlsson, 2020; Isacco et al., 2016).

The value in providing supervision or mentorship and designing collective spaces of support for the following generation of Black male psychologists appeared to be a stepping-stone in informing professional identity formation. The clinical supervisors within the training environment offer an educational space that is crucial in cultivating personal character that is aligned with the profession of psychology. Other participants (experienced Black male psychologists) in professional psychology indicated that offering mentorship is a rewarding exercise since as role models they assist trainees in skill development, knowledge, and professional competence. The findings in this section are

consistent with those of Nair (2008), who explained that training, supervision, and role models are central to professional identity development. The supervisor role conveys the following to trainees': knowledge, awareness, critical thinking, and skills development in working with diversity (Gazzola et al., 2011; Tomlinson & Jackson, 2021). Black male psychologists reconstruct the notion of caring masculinities through mentoring and role modelling, this is serving as positive roles and mentors, and demonstrating alternative expressions of masculinity in the Black community and society (Pasura & Christou, 2018; Townsend, 2013).

5.2.2. Community grounding and connections

Participants involved in this study found value in practicing psychology in ways that are inclusive of the community context. According to Barnwell et al. (2022) a community grounding in practice, prioritises community connections and experiences of African people. Concerns were noted that practising psychology in Westernised theoretical approaches for South Africans may move away from adequate care since it is not inclusive in addressing the societal factors that lead to psychological issues for many clients (Long, 2013). Black communities are confronted with many social issues such as poverty, gender violence, fatherless homes, high unemployment rates, and environmental stressors that contribute to psychological issues (Beasley et al., 2015). In consideration of these issues, many young Black boys and men could benefit from the interventions of culturally competent mental health care professionals. This is in line with Trickett (2009) who asserted that community psychology goes beyond individual-level analysis and contemplates broader societal factors, sociocultural context, and other community factors. Thus, Black male psychologists operate their caring masculinities by reframing caregiving as an essential aspect of masculinity in addressing social issues. These men engage in community work that promotes positive masculinity and social change (Beasley et al., 2015).

There is an indication that supervisor relationships, the situatedness of training programmes, and mentoring for and/or by Black psychologists are actively helpful in encouraging community grounding which cultivates a sense of identity and belonging. The presence of Black psychologists

who represent the cultural, racial, and linguistic diversity of the country promotes the practice of psychology within Black communities (Beasley et al., 2015; Padmanabhanunni et al., 2022). Put together, professional identity and a sense of belonging emerge in practicing psychology in ways that are community-oriented which aligns with Black psychologist's community connections and personal values. These findings correspond to those of Bernal and Sáez-Santiago (2006), who indicated that Black psychologists possess a crucial role in developing psychological consciousness that is relevant to community life, and in addressing psychosocial issues. The results indicated that Black psychologists assume a responsibility for providing psychological knowledge that aims to improve the well-being and lives of people in Black communities. These men challenge previous meanings observed, such as the 'imposter syndrome' (Pierre-Canel, 2022) experienced with respect to feeling like the discipline is associated with White persons, women, and diminished forms of masculinities. Thus, showing their resilience to become agents of change in the Black community. In challenging traditional masculinities norms, they dismantle harmful stereotypes and advocate for an inclusive characterisation of masculinity, thus reconstructing notions of caring masculinities (Elliott, 2016; Nayak, 2023).

There is a sense that Black male psychologists assign themselves to be social agents for change in addressing social issues, and this brings about a sense of purpose and meaning in the kind of work that is directed toward making a difference through advocating for the experiences of Africans in psychology-related spaces (Carolissen et al., 2010). Findings showed that possession of African values, a knowledge of African experiences, and a personal identity that aligns with psychology, remain influential in cultivating resilience for Black psychologists to approach psychology with a sense of purpose (Ratele, 2017, 2018; Trede & McEwen, 2012). Therefore, such authentic values assist in the development of a social identity for psychologists to cement and recognise their place in society and within intergroup relations, thus acquiring a part of their self-concept from their membership (Scheepers & Ellemers, 2017).

Participants explained that a sense of security in your own identity, origins, and 'Africanness'- interconnectedness, community, and a sense of connection and belonging to the

African continent and its people (Ratele, 2019), creates a unique and fundamental contribution to professional psychology rather than conforming to Eurocentric paradigms that depart from local contexts. Black psychologists are then tasked to make a change by not conforming to the “whiteness” of practicing psychology, but by empowering Black communities and providing help that is community-oriented, to advocate for equity in mental health care systems (Cooper, 2013; Jones, 2022). In creating a sense of purpose and internal resilience, which refers to congruence with rootedness, other participants alluded that being a psychologist is an ancestral gift that is a composition of being in touch with origins, ancestral history, and the community. These findings are consistent with Beasley et al. (2015), who explained that Black psychologists find a great sense of purpose in collective healing that considers African heritage; recognises historical and spiritual context, and integrates traditional wisdom in modern practice for culturally responsive care. As a result, Black psychologists reconstruct the notion of caring masculinities and vulnerability through the promotion of an inclusive and unprejudiced understanding of masculinity (Nayak, 2023).

5.2.3. *Decolonising psychology*

Decolonising psychology emerged as a crucial exercise in developing a professional identity for Black psychologists. Participants understood decolonising psychology as a way to transform the distasteful history of psychology in South Africa. This is to decolonise psychology that was previously forged to promote racial discrimination, unfair assessment practices, and segregation in South Africa, as led by psychologists such as Hendrik Verwoerd. This is in alignment with Malherbe and Ratele (2022), who claim that decolonising psychology is readdressing oppressive and discriminatory systems and social structures that reinforce unfair practices. The findings of Padmanabhanunni (2022) indicated that “Apartheid era ideologies also dominated the training and practice of professional psychology” (p. 361) and excluded non-Whites. In democracy, the goal continues to be to achieve diversity in psychology and to increase the number of psychologists from disempowered groups. Black male psychologists form caring masculinities by acknowledging and addressing historical trauma and occurring trauma that directly affect Black communities (Elliott,

2016; Morrell et al., 2012). These Black men, therefore, advocate for a psychology that promotes social justice and transformation (Ratele, 2018).

The inclusion of more Black trainees in professional psychology supports decolonisation, in that it increases diversity in Black representation. But to decolonise psychology involves addition of new knowledge that ultimately changes psychological practice in South Africa; and supports a way of thinking in psychology that harnesses knowledge outside of mainstream psychology (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004; Malherbe & Ratele, 2022). The construction of new knowledge and ultimately power, are concepts that aspire to build a different worldview, which is paramount for decolonisation (Maldonado-Torres, 2016). Therefore, decolonisation “seeks to disrupt the coloniality of knowledge, power, and being and change the world” (Maldonado-Torres, 2016, p. 29). Un-decolonised psychology in higher education lacks efforts to meet the needs of South Africa’s diverse population and redefine mental illness and treatments to be context-relevant (Malherbe & Ratele, 2022). Therefore, the power to seek new ways to actively ‘be’ and a serious confrontation/radical transformation of the colonial body of work is crucial and to ultimately increase post-colonial theory (Maldonado-Torres, 2016; Painter & Terblanche, 2004). Thus, decolonisation is the examination and challenging of dominant epistemologies and ways of being, and power structures which marginalise indigenous knowledge systems (Maldonado-Torres, 2016). Professional identity and a sense of belonging are cultivated in the contributions toward academic work that aims to Africanise psychology through integrating indigenous knowledge (Nolan, 2019; Ratele et al., 2018; Tomlinson & Jackson, 2021).

