

**THE ANALYSIS OF GENDER REPRESENTATIONS IN SELECTED SOUTH
AFRICAN TELEVISION SOAP OPERAS**

**BY
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Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES.....	v
DECLARATION.....	vi
DEDICATION.....	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	viii
ABSTRACT.....	ix
FINDINGS.....	x
METHODS.....	xi
RESULTS.....	xi
DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS.....	xiv
RESEARCH CHAPTER OUTLINE.....	xv
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY.....	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY.....	1
1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM.....	5
1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.....	6
1.4.1 Aim of the Study.....	6
1.4.2 Objectives of the Study.....	7
1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.....	7
1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY.....	7
1.7 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY.....	8
1.8 AREA OF STUDY.....	8
1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	9
1.10 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER.....	9
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	10
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	10
2.2 Gender and soap opera.....	10

2.2.1 Gender, Sex and Sexuality.....	11
2.2.2 The Social Construction of Gender.....	13
2.2.3 Definition and Historical Development of Gender.....	15
2.2.4 Characteristics of Soap Operas.....	16
2.2.5 Reasons for Soap Opera Popularity.....	19
2.2.6 The Power of Soap Operas.....	20
2.2.7 A Brief History of Television and the Soap Opera Industry in South Africa	27
2.2.8 Tribal base (Language) and subtitling of South African Soap Operas.....	29
2.2.9 The Role of SABC in Promoting Soap Opera.....	31
2.2.10 DStv's role in the South African Soap Opera Industry.....	32
2.2.11 Profiles of Selected Soap Operas.....	33
2.3 GENDER REPRESENTATION IN TELEVISION SOAP OPERAS.....	35
2.4 DOMINANT THEMES IN THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN'S AND MEN'S IMAGES IN SOAP OPERAS.....	47
2.5 GENDER-BASED ROLES IN THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN AND MEN IN SOAP OPERAS.....	55
2.5.1 Female Roles.....	55
2.5.2 Male Roles.....	66
2.5.3 Queer Roles.....	68
2.5.4 Gender Roles and Gender Stereotypes.....	69
2.5.5 Gender Stereotypes in the Mass Media.....	72
2.5.6 Television and its Power.....	73
2.5.7 Impact of Gender Stereotypes.....	73
2.5.8 South African Legislation and Policy on Gender.....	75
2.6 TRENDS OF GENDER PORTRAYAL IN SOUTH AFRICA.....	77
2.6.1 Common Trends in Gender Representation.....	77
2.6.2 Impact of Soap opera on Setting Standards and Behaviour.....	79
2.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY.....	80
2.7.1 Feminist Theory.....	81

2.7.2 Hegemonic Masculinity.....	84
2.8 CONCLUSION.....	85
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	86
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	86
3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	86
3.2.1 Qualitative Research Method.....	87
3.2.2 Advantages of Qualitative Research Method.....	87
3.2.3 Disadvantages of Qualitative Research Method.....	88
3.3 SAMPLING AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE.....	88
3.3.1 Non-Probability Sampling Method (Purposive sampling).....	90
3.4 DATA COLLECTION.....	91
3.5 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION.....	92
3.6 CONTENT ANALYSIS.....	93
3.6.1 Content Analysis Research Process.....	94
3.7 QUALITY CRITERIA.....	99
3.7.1 Dependability.....	99
3.7.2 Conformability.....	100
3.7.3 Credibility.....	100
3.7.4 Transferability.....	101
3.8 CONCLUSION.....	102
CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS.....	103
4.1 INTRODUCTION.....	103
4.2 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS.....	103
4.2.1 Gender Representation in Selected South African Soap operas.....	104
4.2.2 Dominant Themes Identified in the Portrayal of Women and Men’s Images in the Selected Television soap operas.....	121
4.2.3 The Various Aspects of Gender-Based Roles in Selected South African Soap operas.....	163

4.2.4 Trends of Gender Portrayal Across the Three Selected South African Soap Operas.....	197
4.3 CONCLUSION.....	205
Chapter 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	207
5 INTRODUCTION.....	207
5.1 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	207
5.2.1 Gender Representation in Soap Operas.....	207
5.2.2 Dominant Themes Represented in Soap Operas.....	212
5.2.3 Gender-Based Roles in Soap Operas.....	222
5.2.4 Trends in Representations, Themes and Gender Roles Portrayed Across the Three Selected Soap Operas.....	236
5.3 THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY.....	237
5.3.1 The Feminist Theory in Relation to Findings.....	237
5.3.2 Hegemonic Masculinity Theory in Relation to the Findings of the Study.....	240
5.4 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	242
5.4.1 Conclusion.....	242
5.4.2 Recommendations.....	243
REFERENCES	
APPENDIX A: Pilot Codebook	
APPENDIX B: Final Codebook	
APPENDIX C: Episodes and Seasons Analysed	

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Viewership and Popularity Level of South African Soap Opera

Table 2: Summary of themes in soap opera

Table 3: Summary of female roles in soap opera

Table 4: Summary of male roles in soap opera

Table 5: Summary of queer roles in soap opera

Table 6: Gender Legislation and Policy Framework in South Africa

Table 7: South African television panels and composition

Table 8: Content analysis process

Table 9: Gender presence in all the three selected soap operas

Table 10: Dominant themes across the three selected soap operas

Table 11: Gender roles identified in all three selected soap operas for females

Table 12: Gender roles identified in all three selected soap operas for males

Table 13: Gender roles identified in all three selected soap operas for the queer group

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of Master of Arts in Media Studies requirements has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that it is my work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to God the Almighty for giving me hope and strength to pursue this academic journey. To my husband Emmanuel Ngomba Mbua for his support and relentless encouragement and to my three lovely daughters Layla, Eva and Jaylyn for giving mommy the space and time to study and make this happen.

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ABSTRACT

Soap opera has become very popular recently. Some of the reasons for its popularity stems from how it mimics reality and its open-ended nature that has attracted a large audience and fan base. Therefore, the study analysed how gender was represented using three selected South African soap operas (*Rhythm City*, *Scandal!* and *Generations: The Legacy*). Alongside a codebook and 20 episodes per soap opera, a content analysis was used to meet the objectives which are; to analyse gender representation, identify dominant themes, identify gender-based roles and the trends found in all three soap operas. The study was based on the feminist and the hegemonic masculinity theory. For gender representation, results showed that there were males and females featured in all three soap operas but there was still a reluctance in queer portrayal. Queer characters were represented in just two of the soap operas and underrepresented with just two queer characters being the maximum. Furthermore, even though few queers were represented and found in two out of the three soap operas used in this study, queers were not represented as the “other”, which is a great improvement. However, there are still other stereotypes that come to the fore. Queers are represented as flamboyant and often in a secretive and once-off relationship. More women were portrayed in the workforce and both women and men were portrayed in skilled and unskilled jobs. Few men were represented in contra-stereotype jobs like cleaners and waiters. However, there is still a long way to go to achieve gender equality as women in the workplace were still portrayed in challenging situations like gender discrimination. Findings revealed that gender stereotypes still exist, however in a more subtle way. In the current study, soap operas have failed to portray a woman who can balance her professional career and family life, suggesting that a woman cannot have both. Men are still not represented in the domestic environment, like doing household chores. Also, even though there are more women like men in the workforce, the men have moved further up to demonstrate their superiority over women. They are into legal as well as illegal businesses that have put them steps ahead financially. Hence, women are still being dominated. Some of the prominent themes identified include motherhood, marriage, love and romance, crime, violence and

family. The study recommended that content producers still need to work on producing content that is free of stereotypes and encourage gender equality and contents that are educative of what they hope the future should be. Female roles identified include motherhood, villainess, sex object, gold digger, and housewife. Also, men's roles include father, villain, gold digger, womaniser and sex offender. Furthermore, the queers roles identified were emotionist and object of decoration. Common trends found in all three soap operas include the fact that most characters were between the ages of 24-29 and 30-45 years old and both genders doing skilled and unskilled jobs. The three soap operas were characterized by themes like motherhood, fatherhood, family, revenge and conflict, marriage, gender discrimination and violence. Similar roles in the findings on all three soap operas include mother, sex object, gold digger and career woman. For the men, roles include villain, model and spy and manipulator.