5.2.4. *Summary of the chapter*

The chapter integrated relevant theory and literature to understand the experiences of professional identity development and belonging among Black male psychologists who had trained through the University of the Western Cape. Different participants understood professional identity as a makeup of a moral guideline, the demarcated scope of practice, and an ethical foundation, which provides an established framework for behaviour to support belonging within a group of psychology

professionals. However, professional identity, underpinned by this definition, was also problematised by participants, in light of the realities of client or community work, thereby creating spaces for participants to reflect on when and where they accept or contest in-group identification as ‘psychologist’.

In terms of the motivators and drivers to enter or stay in the profession, participants highlighted the destigmatisation of mental health and the image of Black men in the Black community. Theoretically, Black male psychologists conceptualise their professional identity by shifting the narrative of men as perpetrators towards being men as helpers (caring masculinities), and drawing on the power of shared experience and in-group social identification, thus modelling positive Black masculinities in society, and delivering psychology practices in context-relevant ways.

Drawbacks and challenges that Black male psychologists encounter in their experiences of professional identity and belonging were related to economic concerns in training and practice; dominant use of Western practices in professional spaces; apparent doubts in the competency of Black men in professional psychology; and the discrimination to Black male psychologists who are labelled with diminished masculinities. Each of these factors was discussed in terms of training or practice and the potential risks and ruptures within professional identity development.

Lastly, the discussion highlighted how Black male psychologists actively navigate the drivers and drawbacks of their professional experience, to develop and foster a more congruent professional identity that is grounded in the promotion of diversity and is legitimised and respected. The identified protective factors included supervision and mentorship, especially that offered by other Black psychologists; community grounding and connections; and the responsibility to decolonise psychology and reform colonial structures.

CHAPTER 6

LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

6. *Introduction*

This final chapter outlines the contribution of the study to the broader field of psychology. It includes a review of the limitations of the study design, with the suggestions for future research, and recommendations for psychology practice and training programmes at South African universities. Recommendations aim to identify possible intervention strategies and supportive factors in the development of Black men within the field of professional psychology practice.

6.1. *Contribution of the study*

The lived experiences of Black male psychologists, particularly, their sense of belonging and identity in professional psychology training contexts are largely absent from representations in the existing literature. Furthermore, contemporary studies have investigated masculinities within psychology training but have overlooked racial identities (Townsend, 2013). This study served as an attempt to give Black male psychologists, who trained at a historically disadvantaged institution, an opportunity to voice their experiences in both psychology training and practice, in understanding how they construct and redefine masculinities and professional identity experiences. This study positively contributed to the literature on the identity and belonging experiences of Black male practitioners in South Africa; to offer a comprehensive understanding of how Black male psychologists navigate professional identity formation despite the identified challenges that Black male psychologists may endure in psychological practice.

The study findings revealed some of the challenges encountered by Black male psychologists in training and practice. This included economic concerns, a culture of whiteness and dominant Western world views, racial stigma and undermined competence, along with other sociocultural forms of discrimination. Despite these challenges, participants described motivating factors for entering and remaining in the profession, such as the importance of representation and role modelling, subverting

the narrative of men as perpetrators, and the value of drawing on a shared lived experience with the black community, that contributes towards accurately translating indigenous experiences in mainstream psychology and developing culture-sensitive approaches to research and clinical practice that understand individuals in their sociocultural contexts.

Protective factors were also identified that are conducive to professional identity development and aligned with personal identity and values in training and practice. Black male psychologists understand their professional identity to be community grounded and declare themselves to be agents of change in providing a body of knowledge that is needed and contextually relevant. Other protective factors included supervision, mentoring and focused training, and a core sense of purpose and meaning to decolonise the profession and foster a professional identity that is conducive to facilitating psychology services in South Africa.

6.2. *Limitations of the study*

As previously mentioned, challenges were noted in the recruitment of participants, owing to the small population of Black male psychologists trained at the identified institution. While a suitable sample size was achieved for this study (8 participants), challenges with recruitment prolonged the data collection phase. The relatively small pool of participants also introduced the risk of identification, and some prospective participants chose not to participate in the study, on this basis, despite confidentiality and attempts to conceal identities. Thus, pointing to further issues of access to samples of this nature.

Due to the climate of the COVID-19 health and safety regulations at the time of proposal development, online data collection methods were preferred. The study was conducted through online interviews, which at times posed some challenges in clear audio and connectivity issues. Connecting with participants in person may have provided an opportunity to understand the nuance of expression more clearly. Furthermore, although the lead researcher is well-versed in multiple local languages, some participants preferred to explain certain cultural notions or phrases in their mother tongue, which posed some language barriers that required additional explanation and inquiry.

6.3. *Implications*

The different participants shared their experiences that validate their sense of identity and belonging in professional psychology. Participants acknowledged that, historically, psychology was involved in the development of the apartheid systems and contributed extensively to unfair practices to discriminate and advance apartheid policies that did not benefit Black communities; and actions of the apartheid which led to various social issues that left a long-standing psychological impact. For example, the apartheid regime constructed masculinities based on patriarchal and hegemony norms that subdued women and other men and denied privileges to non-Whites (MacLeod et al., 2020). It is such history that motivates Black male psychologists to decolonise psychology and reconfigure their masculinities to perform psychology with the intent and purpose to bring change in vulnerable and low-income South African communities. There appears to be a consensus that, the history and current standing of Black people in the profession necessitates a call to activism or at least participants identified a responsibility to endeavour to redress, transform, and address racial disparities to fulfil the needs within Black communities.

Reconfiguration of masculinities was linked to the intention to model positive Black masculinities in the Black community and tailor Western methods and traditional practices to develop culturally competent treatments. Participants' experiences revealed that decolonising psychology is to cocreate a new body of knowledge that punctuates from indigenous knowledge. As a result, they problematised the prevailing culture of whiteness in professional psychology. Therefore, contextually situated professional training is valued since it condones healing that considers the interactions between individuals and their communities. Their quest is to demystify mental health, and diversity in gender identities, while overcoming challenges to acquire a healthy professional identity to perform psychology in exceptional ways. For example, there is hesitancy and doubts surrounding the practice of Black professionals to exceptionally perform in a predominately White field and negative gender stereotypes directed towards these men. Furthermore, challenges for professional training were raised in terms of the dominant use of Western models and the underfunding in higher education was linked to a shortage of qualified Black psychologists due to a lack of financial privileges to educational

training for a professional degree. In the midst of Black male psychologists' experiences in professional psychology, these men seek to obtain a viable professional identity to perform their roles and further provide pathways to achieve the concept of professional identity. For example, supervisors, the situatedness of training programmes, and mentoring for and/or by Black psychologists are actively helpful in forming a constructive professional identity. Challenges to developing a viable professional identity were related to the pressures imposed on professionals to perform in predefined structures and professional identity formation used as a process of summative assessment of learning which prioritises compliance. These findings may have implications for practice, since challenges to a professional identity may include difficulties in self-categorisation within a group which is crucial to forming a social identity with in-group members (Caza & Creary, 2016).