Keywords: Gender, representation, soap opera, gender-based roles, LGBT.

FINDINGS:

The findings revealed the presence of males and females in all three soap operas; however, queer characters were found in just two of them. Also, two out of the three soap operas had an equal representation of both males and females while queer characters were very few. Surprisingly, unlike previous studies where majority of the main characters were much younger in their 20s, in the current study most of the characters that played the main roles were in their 30s and 40s. Both genders were represented in similar jobs, both skilled and unskilled, however, some of the men had illegal and criminal businesses on the side like drug dealing. Common themes found in this study include motherhood, marriage, infidelity, love/romance, gender discrimination, violence and superstition. Women's roles include sex object, careerindependent woman, mother, homemaker, villainess and object of dignity while the men on the other were portrayed in roles such as rapist, abuser and father. The few queer characters were represented as being in a

relationship, however, the romance was a once off thing and a single gay character was portrayed as an object of decoration. Furthermore, common trends found in all three soap operas include the presence of characters between the ages 24-29 and 30-45 which make up majority of the characters for both males and females, and an equal job representation, both skilled and unskilled for both genders in all three soap operas. Also, the findings revealed similar themes in all the three soap operas like love/romance, infidelity, violence, family, marriage and superstition. There were women in all three soap operas portrayed as mothers/nurturer, villainess, dependent, career-independent women and sex objects while the men were portrayed as villains and rich.

METHODS

A qualitative research method was used. A codebook was used to record and analyse data. Three soap operas *Rhythm City*, *Scandal!* and *Generations: The Legacy* from two channels e.tv and SABC were used. A purposeful sampling technique was applied to select 20 episodes from each soap opera from October 2019 to September 2020 to analyse how gender was being represented based on the research objectives. Using content analyses, findings were then coded based on the research variables and categories.

RESULTS

GENDER REPRESENTATION IN SELECTED SOUTH AFRICAN SOAP OPERAS

Despite the concern on the lack of queer representation in soap operas, the current study found that two out of the three soap operas represented gays and lesbians. The representation of males and female was equal in *Scandal!* and *Generations: The legacy* despite previous studies like Daalmans, Kleemans and Sadza, 2017 that have indicated a low representation of females in soap operas on males-targeted television. Furthermore, more women were represented in the workforce and more men were shown in contra-stereotypical roles like receptionist and waiters as well as CEO positions. However, most of the men were also into illegal businesses. Majority of the males and

females were negatively portrayed, thus, an equal negative representation. A few were left neutral. There were very few positive representations.

DOMINANT THEMES IN THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN AND MEN'S IMAGES IN THE SELECTED TELEVISION SOAP OPERAS

The soap opera themes found in the current study are very similar to those found in previous studies. Themes include marriage, love and romance, family and motherhood. However, there were other themes in the findings that are unique to this study like revenge and conflict.

GENDER-BASED ROLES PLAYED BY MEN AND WOMEN PORTRAYED IN SOUTH AFRICAN TELEVISION SOAP OPERAS

Recent studies on soap opera have had different results on gender-based roles, in some of the studies, the women were represented in stereotypical roles like mothers/nurturer and homemakers while in other studies, they were represented in non-stereotypical roles like career women and decision makers. In the current study, majority of the women were represented as equal to the men. They were shown in diverse roles like mother/nurturer, career and independent women, object of honour and menial and stereotypical job workers. The men on the other hand had some surprising results. Contrary to previous findings, few men were portrayed in contra-stereotypical roles like father. Another shocking role was a man who depended financially on a woman. Men were also portrayed in stereotypical roles like rich man, model, womaniser and sex offender. Both men and women were represented as villain and villainess. Furthermore, despite the indication from previous discourse of queers being hardly represented in a relationship, all the queers found in this study were in a relationship. However, it was brief. Consistent with previous discourse, a gay character was portrayed as flamboyant which made it easy for his sexuality to be questioned or known.

TREND OF GENDER PORTRAYAL ACROSS THE THREE SELECTED SOUTH AFRICAN SOAP OPERAS

Trend across the three soap operas were very similar. Contrary to previous results where the women were relatively younger than the males, the most represented age group in the current study was between 30-45 for both genders in all three soap operas. Men and women were portrayed more like equals and both genders were represented in both white or blue-collar jobs. The themes were also very similar for women except for betrayal and divorce that was found only in *Scandal!*. The roles for women as well were quite similar except for object of honour that was found only in *Rhythm City*. For the men, the few who depended on women was unique to *Scandal!* Only. More so, queer roles in *Rhythm City* and *Scandal!* showed that most of them were represented as unrequited lovers, and a single character from *Rhythm City* was represented as an object of decoration.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

1.9.1 Gender: It is the social relation of men and women, boys and girls and how this is socially constructed (Gazura, 2017:1).

1.9.2 Representation: “Is a visual, written or audio depiction of something or someone” (Beltran, 2018:97).

1.9.3 Soap opera: “serial drama performed originally on a daytime radio or television program and chiefly characterized by tangled interpersonal situations and melodramatic or sentimental treatment” (Merriam-webster dictionary, 1996).

1.9.4 Gender roles: these are roles “based on the different expectations that individuals, groups and societies have of individuals based on their sex and based on each society’s values and beliefs about gender” (Blackstone, 2003:335).

1.9.5 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender: This term is collectively used to describe all sexual minorities or gender non-conforming people. It refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (Martos, Wilson & Meyer, 2017)

1.9.6 Gender stereotype: These “are beliefs about attributes associated with women and men that reveal gender discrimination” (Castillo-Mayen & Montes-Berges, 2014:1044).

1.9.7 Patriarchy: This is “a system of society or government in which the father or eldest male is head of the family and descent is reckoned through the male line, hence the system promotes male privilege” (Mudau & Obadire, 2017:67).

1.10 RESEARCH CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter One: Problem in Perspective

This chapter focuses on the research problem. It provides introduction and context of the study. It throws light on the research background, aim and objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, rationale of the study, area of the study, ethical considerations and the definition of key terms.

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the literature review and theoretical framework have been discussed in the context of gender representation in soap operas, the themes represented in soap operas, gender roles played and some common trends found in soap operas. Furthermore, the chapter provides a theoretical framework which provides a supporting perspective found in the research problem. Some of the problems identified in gender representation of soap opera include the fact they they provide stereotypical content that portray distinct gender roles. The men often play the dominant role. Also soap opera sets beauty standards, ideal career paths for each gender with continuously putting the woman's place to be the home. Even when a career woman is represented, the scenes in her home takes priority or a career woman with no fulfilled family or personal life. Consumers of soap operas copy these behaviours ignorantly and strive to emulate them. Therefore, this study has contributed tremendously in closing the academic gap of other studies.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

Chapter three deals with the research methodology. It gives an explanation of how the research was carried out. The steps included the research method and design (qualitative), study population, profile of sampled soap operas selected, area of study, sampling procedure, data collection procedure, data analysis, data interpretation and quality criteria.

Chapter Four: Data Presentation and Analysis

This chapter provides presentation and research findings. This was generated from coding variables and categories.

Chapter Five: Discussion of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendation

This final chapter provided the conclusion, summary and recommendations of the overall study based on the research findings

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Gender representation in soap opera has attracted a lot of researchers globally over the past years (Anam, 2019; Achando, 2017; Jana, 2016). Traditionally, gender roles are often distinct from one another. Women are often portrayed in stereotypical roles like sex object, homemaker or mother while men are portrayed as bosses, independent and non-emotional. Since it is difficult to fit queers into the male or female category, it is necessary to analyse their representation as a new gender group. However, very few studies have acknowledged queer representation apart from a few like Motsaathebe (2009) who noticed their absence in gender representation in the soap opera; *Generations*. Also, a masculinity focused study like Ncube (2019) identified different masculinities with gay masculinity being one of them.

Gender roles are often promoted through media outlets and an outlet like soap opera which uses real-life themes can make it easy for viewers to copy it as a norm. Gender roles often have major discrepancies where women were portrayed as the subordinate while men occupied more dominant positions and played dominant roles. Studies on gender have mixed findings within and between countries. South Africa has free-to-air channels that air soap operas exposing its citizens to content that may either maintain or change their perception of how they view themselves and other genders. Viewers often consume such content ignorantly without knowing that it may not be an actual representation of the country (Marx, 2008).

1.2 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION TO THE STUDY

Mass media especially television has a great influence in strengthening the roles of males and females in the society. With its visual nature, sound and movement, television has the potential to highlight cultural and social values (Jana, 2016). It is obvious that both

adults and children learn a lot from watching television (Gurkan & Serttas, 2017; Anamika, 2014). Television is a “new state religion” that unifies the public by presenting similar images to achieve similar outlook of social reality (Shankaran & Illampirithi, 2018:27). However, it has failed to mirror the changing emancipatory gender roles in society; this now stands as a barrier to gender equality and true emancipation (Daalmans, Kleemans & Sadza, 2017). Television sets stereotypes and unfortunately, many people receive gendered messages from watching television (Ashfaq & Shafiq, 2018). The stereotypical portrayal of gender on television shapes career prospects and affects the ability of people to engage in healthy, respectful and equal relationships (Fulcher, 2015). Also, the language used on television often has the tendency to create gender images that leave a lasting impression in the audience’s mind (Ibrahim, Yunus, Shah, Ilias & Mokhtar, 2017). People’s impression of the real world may be affected by the contents being portrayed on television that they watch (Badaoui, 2016).

One of the main outlets for the portrayal of stereotypical gender roles on television is soap opera. Television soap operas play a great role in grabbing the audience attention, while offering a variety of roles that are either positive or negative. They, in a way transmit messages on how people should behave or relate to one another (Shankaran & Illampirithi, 2018).

Soap operas have become very popular in many households and are typically associated with women. However, the interests of men towards soap operas have grown tremendously over the years (Kabir, 2018; Kumari & Joshi, 2015). Soap operas sometimes reinforce existing negative stereotypes, instead of using them to change and encourage new line of thoughts (Achando, 2017; Arokiaraj, 2017).

Often, soap operas portray both genders in roles that are very distinct from each other (Kabir, 2018). To get a better understanding of the way women are being portrayed in soap operas entails examining their presence (also referred to as “recognition”) and the type and depth of the roles they are being cast in, also termed “respect” (Daalmans, Kleemans & Sadza, 2017:368).

Recent coverage of the woman in soap operas places a lot of emphasis on the 5Fs namely: food, fashion, family, furnishing and fun, which are typical attributes of femininity, ignoring other important aspects like values, attitudes, culture and lifestyle (Ibrahim et al., 2017). Studies have suggested that, in soap operas, women are often underrepresented in general, and in the professional world in particular, with majority of them being portrayed as housewives, doing household chores or in nurturing roles (Achando, 2017; Daalmans et al., 2017; Sink and Mastro, 2017). Even in a case where the woman is working outside the home, her duty as a wife takes priority (Anam, 2019; Jain & Pareek, 2018; Achando, 2017; Ibrahim et al., 2017). Most of the women that work outside the homes in soap opera do menial jobs like domestic servant, cleaners or a job associated with women like waitressing, nursing and teaching (Anam, 2019; Ibrahim et al., 2017). A few successful career women are also portrayed. However, soap opera has failed to represent a successful career woman who is able to strike a balance between her professional demands and family life. It is either they are successful career women with a very lonely personal life or happy wife with no career (Lacalle & Gomez, 2016). This notion about women has permeated into the society. In soap operas, the slim, younger and fair complexion women are considered the most beautiful, with lots of men clamouring for them while the dark complexion women struggle to get partners (Ashfaq & Shafiq, 2018; Sachdeva, 2018). Studies have revealed that women are often portrayed as sex objects, an object for male gaze, and scantily clad with provocative manners to lure men (Kabir; 2018, Ibrahim et al., 2017; Mattens, 2016; Verhellen, 2016; Kumani & Joshi, 2015).

Men on the other hand are portrayed as a rapist, handsome and fit (Ashfaq & Shafiq, 2018; Jain & Pareek, 2018; Gurkan & Serttas, 2017; Ibrahim et al., 2017). Some of the men engage in extra-marital affairs and keep a wife and a girlfriend. Physically, men often carry a stereotype look in soap operas; they are represented as fit and conscious of their nutrition, dressed in good clothes, financially stable and living in good houses (Gurkan & Serttas, 2017). Also, they are often represented in occupational roles, ambitious, independent and as breadwinners in their families (Shankaran & Ilamparithi, 2018). Moreover, men are represented in more dominant roles compared to their female

counterparts; they are portrayed as bosses, non-emotional, decision makers and rational thinkers (Achando, 2017). A study carried out in Armenia revealed that men are often portrayed as violent. Violence towards women is portrayed as an integral part of masculinity so much so that the audiences have become tolerant and the women now find it as an attractive quality, especially domestic violence (Kojoyan & Gevorgyan, 2014). The men are however underrepresented in household and care giving roles (Burffington, Cerf, Jones & Weinburg, 2015).

Soap operas have had both positive and negative impacts on the society due to their ability to induce believability in the mind of viewers. The viewers assume that what is portrayed in soap opera is real in life, and thus, tend to believe them. In a study about the portrayal of women on television soap opera in India by Arokiaraj (2017), women were portrayed as working independent beings. This represents emotional, social and economic emancipation of women. Such roles have helped to empower women but the way women are being portrayed, dressed in very expensive clothes and going to bed in heavy makeup is ridiculous to men (Anamika, 2014). Additionally, men think that soap operas are used to promote expensive products that have brought a lot of strain on their relationships and pockets as the wives also want to own such expensive items. While the men think it is a cultural dilemma, the women disagree and think it instead promotes culture and cultural exchanges (Anamika, *ibid*). Kabir (2018) indicates that soap operas have led to high divorce rates and suicides because people want certain standards from their partners and expensive material things the family cannot afford. Continuous exposure to soap opera creates more audiences that are inclined to stereotypes which may result in a change of perception about reality (Badaoui, 2016).

This study focused on the analysis of gender representation in soap operas as they have become very popular and available in many households. Moreover, it has a greater influence on society's behaviour, attitudes and ability to complicate real lives (Kabir, 2018).