6.4. *Suggestions for future research*

The study draws on qualitative methods and a more context-specific understanding of participant experiences. As such, it does not make claims towards generalisability of all Black men in Psychology in South Africa. However, being able to conduct larger-scale studies, with quantitative survey methodologies to reach a larger pool of Black male psychologists may highlight the pervasiveness of some of the barriers and enablers related to psychology training and practice. The generation of statistical data regarding representativity, experiences, attitudes, and practices may supplement the more nuanced qualitative data from this study.

Secondly, this study focused on the lived experiences of Black male psychologists. Black men encounter challenges at the interface of race ('Black') and sex and/or gender ('male', 'men'). The culture of whiteness in psychology and the experiences of racial stigma were prominent in this study. Future research should therefore also focus on the identity experiences of Black female psychologists, as they negotiate their belonging in the development of a professional identity. Research findings in this study also alluded to a strong community-focus, in terms of motivators to enter the profession and the barriers to mental health service access and uptake. Including the views of individuals in Black

communities who are rendered psychological services would also provide rich information in understanding the current image of psychology and mental health in Black communities.

In terms of the content covered in these interviews, future research in this area may benefit from a more focused engagement on how career choice affects male practitioners' socialised roles and other relations, outside of the professional space. Owing to the prominent theme related to racial stigma, it would be useful to revisit the implications of a perceived racial inclusion bias without merit in selections, as well as how this affects relations in professional psychology at the level of training and practice.

Finally, there is a need for multi-stakeholder engagement on these issues. Aside from working with the practitioners themselves, it would be beneficial to explore the views of staff within the academic training institutions for professional psychology programmes to assess their approach to supporting students of colour. It would also be beneficial to engage with the internship training sites and the HPCSA, in addressing the challenges faced by Black male practitioners working in the private and public sector in South Africa.

6.5. *Recommendations for Policy and Practice*

The current study indicated that Black male psychologists experience challenges that have implications for psychological practice and satisfaction of training needs. Regarding the results, the following recommendations are proposed for both the level of psychology training, as well as ethical regulators, such as the HPCSA.

- i. University institutions should be at the forefront to continue to liaise with the public and private sectors to provide governmental support for students in postgraduate (psychology) training programmes to address findings of economic concerns in higher education and the resources needed for training. A consistent grounding in the motivators to practice psychology for the better good of Black communities was recommended to mitigate ideas of self-importance that are not directed towards performing psychological practice in ways that

seek to empower. Engaging with colleagues in collaborative spaces was recommended. An increase in trained Black psychologists may aid in accessibility and decentralisation of mental health services in marginalised groups and the public sector (Padmanabhanunni et al., 2022).

- ii. Findings indicated the absence of indigenous knowledge and the prevailing culture of whiteness in training and practice which maintains colonial knowledge and power. Therefore, University institutions (M1) and internship training sites (M2) should review curricula annually and ensure the implementation of indigenous knowledge, with a view to promoting culturally sensitive approaches and interventions (Chitindingu & Mkhize, 2016). Professional regulators like the HPCSA should review and issue practice guidelines to formalise indigenous content in training and competencies. A proposed solution is the addition of indigenous knowledge advocates for an integrated health perspective that considers ethnic backgrounds and reduces mental health stigma, and misdiagnosis of Africans in clinical settings (Chitindingu & Mkhize, 2016). Therefore, integrated approaches to psychological practice should be developed as this may lead to “whiteness being radically rejected, and blackness romanticised and a Black identity that is disentangled from White values altogether” (Painter & Terblanche, 2004, p.531).
- iii. Participants in this study reflected that the number of trainee Black male psychologists remains relatively low in comparison to other demographics. Therefore, for higher education training sites, it is important to continue to address the diversity gap through the inclusion of Black male candidates. Efforts to diversify higher education continue through recruiting diverse groups (Padmanabhanunni, 2022; Smith et al., 2023), however, care needs to be taken in the support and integration of minority students within the training context to dispel myths regarding quota allocations that may undermine student self-efficacy (Davis et al., 2020; Padmanabhanunni et al., 2022).
- iv. Findings in this study highlighted the presence of racism and unfairness in training and practice. Participants then indicated the role of clinical supervisors as central to a supportive

structure and professional development in training. University institutions (M1) and internship training sites (M2) would benefit from appointing complementary supervisors, in terms of race and gender, to lessen power differentials that may make it difficult for trainees to raise matters that seem controversial or cause discomfort, e.g. racial matters (Emerson, 2010; Fitzgerald, 2020). Such initiative adds to the decolonising imperatives. Complementary supervisors may help in the support of trainees, and later practitioners, to professionally deal with issues of discrimination and racism in professional practice.

- ✦ Ethical regulators like the HPCSA should consider the implementation of policies and interventions to deal with unfair systems and racial matters in the workspace such as racial profiling, and racist microaggressions (Bautista-Biddle et al., 2021; Proctor et al., 2016).

6.6. Conclusion

In exploring participant's understanding of the professional identity concept, results indicated that professional identity is an expectation that is attached to professional psychologists in performing their duties and responsibilities as per ethical regulations. Professional identity is, therefore, a self-image of how professionals prefer to be recognised across work-setting contexts. Challenges to professional identity were linked to the discrepancies in the agreed objective standard of what the concept encompasses and its application in actual practice. The study further revealed that identity and belonging experiences of Black male psychologists are informed by motivations to represent the experiences of Black communities, and to readdress the perpetuated stigmas of mental health underpinned by specific cultural and gendered norms. Additionally, the participants aim to offer psychology services in forms that are not gender binary; but encourage and create spaces for LGBTQIA+ identities.

Challenges were acknowledged as related to economic constraints, hegemonic notions of psychology as emasculating, racist queries of competency, and the dominance of Western models, which promote 'whiteness' in psychological practice, and stifle the production and place of indigenous knowledge. Despite these challenges, the study showed that participants are motivated

and concerned with offering help that takes into consideration understanding individuals within their sociocultural context. In providing holistic interventions, participants construct their sense of identity and belonging in striving to create a new body of knowledge in psychological practice derived from indigenous knowledge. Decolonising psychology was highlighted in reviewing psychology training to make psychology content relevant for effective care. For many participants, psychological practice that is community grounded contributes to a viable professional identity that emits indigenous knowledge. Furthermore, results indicated that supervision, mentoring, and focused training are central to professional identity formation and participants use this opportunity to absorb essential knowledge, awareness, critical thinking and to gain confidence in the profession.

The representation of the identity and belonging experiences and professional identity formation of Black male psychologists can help increase the number of Black male psychologists in professional psychology. The inclusion of more Black men within the field of psychology is important to expand cultural diversity in professional practice. The aim is to provide psychological awareness and culture-sensitive interventions in Black communities and to challenge the prevailing ‘whiteness’ of psychology in South Africa. Decolonisation is imperative to challenge the institutional barriers that impact Black male students such as low enrolment and representation.

In summary, Black male psychologists acknowledge that they may operate in a context of toxic masculine expression. This was highlighted through their own community exposure and the types of client issues at the heart of their work, like gender-based violence. They also note the perceived stigma and discrimination of being associated with an ‘emotional’ career that is at risk of being feminised and subordinated. However, Black male psychologists actively resist this subordination in reframing their professional identities, by highlighting their power in effecting social change and also in identifying and resisting colonial structures. The research therefore holds promise in creating a space for Black men to voice and affirm the importance of caring and socially just masculinities. It also provides an opportunity to extend the gaze beyond other developed Western nations, and for South Africa to represent the Global South in these conversations on the lived realities of underrepresented groups in the helping professions.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Email Advert for Participation



UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa

Tel: +27 21-959 2911

E-mail: 3937660@myuwc.ac.za

Subject: MPsyh Research Thesis: Invitation for Participation

Dear prospective participant,

This communication serves to inform of a research project entitled, “Exploring the identity and belonging experiences of Black men who have undertaken training in professional psychology programmes at a South African university.”

The study aims to foster understanding of the experiences of those who identify as Black men, in terms of professional psychology practice and training. This knowledge will be beneficial for the development of possible intervention strategies to support the training of psychology students.

Should you identify as a potential participant, please see attached the full Information Sheet for your review and consideration. The document provided is in English. Please advise should you require an Afrikaans or isiXhosa version.

Should you wish to participate, please contact Mr Linda Gamede at: 3937660@myuwc.ac.za

Appendix B: Information sheet (English, Afrikaans, Xhosa version)



UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa

Tel: +27 21-959 2911

E-mail: 3937660@myuwc.ac.za

INFORMATION SHEET

Dear prospective participant,

My name is Linda Gamede. I am currently doing my Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology at the University of the Western Cape. I am conducting research as part of requirement for this degree, and under the supervision of Dr Leigh Adams Tucker and co-supervisor Mr. Brendon Faraa. The research project is titled: Exploring the identity and belonging experiences of Black men who have undertaken training in professional psychology programmes at a South African university.

Please read through the information on this sheet. You are welcome to pass the information to any other candidate who could participate. The details of the study are below.

What is this study about?

The study aims to foster understanding of the experiences of those who identify as Black men, in terms of professional psychology practice and training. This study may bring knowledge to understand what supports men in their journey of Psychology and may provide an overall picture of what the practice looks like for those who identify as Black men. This knowledge will be beneficial for the development of possible intervention strategies and may serve as feedback to the department of psychology at UWC.

What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?

The requirement for participation in the study, you will be asked to participate in a once-off audio recorded Zoom or Google Meet virtual meetings with the researcher. The audio recordings will be kept safe in a password encrypted cloud file for a period of five years, for review purposes and will be destroyed thereafter. The use of online platforms is to adhere to COVID-19 protocols which limits physical contact for safety purposes.

The interview will ask you to participate in open-ended qualitative questions to engage in a dialogue of your experiences in training at UWC and beyond university training as a practitioner. The interview will be scheduled at convenience and availability of the prospective participant. The duration of the interview will be approximately 1 hour or less on either Zoom or Google Meet. The preferred language medium for both instructions and participation is English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa. The interview guide will be available in all three languages, to give participants the opportunity to participate in their mother tongue language. The recordings of the interviews will be transcribed word-by-word by the researcher. The findings will be written up and presented in a way that does not prejudice participants and include a thesis to be submitted for examination at UWC. Prior to the interview, an effort will be required from you to carefully read through the informed consent form and will also be explained to you telephonically. This form confirms that you understand and are aware of everything that we have

discussed concerning confidentiality, feedback, privacy, and rights for participation, and this will be substantiated by your signature to confirm your participation and return the form via email. Participation in this research is voluntary and participants may withdraw at any time should they wish to not continue.

Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?

The identifiers of participant's will be discarded, or the use of different names will be implemented, however for the purpose of the study direct quotations from the transcripts may be used in the research output and anonymity will be maintained. However, there are instances where confidentiality from a practitioner may be broken under strict and professional procedures to fulfil a legal responsibility to report to the relevant authorities. This is in cases where the practitioner is obligated to disclose information perceived as possibly leading to potential harm to self or others, in this event you will be informed that confidentiality is broken based on concerning information brought to my attention. Responses provided by participants will be used for research purposes only.

What are the risks and benefits of this study?

Participation is voluntary, and you will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to take part in or decline the research. You may withdraw from participating at any time during the interview, without any negative consequences. You may also choose not to answer any question if you do not feel comfortable answering.

Sharing of personal information and experiences may carry some number of risks. As an attempt to minimise such risks, a plan will be put in place to assist should you experience any emotional discomfort or psychological impacts during the process of the interview. After the interview a debriefing session will be necessary to reflect on the process and discuss how you felt. At any time should it be noted or mentioned that you might have possibly experienced distress after the interview you may contact me for referral or contact the following contact options for face-to-face, online or telephonic counselling listed below.

The following are organisations offering free counselling services, that operate 24hrs 7 days per week.

CIPLA WhatsApp chat Line: 076 882 2775 Website: cipla.co.za

CIPLA Mental Health Line: 0800 456 789 Website: cipla.co.za

Lifeline Counselling Line: 0861 322 322 Website: lifelinesa.co.za

SADAG 011 234 4837 Website: sadag.org

What if I have questions?

Please keep this information sheet for your reference, as well as the contact details of the researcher, Linda Gamede; e-mail: 3937660@myuwc.ac.za; and research supervisor Dr Leigh Adams Tucker; email: ltucker@uwc.ac.za and co-supervisor Mr. Brendon Faroa; email: bfaroa@uwc.ac.za

Prof. Anthea Rhoda
Dean: Faculty of Community and Health Sciences
University of the Western Cape
chs-deansoffice@uwc.ac.za

Prof. Padmanabhanun Anita
Psychology Head of Department
University of the Western Cape
apadmana@uwc.ac.za

This research is a requirement as part of the Masters of Arts in clinical psychology training course and will seek approval from the University of the Western Cape's Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC).

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INLIGTINGSBLAD

Geagte Voornemende deelnemer,

My naam is Linda Gamede. Ek is tans besig met my Meestersgraad in Kliniese Sielkunde aan die Universiteit van Wes-Kaap. Ek doen navorsing as deel van die vereiste van hierdie graad en onder toesig van Dr Leigh Adams Tucker en medeleier, mnr. Brendon Faroa. Die navorsingsprojek het die titel: Verkenning van die identiteit en ervarings om te behoort aan swart mans wat opleiding in professionele sielkundeprogramme by 'n Suid-Afrikaanse universiteit onderneem het.

Lees asseblief die inligting op hierdie blad. U is welkom om die inligting deur te gee aan enige ander kandidaat wie kan deelneem. Die besonderhede van die studie is hieronder.

Waaroor gaan hierdie studie?

Dit is 'n uitnodiging vir deelname aan hierdie navorsingsprojek, aangesien u moontlik geïdentifiseer is as 'n geskikte Swartman om verslag te doen oor u ervarings in die professionele praktyk en tydens opleiding. Hierdie studie kan kennis bring om die ervarings van mans in die Sielkunde te begryp en wat mans ondersteun in hul reis na Sielkunde, en kan 'n geheelbeeld gee van hoe die praktyk vir Swartmans voorkom. Hierdie kennis is voordelig vir die ontwikkeling van moontlike intervensiestrategieë en kan dien as terugvoer aan die departement sielkunde aan die UWK.

Wat sal ek gevra word om te doen as ek instem om deel te neem?

Die vereiste vir deelname aan die studie, u sal gevra word om deel te neem aan 'n eenmalige klankopname van Zoom of Google Meet virtuele vergaderings met die navorser. Die klankopnames word vir 'n tydperk van vyf jaar veilig bewaar in 'n wagwoord-geënkripteerde wolklêer, en dit sal daarna vernietig word. Die gebruik van aanlynplatforms is om COVID- 19-protokolle na te kom wat fisiese kontak vir veiligheidsdoeleindes beperk.