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Soap operas have become very popular in recent years, they have the ability to grab audience attention, reach a wide audience and play the role to educate and inform societies (Sachdeva, 2018; Sharankan & Illampirithi, 2018; Ahmed, 2012). They can play a key role in correcting negative society stereotypes and perceptions, and promote new values like gender equality (Achando, 2017; Arokiaraj, 2017). However, soap operas portray stereotypical gender contents; they set beauty standards, what is right and wrong, distinct gender roles, gender-related behaviour and ideal career paths for each gender. Unfortunately, soap opera audience consumes such content unknowingly and fail to be critical and instead strive to be like the characters portrayed (Kabir, 2018; Achando, 2017; Ahmed, 2012). Also due to its ability to impact believability, it affects how people view themselves and tend to limit themselves from pursuing certain careers (Fulcher, 2015).

Soap operas often portray characters in gender roles distinct from one another. Women are portrayed as housewives, sex object, slim, younger, fair in complexion, emotional and dependent (Sacheva, 2018; Ashfaq & Shafiq, 2018; Verhellen, 2016). Few women are portrayed in occupational roles but cannot balance their professional demands and family life. This notion of women who find it hard to balance their professional and family life has infiltrated society and women think they have to choose between the two. Men on the other hand were portrayed as handsome, muscular, fit, and engage in extra-marital affairs (Gurkan & Serttas, 2017). They are also portrayed in occupational roles, as ambitious, breadwinners and underrepresented in care giving roles (Achando, 2017). In relation to one another, men play the dominant role and are presented as a fulfilment in a woman's life (Badaoui 2016, Lacalle & Gomez, 2016). Gender representation in soap operas have both positive and negative impacts on society. In cases where women are presented as working and independent, they symbolise economic, emotional and financial emancipation of women. Negatively, soap operas have strained many relationships and led to a lot of separation as many people expect their partners to have similar behaviours to those of the characters (Kabir, 2018; Anamika, 2014). Therefore, it becomes imperative

for this study to investigate gender misrepresentation in South African soap operas. This could help to solve the negative impact on societal perception of gender.

It is worth noting that the above statements are typical of other countries. This study investigated male and female gender representations in three major South African television soap operas. Previously, soap opera was considered a female genre with mostly female centred-themes (Ahmed, 2012). However, producers are beginning to incorporate themes about men which make male representation in soap opera new and an area that needs to be explored. Majority of existing literature on gender representation in soap operas focused on women with limited literature on men. The researcher could find only one study in the South African context by Motsaathebe (2009) that dates back to 2009 where both gender representations were explored. Also, comparing and identifying trends in the three selected soap operas is something new in the South African context. Previous studies focus on a single soap opera, majority of which is *Generations*. Also, even though previous studies have recommended content free from stereotypes from producers (Ibrahim et al., 2017), the problem still exists.

1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.4.1 Aim of the Study

The study aimed to investigate the representation of men and women in selected South African television soap operas.

1.4.2 Objectives of the Study

- To analyse gender representation in selected South African soap operas.
- To identify dominant themes in the portrayal of women and men's images in the selected South African television soap operas.
- To identify the various aspects of gender-based roles played by men and women portrayed in the selected South African television soap operas.

- To examine the trends of gender portrayal across the three selected South African soap operas.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Over the years, women and men have accepted their positions in society and the way they are being represented in the media. Typically, both genders are being misrepresented and the media has failed to correctly portray the real 21st Century man or woman. The media's failure to portray the gender roles that have taken place has instead helped to maintain the stereotypical portrayal of both genders, something that has been fought against for many years. The media is considered a very important tool that mirrors society and brings about change, and society copies what the media portrays which has led to the development of a less constructive role for men and women. This has encouraged both genders to settle for less and limit themselves from attaining certain goals in their social and professional life. Thus, the current study analysed the current patterns and values that are being represented. This has helped researchers to know whether gender is still being portrayed in a constructive or stereotypical manner. This has also helped content producers to incorporate new and fair content that represent both genders constructively, free from stereotype and improve on people's perception of gender.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

There are many soap operas in South Africa. The selected soap operas for this study were prime time soap operas airing from 19:00-20:30 with a time of 30 minutes each. They broadcast on the country's free to air channels e.tv and SABC 1 as well as on subscription platforms like DStv. They broadcast at prime time when people have returned home after their busy schedule, contain subtitles and has a high viewership. For June 2013-June 2014, SABC 1 and e.tv had an annual reach of 97% and 93% respectively (SAARF, 2014). This makes it a perfect fit for the current study. Only South African produced soap operas were used for this study.

1.7 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The study was motivated by the necessity to find out how gender was being portrayed in soap operas. A lot of studies on gender representation in soap operas come from Europe and Asia, with very few from Africa. These studies have paved a way and, in a way, created a norm which many content producers may want to imitate. A country like South Africa with its apartheid history underwent a new beginning in 1994. Even though its struggles were mostly based on race, it had learnt to fight inequality in many other spheres like gender and sexuality. Many previous studies like Anam (2019), Ibrahim et al (2017) and Jain and Pareek (2016), highlighted the representation of women and men in very stereotypical and distinct roles. Hence, out of curiosity, I decided to pursue this topic to find out how they conform to or dissociated from such stereotypes. Also, I wanted to find out if I will see themes and roles that were unique to South Africa compared to previous studies. In South Africa, where gay and lesbian relationships are being accepted and legal, there is still a lot of hatred towards them. The news often reports about the killing of homosexuals and lesbians out of spite for their sexuality, I wanted to find out if they were being represented and if yes, how? Soap opera is a platform which has the power to right wrongs and bring about social change (Ahmed and Khalid, 2012). Soap opera could be used as a platform to change the perception through its representation for marginalised groups like gays and lesbians (Ncube, 2019) Furthermore, South African soap operas have a wide reach in and out of the country. Channels like SABC and e.tv which produces a lot of soap operas are broadcasted in many other countries and international networks like DStv. They are available in many Southern African countries like Botswana, Mozambique and Zimbabwe (SABC, 2019; e.tv, 2019). Hence, what soap operas portray out there in the African continent cannot be overlooked because their content will eventually affect people's behaviour and attitudes.

1.8 AREA OF STUDY

The study focused on analysing gender representation in three of South African soap operas. Even though the country has a lot of home-based operas, only three were

selected for this study, namely *Rhythm City*, *Scandal!* and *Generations: The Legacy*, broadcasted on e.tv and SABC 1.

1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The current study was based on drama fictions and did not involve the use of people, so permission from subjects were not obtained as the episodes are available online and are in the public domain. However, the researcher still ensured that the research is based on accurate information obtained. Additionally, the researcher still sought the approval of the University of Limpopo's Research and Ethics Committee (TREC) before going further with the research.

1.10 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

This chapter aimed to contextualise the study. The relevance of the media as one of the main platforms of gender construction and perception was discussed. However, while the media is highly influential, it was argued that it has not always created content free of stereotypes. The popularity of soap opera and its ability to induce believability was recognised and argued as one of the most influential media platforms where gender stereotype is constructed, hence I decided to use it to investigate gender representation. Acknowledging the South African context and the scarcity of knowledge on gender representation in the context, heightened curiosity to investigate gender portrayal in the country. The main aim of the study was to create awareness for the public to become critical viewers and not just imitators who copy what they see and for content producers to create content free from stereotypes. The study was guided by research objectives of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter dealt with key developments in the field of gender studies and soap opera that applied to the current study. Critical insights into past research studies and discourse on gender and soap opera are provided. Under gender representation in soap operas, topics covered in the literature review included gender, gender versus sex, the social construction of gender, gender legislation and policy in South Africa, gender roles and gender stereotype in the media and its impact on individuals and the society. Furthermore, soap opera, its historical development, its characteristics, reasons for its popularity, its power and also the soap opera industry in South Africa are discussed. A critical overview from previous studies, books and other secondary information on gender representation, themes, roles and some popular trends in soap operas are provided. However, most previous studies have failed to acknowledge the presence or absence of the LGBT (queer) community in soap operas and the type of roles they play. Hence, a few focus studies on their representation in soap operas were also reviewed.