In die onderhoud word u gevra om deel te neem aan oop kwalitatiewe vrae om 'n gesprek te voer oor u ervaring in opleiding aan UWK en verder as universiteitsopleiding as praktisyn. Die onderhoud word geskeduleer op die gemak en beskikbaarheid van die voornemende deelnemer. Die duur van die onderhoud sal ongeveer 1 uur of minder op Zoom of Google Meet wees. Die voorkeurtaal-medium vir beide instruksies en deelname is Engels, Afrikaans en isiXhosa. Die onderhoudsgids sal in al drie tale beskikbaar wees om deelnemers die geleentheid te gee om aan hul moedertaal te deel. Die opnames van die onderhoude sal woord vir woord deur die navorser getranskribeer word. Die bevindinge sal opgeskryf en aangebied word op 'n manier wat nie deelnemers benadeel nie, en 'n tesis insluit wat vir UWK vir eksaminering ingedien moet word. Voor die onderhoud sal u 'n poging nodig om die ingeligte toestemmingsvorm deeglik deur te lees en ook telefonies aan u verduidelik word.

Hierdie vorm bevestig dat u alles wat ons bespreek het rakende vertroulikheid, terugvoer, privaatheid en regte vir deelname verstaan en bewus is, en dit sal bevestig word deur u handtekening om u deelname te bevestig en die vorm per e-pos terug te stuur. Deelname aan hierdie navorsing is vrywillig en deelnemers kan te enige tyd onttrek indien hulle nie wil voortgaan nie.

Sou my deelname aan hierdie studie vertroulik gehou word?

Die identifiseerder van deelnemers sal weggegooi word, of die gebruik van verskillende name sal geïmplementeer word, maar vir die doel van die studie kan direkte aanhalings uit die transkripsies gebruik word in die navorsingsuitsette en anonimiteit sal behou word. Daar is egter gevalle waar vertroulikheid van 'n praktisyn verbreek kan word onder streng en professionele prosedures om 'n wettige verantwoordelikheid om aan die betrokke owerhede verslag te doen, na te kom. Dit is in gevalle waar die praktisyn verplig is om inligting bekend te maak wat beskou word as moontlik tot beskadiging van self of ander, en in hierdie geval sal u in kennis gestel word dat vertroulikheid verbreek word op grond van inligting wat onder my aandag gebring word. Die antwoorde wat deur die deelnemers verskaf word, sal slegs vir navorsingsdoeleindes gebruik word.

Wat is die risiko's en voordele van hierdie studie?

Deelname is vrywillig, en u sal op geen manier bevoordeel of benadeel word as u verkies om aan die navorsing deel te neem of dit van die hand te wys nie. U kan te eniger tyd tydens die onderhoud deelneem aan deelname sonder enige negatiewe gevolge. U kan ook kies om geen vraag te beantwoord as u nie gemaklik voel om te antwoord nie.

Die deel van persoonlike inligting en ervarings kan 'n aantal risiko's inhou. As 'n poging om sulke risiko's te minimaliseer, sal 'n plan ingestel word om te help indien u tydens die onderhoudsproses emosionele ongemak met die sielkundige gevolge ervaar. Na die onderhoud is 'n besprekingsessie nodig om na te dink oor die proses en te bespreek hoe u gevoel het. Daar moet op enige tydstip opgemerk of vermeld word dat u moontlik na die onderhoud probleme ervaar het, u kan my kontak vir verwysing of kontak met die volgende kontakopsies vir die onderstaande persoonlike, aanlyn- of telefoniese berading.

Die volgende is organisasies wat gratis beradingsdienste aanbied, wat 24 uur 7 dae per week werk

CIPLA WhatsApp Chat line: 076 882 2774 Webwerf: cipla.co.za

CIPLA Geestesgesondheidslyn: 0800 456 789 Webwerf: cipla.co.za

Lifeline Counselling Line: 0861 322 322 Webwerf: lifelinesa.co.za

SADAG: (011) 234 4837 Webwerf: sadag.org

Wat as ek vrae het?

Hou hierdie inligtingsblad vir u verwysing, sowel as die kontakbesonderhede van die navorser, Linda Gamede; e-pos 3937660@myuwc.ac.za; en studieleier Dr Leigh Adams Tucker; e-pos ltucker@uwc.ac.za en medestudieleier mnr Brendon Faroa; e-pos

Prof Anthea Rhode
Dekaan: Fakulteit Gemeenskaps- en Gesondheidsdienste
Universiteit van Wes-Kaap
chs-deansoffice@uwc.ac.za

Prof Padmanabhanun Anita
Sielkunde Hoofafdeling
Universiteit van Wes-Kaap
apadmana@uwc.ac.za

Hierdie navorsing is 'n vereiste as deel van die meestersgraad in die kliniese sielkunde- opleidingskursus en sal goedkeuring van die Universiteit van die Wes-Kaap se navorsingsetiek- komitee vir Geesteswetenskappe en Sosiale Wetenskappe (HSSREC) verkry.

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Tel .: 021 959 4222; e-pos: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za



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Uxwebhu loLwazi

Mthandi oza kuthatha inxaxheba,

Igama lam ndingu Linda Gamede. Ngoku ndenza iMasters yezoBugcisa kwiClinical Psychology kwiYunivesithi yaseNtshona Koloni. Ndenza uphando njengxenye yemfuno zale nqanaba, naphantsi kolawulo lukaGqr Leigh Adams Tucker kunye nomphathi-ceba uMnu Brendon Faroo. Iprojekthi yophando inesihloko esithi: Ukuphonononga ubuni kunye namava abandakanyekayo amadoda aMnyama athe aqeqeshelwa iinkqubo zesayikholoji kwiyunivesithi yaseMzantsi Afrika.

Nceda ufunde ulwazi olukulephepha. Wamkelekile ukuba udlulise ulwazi kuye nawuphi na omnye umgqatswa onokuthi athathe inxaxheba. Iinkcukacha zesifundo zingezantsi.

Singantoni esi sifundo?

Esi sisimemo sokuthatha inxaxheba kule projekthi yophando nanjengoko usenokuchongwa njengendoda efanelekileyo eMnyama ukuba unike ingxelo ngamava akho kuqeqesho lobuchule nangexesha loqeqesho. Olu phononongo lunokuzisa ulwazi lokuqonda amava endoda kwiPsychology kwaye yintoni exhasa amadoda kuhambo lwabo lwePsychology kwaye inokunika umfanekiso opheleleyo wento yokuziqhelanisa ijonge kubantu abamnyama. Olu lwazi luya kuba luncedo kuphuhliso lwezicwangciso zongenelelo kwaye lunokusebenza njengengxelo kwisebe lezengqondo kwi-UWC.

Yintoni endiza kucelwa ukuba ndiyenze ukuba ndiyavuma ukuthatha inxaxheba?

Imfuno yokuthatha inxaxheba kuphononongo, uyakucelwa ukuba uthathe inxaxheba kwisandi esikrekhodwa kanye kwi-Google okanye kwiintlanganiso zeGoogle zokudibana kunye nomphandi. Ukurekhodwa okurekhodwayo kuya kugcinwa kukhuselekile kwifayile ye-encrypted file yelifu kangangesithuba seminyaka emihlanu, ukulungiselela iinjongo zokuphononongwa kwaye ziya kutshatyalaliswa emva koko. Ukusetyenziswa kwamaqonga akwi-Intanethi kukubambelela kwiiprotokholi ze-COVID-19 ezithintela ukuthintana komzimba ngenjongo yokhuseleko.

Udliwanondlebe luyakucelwa ukuba uthathe inxaxheba kwimibuzo esemgangathweni evulelekileyo ukuze ubandakanyeke kwincoko yamava akho kuqeqesho e-UWC nangaphaya koqeqesho lwaseyunivesithi njengengcali. Udliwanondlebe luya kucwangciswa ngokufanelekileyo kunye nokufumaneka komntu oza kuthatha inxaxheba. Ixesha

lodliwanondlebe liya kuba malunga neyure enye okanye ngaphantsi kwi-Zoom okanye kwiGoogle Meet. Olona lwimi luthethwayo kuyo yomibini imiyalelo nokuthatha inxaxheba sisiNgesi, isiBhulu nesiXhosa. Isikhokelo sodliwanondlebe siya kufumaneka ngazo zontathu iilwimi, ukunika abathathi-nxaxheba ithuba lokuthatha inxaxheba kulwimi lwabo lweenkobe. Ukurekhodwa kodliwanondlebe kuya kubhalwa ngegama-ngelizwi ngumphandi. Iziphumo ziya kubhalwa kwaye zenziwe ngendlela engabathinteli abathathi-nxaxheba kwaye ibandakanye ithisisi eza kungeniswa ukuze ihlolwe e-UWC. Phambi kodliwanondlebe, kuya kufuneka umzamo kuwe wokufunda ngononophelo kwifom yemvume unolwazi kwaye uya kuchazelwa nawe ngomnxeba. Le fomu iyangqina ukuba uyayiqonda kwaye uyayazi yonke into esiyixoxe malunga nemfihlo, ingxelo, imfihlo kunye namalungelo okuthatha inxaxheba, kwaye oku kuya kuqinisekiswa kukusayina kwakho ukuqinisekisa ukuthatha kwakho inxaxheba kwaye ubuyisele ifom nge-imeyile. Ukuthatha inxaxheba kolu phando kwenziwa ngokuzithandela kwaye abathathi-nxaxheba banokurhoxa nangaliphi na ixesha ukuba banqwenela ukuqhubeka.

Ngaba ukuthatha inxaxheba kwam kolu phando kungacina kuyimfihlo?

Ukuchongwa kwabathathi-nxaxheba kuya kulahlwa, okanye ukusetyenziswa kwamagama ahlukeneyo kuya kwenziwa, nangona kunjalo ngenjongo yophando iikowuti ezizodwa ezivela kwimibhalo ezinokuthi zisetyenziswe kwimveliso yophando kwaye ukungaziwa kungacina. Nangona kunjalo, kukho iimeko apho ukugcina kwemfihlo kugqirha kungaphulwa phantsi kweenkqubo ezingqongqo nezobungcali ukuzalisekisa uxanduva olusemthethweni lokunika ingxelo kwabasemagunyeni abafanelekileyo. Kwimeko apho ingcali inyanzelekile ukuba ichaze ulwazi olubonwa njengolunokubangela ingozi kuwe okanye kwabanye, kulo mcimbi uyakwaziswa ukuba imfihlo iphulwe ngokusekwe kulwazi olwazisiweyo. Iimpendulo ezinikwe ngabathathi-nxaxheba ziya kusetyenziselwa iinjongo zophando kuphela.

Buphi ubungozi nezibonelelo zolu phononongo?

Ukuthatha inxaxheba kungokuzithandela, kwaye awuyi kuxhamla okanye uhleleleke nangayiphi na indlela yokukhetha ukuthatha inxaxheba okanye ukwala uphando. Ungarhoxa ekuthatheni inxaxheba nangaliphi na ixesha ngexesha lodliwanondlebe, ngaphandle kweziphumo ezibi. Unokukhetha ukungaphenduli nawuphi na umbuzo ukuba awuziva ukhululekile ukuphendula.

Ukwabelana ngolwazi lomntu kunye namava kunokuba nemingcipheko ethile. Njengelingo lokunciphisa ubungozi obunjalo, kuyakubekwa isicwangciso sokunceda ukuba ufumene nakuphi na ukuphazamiseka ngokweemvakalelo okanye iimpembelelo zengqondo ngexesha lodliwanondlebe. Emva kodliwanondlebe iseshoni yokuxoxa iya kuba yimfuneko ukubonisa inkqubo kwaye uxoxe ngendlela oziva ngayo. Ngalo naliphi na ixesha kufanele ukuba kuqatshelwe okanye kukhankanywe ukuba kungenzeka ukuba ukhe ube noxinzelelo emva kodliwanondlebe unganxibelelana nam ukuze undidlulisele okanye uqhakamshelane nezi ndlela zilandelayo zokunxibelelana ubuso ngobuso, nge-intanethi okanye ngeengcebiso ngomnxeba ezidweliswe apha ngezantsi.

Le mibutho ilandelayo inikezela ngeenkonzo zasimahla zokufumana iingcebiso, ezisebenza iiyure ezingamashumi amabini anesine iintsuku ezisixhenxe ngeveki.

CIPLA WhatsApp chat Line: 076 882 2775 Website: cipla.co.za

CIPLA Mental Health Line: 0800 456 789 Website: cipla.co.za

Lifeline Counselling Line: 0861 322 322 Website: lifelinesa.co.za

SADAG 011 234 4837 Website: sadag.org

Kuthekani ukuba ndinemibuzo?

Nceda ugcine eli phepha lolwazi ukuze ubhekisele kulo, kunye neenkukacha zonxibelelwano zomphandi, uLinda Gamede; imeyile: 3937660@myuwc.ac.za; nomphathi wezophando uGqirha Leigh Adams Tucker; i-imeyile: ltucker@uwc.ac.za kunye nomphathi- ntloko uMnu Brendon Faroa; imeyile: bfaroa@uwc.ac.za

UProfesa Anthea Rhoda

UMlawuli: ICandelo loLuntu kunye neNzululwazi yezeMpilo KwiYunivesithi yaseNtshona Koloni
chs-deansoffice@uwc.ac.za

UProfesa Padmanabhanun Anita INtloko yeSayensi yezeNgqondo KwiYunivesithi yaseNtshona
Koloni apadmana@uwc.ac.za

Olu phando luyimfuneko njengexalenye yeenkosi zoBugcisa kuqeqesho lweklinikhi yengqondo kunjalo kwaye bayakufuna invume kwiDyunivesithi yaseNtshona Koloni yoLuntu kwaye IKomiti yeeNqobo eziseSikweni yoPhando ngezeNzululwazi yezeNtlalo (HSSREC).

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Appendix C: Informed consent forms (English, Afrikaans, isiXhosa)



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CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project: Exploring the identity and belonging experiences of Black men who have undertaken training in professional psychology programmes at a South African university.

The study has been described to me in language that I understand. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand what my participation will involve, and I agree to participate of my own choice and free will. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed to anyone. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without fear of negative consequences or loss of benefits.

___ I agree to be audiotaped during my participation in this study.

___ I do not agree to be audiotaped during my participation in this study.

Participant's name.....

Participant's signature.....

Date.....

Humanities Social Sciences Committee Research Ethics Committee University of the Western Cape

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Tel: 021 959 4111

Email: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za



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INSTEMMINGSVORM

Titel van die navorsingsprojek: Verkenning van die identiteit en ervarings om te behoort aan swart mans wat opleiding in professionele sielkundeprogramme by 'n Suid-Afrikaanse universiteit onderneem het.