2.2 GENDER AND SOAP OPERA

This section discusses gender and soap opera. Here, the discourse on gender demonstrates how it is being used in different context, societies and cultures. This enables better understanding of gender and how it is being used in this study. Furthermore, discussion on soap operas, its historical development, popularity and the South African soap opera industry has been provided.

2.2.1 Gender, Sex and Sexuality

Researchers have set the challenge for many decades for people to reconsider the way they use the terms 'gender' and 'sex' (Johnson & Repta, 2011). Gender is often confused with the term 'sex'; however, a number of researchers have managed to differentiate between the two. In the United States of America, the term 'gender' was commonly used as an alternative to the word 'sex' by researchers and activists in the 1970s to create the impression that masculinity and femininity were biologically determined (Rolleri, 2013). However, Blackstone (2003) has managed to distinguish the two. She defines 'sex' as the biological concept based on individual's primary features that are ascribed to males and females by birth while gender is the social construction that is demonstrated on the basis that individuals, societies and groups attribute different characteristics like traits and values based on their sex. These characteristics vary across different societies and cultures and may overtime differ even within the same society. Simply put, Rolleri (2013) defines 'sex' as biologically determined, that is whether one is male or female based on biology while 'gender' is socially constructed. Gazura (2017) intertwines both 'sex' and 'gender' and makes one to understand that gender construction is based on biological sex. He defines gender as the social relations between men and women, boys and girls and how this is socially constructed within a society; females are taught to be feminine and males masculine. Hence, gender is the difference that sex makes in a society as people are socially constructed (gender) based on their 'sex'. He further explained that people of a particular sex are guided on how they think about themselves, how they interact with others, the social opportunities, family roles and the different prestige that is allowed to males and females. Kachel (2016) states that the definitions of masculinity and femininity vary depending on the class, place and historical time. Furthermore, Abdul and Tejaswini (2019) define gender as the social, behavioural and cultural attributes, expectations and norms that are associated to being a man or a woman. However, the above definition is in other words linking behaviours (gender) to a particular sex that is male or female. Cislighi and Heise (2020) explain gender as the social, psychological and hierarchical aspects that are established between a man and a woman. With

gendered aspects, people's ways of thinking about themselves and others are moulded in a particular way, hence influencing people's everyday life (Macionis & Plummer, 2012).

So far, the two main constructs on gender discourse have been based on the traditional masculinity and femininity which are based on characteristics like character traits, behaviour, appearance and interests (Kachel, Steffens & Niedlich, 2016). Hence, linking sex and gender in heterosexuals becomes easy; that is male is to masculinity and female is to femininity.

However, this becomes tricky when dealing with a different sexual group like the transgender which cannot be defined based on biology (Westbrook & Schilt, 2014). Furthermore, Kachel et al. (2016) identify another gap, that is, fitting people into traditional gender groups based on their sexuality. Hence, they introduce a new dimension, masculinity-femininity, a combination of masculinity and femininity. This group is based more on sexuality and not biology. Sexuality refers to a person's capacity to develop sexual feelings and attraction to a male or female. There are four types of sexuality, also known as sexual orientation, these are heterosexual which refers to an individual's sexual attraction to the opposite sex, homosexual, an individual's attraction to same sex, bisexual, an attraction to both sexes, and asexual where there is no sexual attraction to either sex (Ryle, 2011).

The current study on gender representation did not assign queers to either the male or female gender. They fall under the queer group, hence non-heterosexuals (LGBT) on the one hand and heterosexuals (male /female) on the other hand. Queerness is regarded as the "other" and the binary opposite of heterosexuality, masculinity and femininity. However, due to alignment of feminine to female and masculine to male, it is therefore necessary to consider gay men as feminine and unnatural to make sense of the heterosexual logic; the feminine gay man is attracted to men while the masculine lesbian is attracted to women (Bradley, 2012). Butler makes the understanding of queer a little easier with her take of gender which states that;

Originally intended to dispute the biology is destiny formulation, the distinction between sex and gender serves the argument that

whatever biological intractability sex appears to have, gender is culturally constructed: hence, gender is neither the causal result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as sex (Butler, 2002:9-10).

Hence, the concept that male is synonymous with masculinity and female with femininity will not apply because queers do not often fit within traditional gender-patterned ways.

2.2.2 The Social Construction of Gender

The acquisition of gender is being influenced by 'agencies of socialisation'. Family, school, media, peer groups, religion and the work environment all have an influence in the way gender is constructed in an individual's life (Endendijk, Groeneveld & Mesman, 2018). Through a lot of small interactions, these agencies convey the social norm of appropriate gender behaviour by displaying examples of male and female characteristics (Connell, 2003). Gender is something that one does and does often in their interaction with others. Gender performance takes place in different settings, through different activities and with different people. Through these performances, gender becomes something that plays in the different context with others and certain aspects of gender become eventually normalised and legitimated (Payne, Swami & Stanistreet, 2008). Gender is part of our everyday life that is created and recreated through human interaction, social life and the order and texture of that social life. It is a human production that constantly depends on everyone and people do gender without thinking about it (Schoellkopf, 2012). People fail to see gender signs that are found everywhere. However, when the signs are missing or ambiguous, people notice and become uncomfortable until they successfully place someone in a gender status. The construction of gender begins with assignment to a sex category based on what the genitalia looks like at birth. Even babies are dressed in ways that display their sex category (Little, 2016). Through naming, dressing and using other gender markers, sex category turns to gender status. Once a child's gender is evident, they are treated differently from those of another gender that causes a reaction from the child who then begins to feel and act differently (Martin & Ruble, 2010). The social meaning of gender is created by subtle controls and socialisation

agents that accordingly, commission people into roles and spheres (Chafetz, 2006). Often, it is believed that social roles and the differences between male and female personalities are inborn and come naturally, hence the main conductors in assigning social roles. For example, women are naturally born to nurture while men are inherently competitive (Chafetz, *ibid*).

Previously, social constructionists viewed gender as something that is fixed and static. However, recent conceptualisations see it as something that one does concurrently in his or her interaction with others in different settings through various activities (Payne, Swani & Stanistreet, 2008). These frequent performances portray gender as something that takes place in the context of assessment in relation with others. Hence, certain aspects of gender become normalised and legitimised (Payne et al., 2008). Men and women perform gender differently, making them gender beings while contributing to social gender conventions. Gender practices encourage conformity to masculinity and femininity norms (Edwards, 2015).

Post-structural idea suggests that gender is created through spoken (conversation) and written (text) language, media, institutional practice and law. Like social constructionists, they see gender as something that is performed and different from biological differences (Payne, *ibid*). However, the post-structural view recognises competing and contradictory ways of doing gender within normative boundaries using the notion of hegemonic gender that allows greater acceptability and higher status of certain gender practices like hegemonic masculinity (Payne et al., 2008). Recently, hegemonic masculinity has been used very widely to highlight the different forms of masculinity and honour the one which is most desired, which leaves many men striving to fit themselves in the hegemonic ideal context (Jewkes, Morrell, Hearn, Lundquist, Blackbeard, Lindegger, Quayle, Sikweyiya & Gottzen, 2015). Singh, Sengupta and Dev (2018) refer to this search for the ideal to include a lot of toxic practices like violence, aggression and competitiveness which at times may lead to self-destruction. Unfortunately, very little has been written on hegemonic femininities to help understand women's lives and behaviour.