Die studie is aan my verduidelik. Ek verstaan wat ek moet doen en ek stem in om aan die bogenoemde navorsingstudie deel te neem. Ek is tevrede dat al die vrae wat ek gevra het beantwoord is. Ek verstaan dat my naam op geen vorm gebruik sal word nie. Ek verstaan ook dat ek enige tyd en sonder 'n rede mag ophou om deel te neem en dat ek glad nie daarvoor gestraf sal word nie.

_____ Ek mag op band opgeneem word tydens my deelname aan die studie.

_____ Ek mag nie op band opgeneem word tydens my deelname aan die studie nie.

Deelnemer se naam.....

Deelnemer se handtekening.....

Datum.....

Humanities Social Sciences Committee Research Ethics Committee Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland

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7535

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E-pos: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za



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IFOMU YEMVUME

Isihloko sophando lwesifundo: Ukuphonononga ubuni kunye namava abandakanyekayo amadoda aMnyama athe aqeqeshelwa iinkqubo zesayikholoji kwiyunivesithi yaseMzantsi Afrika.

Olu phando lwesifundo luchaziwe kum, khon'ukuze ndikuqonde emandikwenze, yaye ndiyavuma ukuthabatha inxaxheba kolu phando luchazwe ngasentl'apha. Ndikonwabele ukuba nayo nayiphi na imibuzo ebendinayo iphendulwe.

Ndiyayiqonda into yokuba igama lam alizi kukhankanywa nakuyo nayiphi na ifomu, yaye ndingayeka ukuthabatha inxaxheba kuphando nangaliphi na ixesha ngaphandle kokunika isizathu, ndingazi kufumana sohlwayo nangayiphi na indlela xa ndithe ndayeka (ukuthabatha inxaxheba).

_____Ndiyavuma ukuba kushicilelwe (kuqotshwe) ukuthabatha kwam inxaxheba kwesi sifundo.

_____Andivumi ukuba kushicilelwe (kuqotshwe) ukuthabatha kwam inxaxheba kwesi sifundo.

Igama lomthabathi-nxaxheba:.....

Utyikityo ngesandla (signature) lomthabathi-nxaxheba:.....

Umhla:.....

Humanities Social Sciences Committee Research Ethics Committee University of the Western Cape

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7535

Tel: 021 959 4111

E-mail: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za

Appendix D: Interview Guide – Demographic profile (English, Afrikaans, Xhosa)



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Part 1 of Interview guide

Kindly complete the following form by providing your personal details Age:

Surname:

Date of birth:

How would you describe your sex?

How would you describe your racial identity? How would you describe your gender?

How would you describe your sexuality? Are you a South African citizen? Yes or No. What is your first language?

What other languages do you speak? Year of training at UWC:

Highest education level:



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Deel 1 van Onderhoudsgids

Asseblief vul die volgende vorm in deur u persoonlike besonderhede te verstrek Ouderdom:

Van:

Geboortedatum:

Hoe sou jy jou seks beskryf?

Hoe sou jy jou rasse -identiteit beskryf?

Hoe sou jy jou geslag beskryf?

Hoe sou jy jou seksualiteit beskryf?

Is u 'n Suid -Afrikaanse burger? Ja of nee.

Wat is jou eerste taal?

Watter ander tale praat jy?

Jaar van opleiding by UWK:

Hoogste opvoedingsvlak:



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Icandelo 1 lesikhokelo sodliwanondlebe

Nceda ugwalise le fomu ilandelayo ngokunikezela ngeenkukacha zakho Ubudala:

Ifani:

Usuku lokuzalwa:

Ungayichaza njani isondo noma isazisi sakho?

Ungabuchaza njani ubuhlanga bakho?

Ungabuchaza njani ubuni bakho?

Ungabuchaza njani ubuni bakho?

Ngaba ungummi woMzantsi Afrika?

Hayi okanye ewe. Luluphi ulwimi lwakho lokuqala?

Zeziphi ezinye iilwimi ozithethayo? Unyaka woqeqesho e-UWC:

Elona nqanaba lemfundo liphezulu:



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INTERVIEW GUIDE

Researcher: Linda Gamede

Title of Research project: Exploring the identity and belonging experiences of Black men who undertaken training in professional psychology programmes at a South African university.

Part 2 of Interview guide

This study aims to explore the identity experiences of Black men psychologists who received training in the Clinical and Research Masters psychology training programmes at the University of the Western Cape, between 2016 to 2020. I would like to give you this opportunity to express your unique identity experiences in the discipline of psychology. This study is based on the exploration of professional identity development with a focus on your experiences as a professional Psychologist.

- 1. Describe your current status of employment/position?**
Probe: setting and placement
- 2. What led to you choosing psychology as a career choice?**
Probe: interests, values, skills, personality, and background.
- 3. What gives you a sense of belonging in the field of psychology as a Black Psychologist?**
Probe: factors that may support or encourage practicing psychology?
- 4. What do you understand by the term professional identity?**
Probe: factors defining professional identity in general
Probes: ways to develop this identity as a professional psychologist; the role of gender and race in developing your sense of identity as a psychologist
- 5. What factors played a role in developing your professional identity during your training (academic, internship)?**
Probe: supportive factors, challenging factors
- 6. What is your understanding of the given image and current presentation of Black men in psychological practice?**
- 7. Is there a need for more Black psychology trainees and psychologists? Please elaborate. If so, why?**

8. **How do you define your role as a Black man in psychology as a profession?**
Probe: scope of practice and unique perspective offered
9. **What are the benefits/satisfactions as a Black man in psychology as a profession?**
10. **Describe any challenges you face or faced as a Black man in the psychology profession?**
Probe: Gender and race challenges during graduate training in the clinical or research programme, professional setting, and practice.
11. **Are there any factors that may help Black men pursuing a career in psychology in South Africa?**
12. **Any other reflections on the topic?**



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ONDERHOUDSGIDS

Navorsers: Linda Gamede

Titel van navorsingsprojek: Ondersoek die identiteit en behoort-ervarings van swart mans wat tans ingeskryf is en voorheen geregistreer is vir professionele sielkunde-opleidingsprogramme by 'n Suid-Afrikaanse universiteit.

Deel 2 van Onderhoudsgids

Hierdie studie is daarop gemik om die identiteitservarings van Swart manlik sielkundiges te ondersoek wat voorheen ingeskryf was vir die kliniese en navorsingsmeesters - sielkundeopleidingsprogramme aan die Universiteit van Wes -Kaap, tussen 2016 en 2020. Ek wil u hierdie geleentheid gee om u unieke identiteitservarings in die dissipline van sielkunde. Hierdie studie is gebaseer op die verkenning van professionele identiteitsontwikkeling met die fokus op u ervarings as 'n professionele sielkundige.

1. **Beskryf u huidige status van indiensneming/posisie?**

Ondersoek : instelling en plasing

2. **Wat het daartoe gelei dat u sielkunde as 'n beroepskeuse gekies het?**

Ondersoek : belangstellings, waardes, vaardighede, persoonlikheid en agtergrond

3. **Wat gee jou 'n gevoel van aanvaarding op die gebied van sielkunde as 'n Swart sielkundige?**

Ondersoek: faktore wat die praktyk van sielkunde kan ondersteun of aanmoedig?