2.2.3 Definition and Historical Development of Soap Opera

Soap opera is;

a continuing fictional dramatic television program, presented in multiple serial installations each week through a narrative composed of interlocking storylines that focus on the relationship within a specific community of characters (Syed, 2011:20).

Soap operas also popularly known as serial is often considered a female-oriented narrative even though its audience consists of both men and women (Bhowmick & Sharief, 2020). Soap operas have become very popular worldwide. Its history can be traced back in the 1800s when novels like Dickens were published in a serialised format in newspapers, conforming to the requirements of melodrama. Soap opera first started on radio as radio series in the United States and later moved to television (which replaced all the functions of radio) as a daytime drama broadcasted daily (Anitha, 2014; Czarniawska, Eriksson-Zetterquist & Renemark, 2011). It first originated in the United States in the 1930s, sponsored by large soap manufacturers like Procter and Gamble, Colgate, Palmolive and Peets who use this as a platform for product placement, extend their markets and attract the female audience (Hobson, 2003; Porto, 2001). Soap opera later expanded in the 1960s when features of the genre were on TV guide and in the 1970s when a soap magazine emerged, daytime TV was launched and many more magazines emerged throughout the 1970s and the 1990s (Harrington, Scardaville, Lippmann & Bielby, 2015).

When commercial radio first started, it was limited to the local level but its expansion in the 1930s led to its extension to the national level that was later adopted internationally by many countries including Britain, Australia and South Africa where manufacturers used it to reach potential clients (Hobson, 2003). Soap opera drew the attention of the female audience in particular with themes like romance, marriage, childlessness, fidelity, child rearing, divorce and family which still remain part of the characteristics of modern-day soap opera (Hobson, *ibid*).

Soap operas also known as serials (note: only the term soap opera will be used for the purpose of this study) presents a feminine narrative which is in contrast with the masculine tradition with emphasis on goal orientation, pre-established conflict and resolutions (Czarniawska, ErikssonZetterquist & Ranemark, 2013). Feminist theorists' interest and eventual criticism in the genre grew as a result of the stereotypical portrayal of women who then had a problem with the way women were being presented which was in great contrast to what they really should be or what they are (Marx, 2008; Gledhill, 2003).

2.2.4 Characteristics of Soap Opera

Soap opera has unique conventions;

(a) Suspense

A key feature of soap opera is their lack of closure. Soap opera lacks ending and the stories are written in a way that can go on forever. Often, endings are associated with the ability of dominant ideology to over determine and close down other possibilities that might have been raised in a seemingly progressive narrative. The never-ending nature of soap operas aims for openness, plurality and multiplicity, giving a sense of an unknown future and creates different relationships with different audience (Geraghty, 2010; Geraghty 2007). Episodes end up in suspense with a promise that the story will continue in the next episode. This technique keeps people glued to the show as they continue to watch hoping to unfold the climax created from previous episodes (Ojha & Singh, 2018). Suspense as one of the narrative conventions of soap operas generates instabilities and uncertainties within everyday life stories that will not be so appealing if delivered otherwise (Syed, 2011).

(b) Unique Narratives

Also, soap opera has more of a circular and a non-linear narrative, they resist narrative closure. Revelations, reunion or confrontations are always interrupted by unexpected visitors or phone calls, a switch to another plot or a catastrophe, a style that is annoying

and pleasurable (Gledhill, 2003). Furthermore, soaps are usually broadcasted once or more in a week consisting of a 30 minute slot on radio or television. However, some can even run for up to 50 minutes. They are often criticised for stereotypical and archetypal representation to disseminate the established beliefs of masculinity and femininity (Gledhill, *ibid*). There is a lot of emphasis on dialogue, intimate conversations, solving problems and often set in the home (Geraghty, 2010). Soap operas are characterised by extended, complex and interwoven stories that have no endings, makes use of a wide range of characters with themes that centre around family relationship and domesticity (Geraghty, 2005). Moreover, soap operas are not big on action but place a lot of emphasis on dialogue; they focus more on solving problems and intimate conversations on dating, motherhood, beauty and marriage (Neophytou, 2012), and focus on interpersonal problems like extra-marital relationships (Ahmed & Khalid, 2012). Also, the narratives found in soap opera are told from a female-centric perspective and revolve around the role of the woman (Syed, 2011).

(c) Mimics Real Time

Soap opera tries to mimic soap opera time to real time that is parallel to the viewer's world by relaying the daily lives of the viewers through the characters (Soukop, 2016). Soap opera mimics calendar time to that of real time by making references to days like Christmas, public holidays and valentine's day (Kock, 2010). Soap operas present an "illusion of reality"

(Wiergacz & Lucas, 2003:71) and displays real life emotions that viewers can relate to (Czarniawska, Eriksson-Zetterquist & Renemark, 2013). Soap opera deals with realistic themes and plots that are relatable to the viewers, this includes "falling out between family and community members; jealousies, infidelities, dirty dealings, hidden secrets and their exposure, social problems, for example, illegitimacy, abortion, sometimes work problems, e.g., redundancy" (Gledhill, 2003: 352).

(d) Serialisation

Serialisation is commonly adapted to television, which is a characteristic to soap opera and a great contrast from film which runs for several hours with the exception of film series like Lord of the Rings and Harry Potter (Kim & Long, 2012). Creeber (2001) defines serialisation as continuation of storylines and reoccurrence of themes throughout an episode on a regular basis at a particular time schedule. Episodes usually end in a 'cliff hanger' to keep the audience in suspense while leaving them guessing of what will happen in the next episodes and at the same time encouraging soap opera loyalty (Hobson, 2003; Valaskivi, 2000).

(e) Target Audience and Themes

Soap opera is aimed at the female audience. It deals with societal issues that interest women.

Viewers need to have "a set of knowledge and skills normally associated with them in patriarchal culture" (Syed, 2011:22). These patriarchal cultural competencies are acquired in everyday life that helps women to decode words and gestures so they can derive pleasure and understand emotional meanings that the male audience maybe unable to understand since they have a different manner of acculturation (Geraghty, 1994). While this may be true, Gledhill (1997) and Gauntlett and Hill (1992) argue that this notion of a gendered audience is no longer relevant as viewership has recently broadened and now includes men and even children.

Hence, this destroys the myth that was created that soaps were for un-liberated housewives.

(f) Stereotype and Archetypal Representation

Soap operas are usually criticised for portraying gender stereotype or archetypal representations which helps in establishing the dominant societal ideologies of masculinity and femininity. Also, soap operas focus more on heterosexual relationship and in cases where another sexuality is represented, this representation still falls short and the main focus remains on heterosexual romance. The usual stereotype or archetypal

characters include the matriarch or patriarch, romantic hero or heroine, the antagonist, gossip monger, the career woman (opposition), professional man, loving mother and Cinderella, and the reformed rake (Knoetze, 2015).

(g) Reality Versus Verisimilitude

Usually, soap operas are often described as “exaggerated, far-fetched, stretching things, over the top, overboard, extreme, even ridiculous or surreal” (Lamuedra & O’Donnell, 2013: 63). Soap opera narrative often incorporates elements that the viewers find familiar and perceive it as “realistic” (La MihaPastina & Straubhoar, 2005). It is often argued that because of soap opera’s multiplicity of plots and diverse characters, the genre resembles everyday life to the viewer (Knoetze, 2015). “Verisimilitude refers not to what may or may not actually be the case but rather to what the dominant culture believes to be the case, to what is generally accepted as credible, suitable, proper” (Gledhill, 2003:360).

2.2.5 Reasons for Soap Opera Popularity

Soap opera is the most popular telecasted television program of the world that dominates national audience ratings over others. One of the reasons for its popularity is that it deals with issues of everyday lives, everyday people and their problems. Soap’s realist conventions attract audiences, deals with everyday themes like death, friendship, marriage, personal relationship, female role in the home, romance and divorce (Ahmed, 2012). Similarly, Gledhill (2003:360) claims soap operas are popular for their “verisimilitude”. Soap opera also contains a lot of ‘soft power’ that has further contributed to its popularity. Soft power is the skill that is being used to structure a situation in ways that make others get attracted to the same thing you want which develops their interest and preferences similar to those of that same nation. Like in the case of Turkey, soft power is being portrayed in soap operas as a nation-building instrument, through the

presentation of culture, beautiful characters and the display of iconic Turkish sites that have ignited the rise of tourists into the country (Constantinos & Tziarras, 2018).

Furthermore, soap opera is so popular due to the fact that it has no beginning, middle or an end and presents conflicting viewpoints which the viewers have to resolve on their own. Hence, viewers enjoy becoming actively involved, predicting and speculating future events. Since soap operas contain a lot of suspense, viewers are left to predict future episodes. This rewards the viewers by confirming their prediction skills (Czarniawski et al., 2011).

Soap opera is very entertaining, informative and used as an escape from everyday problems. Since it deals with realistic themes, many viewers see it as a way of exploring reality (Perse, 2014). It gives viewers an outlet for every day worries found in the real world (Lewis, 2002).

Women use it as “a break, a fantasy, imaginary solution, some excitement, relaxation, or ‘a moment for themselves’” (Spence, 2005:29). Also, because of its realistic nature, soap opera is therapeutic with a capability for community and individual change. It teaches individuals how they could have or can behave if they find themselves in similar situations (Mynors-Wallis, 2007).

2.2.6 The Power of Soap Opera

(a) Deals With Realistic Themes

Even though soap operas are often described as “exaggerated, far-fetched, stretching things, over the top, overboard, extreme, even ridiculous or surreal” (Lamuedra & O’Donnell, 2012:63), there is however an agreement that they contain realistic aspects like the way they incorporate social issues into their narratives (Marx, 2018). Soap opera is not a fantasy genre, it is embedded firmly as a natural realism seemingly portraying the lives of everyday people whereby the audience perceive it as a true representation of reality (Wiltebols, 2004). Also, soap opera narratives give the audience especially women a better understanding of everyday life issues and its mediatory tool influence and inform

the perception of the female audience (Syed, 2011; Hobson, 2003). Since soap opera tells the stories of everyday people, the audience become emotionally attached as they recognised the characters and the stories they tell especially in cases where the viewer identifies with the characters and their lifestyles. However, the viewers distance themselves in cases where there are elements they do not identify with (Chua & Iwabuchi, 2008).

(b) Development of Para-social Relationship

There is para-social relationship with soap opera characters that develop overtime. Stern and Lavin (2006) further describe it as the influence these characters have on what the viewers aspire to consume or how to model their behaviour. Furthermore, para-social relationship is one-way (Gilles, 2010). Moreover, para-social relationship refers to the imaginary sense of intimacy an individual viewer experiences with a film character. It is a deep level of involvement through empathy and identification with the soap characters. Compared to single film releases where the characters are built at once, soap opera characters are built overtime which generate sophisticated and complex relationship with viewers who may start facing a para social interaction (Kim & Long, 2012). Continuous exposure to such media content intensifies this relationship as viewers become very loyal, start investing a lot of time and emotions, develop interest in their wellbeing, and even responding to the character's behaviour. Some viewers even go as far as seeking the character's personal contact information to bond and affirm their emotional attachment (Stern, Russell & Russell, 2012; Gilles, 2002; Sood & Rogers, 2000). Even though it can be argued that both film and soap opera are designed to develop such emotional attachment between the audience and the characters, the para-social relationship developed in soap opera and its viewers is more intensified. With the serialisation of soap opera, this relationship is gradually built which makes it more intense as the audience begin to empathise and connect with the characters emotionally (Kim; 2012).

(c) Ability to Influence Behavioural Changes

Television soap operas are one of the most popular shows on TV and affect viewers in different ways irrespective of their age or gender. Soap operas has the ability to have a positive as well as negative impact on the viewers. A study by Babu and Krishna (2020) in a survey of viewers to analyse the unethical issues in Telugu soap opera revealed that women's values had deteriorated and they symbolise cruelty and not chastity. Similarly, a study by Okinyi, Otieno and Nyabuto (2014) revealed a deterioration of behaviour. The youths influenced by soap opera end up dropping from school, engage in casual sex and eventually ushered into motherhood and fatherhood at an early age. Furthermore, soap opera has greatly helped in influencing the attitudes and behaviours of the audience over the long-term especially in health communication (Obregón, 2005). A study by Verma, Adams and White (2007) that examined the portrayal of health-related behaviours in popular UK soap operas uses a lot of health storylines which may increase viewers' knowledge about health issues and may lead to a positive change in health behaviours of viewers. In Tanzania, soap opera was used as a powerful tool to promote educational and social messages. Soap opera was employed to promote HIV/AIDS prevention and other social issues (Fraser, Kiruswa & Brown, 2003).

(d) Soap Opera Impacts Other Genres

Soap opera is often in the debate and discussion of television genres and its cross-generic element has been used in the development of various forms of reality TV (Geraghty 2006). Soap opera is very flexible. In Portugal, it was easily adapted and localised to a particular cultural and geographical location and later achieved international flow (Damasio & da Costa, 2020). According to Wittebols, "the soap opera, or more largely, serial storytelling, has emerged as the dominant guide by which stories are told on television, regardless of whether we are looking at news, prime time programming, or the presentation of sporting contest", (Wittebols, 2004: 2) soap opera has shaped a plethora of other genres. With its unique characteristics like its narratives (suspense, interweaving storylines), themes

(family, marriages, births and divorces) and format (break interruptions) (Marx, 2008), reality shows like *Survivor* have borrowed the hanger narratives from soap operas to create suspense. Furthermore, a reality show like *Big Brother* has structures and depiction of ordinary lives that is similar to soap operas (Turner, 2005; Foster, 2004).

(e) Platform for Controversial Topics

Soap opera serves as a platform for the introduction of controversial topics which is used to attract and retain audience loyalty for a long time (Knoetze, 2015). Soap opera has routinely dwelled in the portrayal of 'hard' subject matter that have sparked a lot of controversy about the role of this genre. Some controversial topics in soap opera include teenage pregnancy, alcoholism, AIDS, physical and sexual violence and male rape. Furthermore, the traditional landscape of soap opera has been broadened to include the marginalised groups like gay and lesbians and occasional deal with things like racist attacks (Henderson, 2002). However, in some cases, the government and other authorities have taken some measures to regulate such content. In 2015 in Peru, a TV station put a warning on a scene where two male characters kissed saying it could offend some people. Still in Peru, another popular TV soap opera was criticised by the United Nations for failing to eliminate racial discrimination. For this, the show was moved from its prime-time slot to early morning broadcast. Furthermore, in Venezuela, the government suspended the airing of a soap opera that has some controversial topics (Caselli, 2016).