4. **Wat verstaan jy onder die term professionele identiteit?**

Ondersoek: faktore wat professionele identiteit in die algemeen bepaal

Ondersoeke: maniere om hierdie identiteit as 'n professionele sielkundige te ontwikkel; die rol van geslag en ras in die ontwikkeling van u identiteitsgevoel as sielkundige

5. **Watter faktore het 'n rol gespeel in die ontwikkeling van u professionele identiteit tydens u opleiding (akademies, internskap)?**

Ondersoek: ondersteunende faktore, uitdagende faktore

6. **Wat verstaan u van die gegewe beeld en die huidige aanbieding van Swart mans in die sielkundige praktyk?**
7. **Is daar 'n behoefte aan meer Swart sielkunde -leerlinge en sielkundiges? Verduidelik asseblief. Indien wel, hoekom?**
8. **Hoe definieer u u rol as 'n Swart man in die sielkunde as 'n beroep?**
9. **Wat is die voordele / bevredigings as 'n Swart man in die sielkundeberoep?**
Ondersoek: Geslags- en rasuitdagings tydens gegraduateerde opleiding in die kliniese of navorsingsprogram, professionele omgewing en praktyk.
10. **Beskryf enige uitdagings wat u as 'n Swart man in die sielkundeberoep in die gesig staar of in die gesig staar?**
Ondersoek: Geslags- en rasuitdagings tydens gegraduateerde opleiding in die kliniese of navorsings-program, professionele omgewing en praktyk.
11. **Is daar faktore wat Swart mans kan help om 'n loopbaan in sielkunde in Suid -Afrika te volg?**
12. **Enige ander besinning oor die onderwerp?**



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ISIKHOKELO SODLIWANO-NDLEBE

Umphandi: Linda Gamede

Isihloko seprojekthi yophando: Ukuphonononga isazisi kunye namava okuzibandakanya kwamadoda aNtsundu abhalisiweyo njengangoku kwaye ngaphambili abhaliswe kwiinkqubo zoqeqesho lwengqondo yobungcali kwiyunivesithi yaseMzantsi Afrika.

Icandelo 2 lesikhokelo sodliwanondlebe

Olu phononongo lujolise ekuphononongeni amava ezazisi zeNzululwazi yamadoda aMnyama ababekade babhalise kwiinkqubo zoqeqesho kwizifundo zenzululwazi yezonyango kwiYunivesithi yaseNtshona Koloni, phakathi kowama-2016 ukuya kowama-2020. amava esazisi kuqeqesho lwengqondo. Olu phononongo lusekwe kuphononongo lophuhliso lolwazi ngokujolisa kumava akho njengengcali yeengqondo.

1. Chaza imeko yakho yangoku yengqesho / isikhundla? Probe: ukubeka kunye nokubekwa
2. Yintoni ekhokelele ekubeni ukhethe isayikholoji njengokhetho lomsebenzi onokukhetha kuwo?
Probe: umdla, amaxabiso, izakhono, ubuntu, kunye nemvelaphi.
3. Yintoni ekunika imeko yokuziva ubandakanyekile kwicandelo leengqondo njengeNzululwazi yeengqondo eziMnyama?
Probe: zizinto ezinokuxhasa okanye zikhuthaze ukuziqhelanisa nezengqondo?
4. Uqonda ntoni ngegama elithi uchazo lobungcali? Probe: izinto ezichaza isazisi sobungcali ngokubanzi
Inkqubo: iindlela zokuphuhlisa obu buchwephesha njengengcali yokusebenza kwengqondo; indima yesini kunye nohlanga ekuphuhliseni ukuqonda kwakho njengesazinzulu ngengqondo

5. Zeziphi izinto ezidlale indima ekukhuleni kwesazisi sakho ngexesha loqeqesho lwakho (kwizifundo, uqeqesho lomsebenzi)?
Probe: izinto ezixhasayo, izinto ezinobunzima
6. Kukuthini ukuqonda kwakho umfanekiso onikiweyo kunye nenkcazo yangoku yamadoda aMnyama kwindlela yokusebenza kwengqondo?
7. Ngaba sikhona isidingo sokwenza uqeqesho lwabafundi abaNtsundu abaNtsundu kunye noochwephesha bengqondo? Nceda ucacise. Ukuba kunjalo, kutheni?
8. Uyichaza njani indima yakho njengendoda eMnyama kwisayikholoji njengomsebenzi? Probe: ubungakanani bokuziqhelanisa kunye nembono eyahlukileyo ebonelelweyo
9. Zithini izibonelelo / ukwaneliseka njengendoda eNtsundu kwisayikholoji njengomsebenzi?
10. Chaza nayiphi na imiceli mngeni ojamelana nayo okanye ojamelene nayo njengendoda eMnyama kwizifundo zengqondo?
Probe: Isini kunye nemiceli mngeni yohlanga ngexesha loqeqesho lokuthweswa isidanga kwinkqubo yeklinikhi okanye yophando, ukumiselwa kobungcali kunye nokuzilolonga.
11. Ngaba zikhona izinto ezinokunceda amadoda aMnyama aqhubeke nezifundo zengqondo eMzantsi Afrika?
12. Ngaba kukho okunye ukubonakaliswa kwesihloko?

Appendix F: Ethics approval (HS21/7/45)



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29 September 2021

Mr L. Gamede
Psychology
Faculty of Community and Health Sciences

HSSREC Reference Number: HS21/7/45

Project Title: Exploring the identity and belonging experiences of Black men formerly enrolled in professional psychology training programmes at a South African university

Approval Period: 29 September 2021 – 29 September 2024

I hereby certify that the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology, and amendments to the ethics of the above mentioned research project.

Any amendments, extension or other modifications to the protocol must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval.

Please remember to submit a progress report by 30 November each year for the duration of the project.

For permission to conduct research using student and/or staff data or to distribute research surveys/questionnaires please apply via:

<https://sites.google.com/uwc.ac.za/permissionresearch/home>

The permission letter must then be submitted to HSSREC for record keeping purposes.

The Committee must be informed of any serious adverse events and/or termination of the study.

Ms Patricia Josias
Research Ethics Committee Officer
University of the Western Cape

NHREC Registration Number: HSSREC-130416-049

Director: Research Development
University of the Western Cape
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Email: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za

FROM HOPE TO ACTION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE.

Appendix G: Permission to conduct research



**UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE
PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

DEAR Lindokuhle Gamede

This serves as acknowledgement that you have obtained and presented the necessary ethical clearance and your institutional permission required to proceed with the project referenced below:

RESEARCH TOPIC

Exploring the identity and belonging experiences of Black men formerly enrolled in professional psychology training programmes at a South African university

Name of researcher : Lindokuhle Gamede
Permission valid till : 29 September 2024
Institution : University of the Western Cape
Ethics reference : HS21/7/45
Permission reference : UWC 5097106489931665336

You are required to engage this office (researchperm@uwc.ac.za) in advance if there is a need to continue with research outside of the stipulated period. The manner in which you conduct your research must be guided by the conditions set out in the annexed agreement: Conditions to guide research conducted at the University of the Western Cape.

Please be at liberty to contact this office should you require any assistance to conduct your research or require access to either staff or student contact information.

Regards
Dr Ahmed Shaikjee
Deputy Registrar Academic Administration

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Approval status: **APPROVED** 10 October 2021

To verify or confirm the authenticity of this document please contact the University at researchperm@uwc.ac.za.



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