(f) Commercial Product

Despite the fact that many critics have failed to recognise soap opera as a form of art, it has managed to obtain partial success from an economic perspective. Apart from it being very entertaining, soap opera is a commercial product with a profit potential. It is the most effective broadcasting advertising vehicle on television (Harrington, Scardaville, Lippmann & Bielby, 2015). Soap operas are 'crowd pullers' that changed the concept of entertainment and plays a vital role in TV broadcasting. It became a popular slot for advertisers to reach

potential audiences. For example, in India, advertisers used it as a main platform to reach potential customers especially the middle class who were the beneficiaries of the 'New Economic Policy' by the Indian government in 1991. This enabled the middle class to emerge with higher buying power and thirst for luxurious and extravagant lifestyle (Jalarajan & Rihini, 2010:15). Also, soap operas are cheap to produce as most of the scenes are shot and set indoors with simple camera style, more attention to interaction between characters and camera to pan over the city during breaks between sets (Neophytou, 2012). Furthermore, the exportation of soap operas to many other countries have proven to be very lucrative. For example, Turkey is one country that has been benefitting a lot from commercialising its soap operas and exporting abroad. Previously, Turkish serial content was produced in a way that attracted mostly the national audience. However, recently, content has been introduced to attract the global television content producers (Alankus & Yanardagoglu, 2016), Turkish soap operas are popular in the Middle East, Turkic Republics and the Balkans and are recently spreading into Pakistan, Ukraine and the Chinese markets, reaching a total of over 50 countries which brings in export revenue (Kalidag & Bulut, 2014). The spread and wide reach of these soap operas has led to the acquisition of new customers and eventually more earnings for producers (Çevik, 2014). Still in Turkey, a more recent study by Begendik (2019) reveals that Turkish soap operas were exported at a value of over 300 million dollars to over 150 countries. This export success has attracted the attention of academics, series producers and exporters.

(g) Tourism

Soap opera encourages tourism. Many viewers tend to visit the sites where films or television series were shot or the series studios or film-related theme parks. Tourists sometimes visit locations because they were featured in a video, cinema or television (Kim & Long, 2012). This phenomenon has come to be known as film-induced tourism or film tourism (Beeton, 2005), screen tourism (Kim & O'Connor, 2011; Connell and Meyer, 2009), media-related tourism (Busby and Klug, 2001) and media pilgrimage (Couldry, 1998). According to Balli, Balli and Cebeci (2013), the export of Turkish soap opera and

the visa-free entry into Turkey for certain countries have boosted the country's tourism industry. Apart from the Visa waiver, findings show the increase in the export of soap operas into the middle east and Eastern Europe which has also led to an increase in tourist influx into Turkey. Similarly, Anaz and Ozean (2016) carried out a study in Turkey to find out the correlation of soap operas to tourism and it reveals that exporting these series abroad has greatly helped in promoting tourism especially tourists from other Arab countries who are film-induced to visit. Furthermore, their studies show that the number of tourists into Turkey from countries like Bulgaria, Kazakhstan and Iran increased as the number of exports of soap operas to these countries grew. In South Africa, Gibson (2018) uses *Uzalo* as an example of a soap opera's 'spectacular realism' that has a televisual tourist glance, to promote tourism.

(h) Influence on Consumer Behaviour

Soap opera symbolises a modern age that promotes consumer culture and brings about social change. It promotes fashion trends and lifestyle, hence creating an aspirational standard for consumers, for example, consumption of healthy foods like fish, brown bread, fruits and vegetables and going abroad for beach tourism (Syed, 2011; Skuse, 1999). Globalisation has further facilitated the exposure of consumers to foreign products. Koksai and Gjani (2015) carried out a study to examine the influence of Turkish soap opera on the Albanian market and purchase decision in terms of product preference. Findings from the study imply that soap operas have an influence on consumer product preference and participants from the study agree that these serials influence their decision to buy Turkish products. Also, a behavioural modelling process is triggered in cases where the consumer has a para social connection to the character (Stern & Lavin, 2006). Soap operas are known to promote a stereotypical traditional gender role and depict undesirable behaviour. Also, it promotes extravagant lifestyle, products and services that symbolise the viewers' self. This compels viewers to put their real lives on hold and enter the fictional lives for the duration of the show and afterwards lead to hopelessness and dissatisfaction at themselves for not being able to afford that lifestyle (Ozgun, Yurdakul & Atik, 2017; Stern, Russell & Russell, 2005). Soap opera is known to

affect female characters the most, when women start identifying with fictional characters in soap operas, it begins to drive them emotional to start searching for what they lack in their everyday lives

(Ozgun, Yurdakul & Atik, 2017). Also, beverages like alcohol are promoted as “normal, appropriate, and innocuous create a world in which drinking alcohol looks attractive and is part of everyday life” (Stern, Russell & Russell, 2005:2). Also, many viewers are influence by soap operas in the way homes are furnished and decorated (Bhattacharjee & Sarkar, 2017; Kaul & Sahni, 2010).

(i) Promotes National Identity

Soap opera helps to promote national identity. Studying the production from 1994-2003 on Catalan television using content analyses, documentation and in-depth interviews with script writers and managers, Castello (2007) points out the importance of fictional television series in promoting nation building. This could be achieved through fictional discourse based on territorial and linguistic or even through institutional, historical and cultural aspects. Also, the production dynamics and cultural policy is important to determine a nation’s representation. Hence, it is important for a nation to use such platforms to highlight how it wants its country to be portrayed, therefore promoting its identity. A study carried out in Brazil by Porto (2011) to analysis the representation of the country’s identity through fictional telenovelas (soap operas) broadcasted in the past four decades highlight a link between the two. Findings show more detailed processes of the economic, political and social changes of the country’s dilemma which were reflected in the television fiction. Furthermore, in South Africa, soap opera embraces the national complexities of the country and makes use of multiple languages to promote the country’s 11 official languages. This serves as a platform to promote national unity and the country’s multiple identities (Marx, 2007).

2.2.7 A Brief History of South African Television and the Soap Opera Industry in South Africa

In 1976, South Africa experienced its first nationwide television broadcast after a lot of resistance from the apartheid government. This came about 20 years late when many developed countries had already started television broadcasting. From the post-apartheid context, 1994 marks a remarkable shift towards inclusion; however, television viewing still remained subject to the intricacies of the apartheid legacy (Smit, 2016).

Soap opera was first introduced in South Africa in 1953 on Springbok radio which was one of SABC's radio stations. Repeated reports from the SABC annual reports say it was very popular among its female audience. Soap opera only came to television years later in 1984 on Bop television (the former Bophuthatswana homeland in South Africa) which broadcasted Santa Barbara and Dallas, making them gain a lot of popularity as hotels began erecting satellite dishes to meet customers demand to receive the two popular soap operas on their screens (Motsaathebe, 2009). The popularity of the two soap operas became money-spinners for Bop television. It was however short-lived when Tim Ellis a former Bop producer was head-hunted to start Channel 4, a new SABC channel from 1986 (Ibid).

After 1994, South Africa has undergone a shift in their cultural, economic and political paradigms and creating new histories, renegotiating existing identities and creating new ones. South African soap operas which are broadcasted daily have a contributing role to play in these changes as they are locally produced and attract a wide audience (Marx, 2008). Barnard (2006:40) explored a shift towards multiculturalism and multi-lingual programming in South African television and advice that South African sitcoms and soap operas have such capacity to 'critique and contest its apartheid past and imply an innovative model of multiculturalism for the future'.

South African soap opera is also popularly known in South Africa as soapy, soapie or soap(s). These different names have been used interchangeably in a number of previous studies like

Marx (2018), Smit (2016), Neophytou (2012), Boniface and Ilroy (2007) and Barnard (2006). However, for the purpose of this study, only the term soap opera was used. It is largely aimed at the female audience. They are usually broadcasted in the late mornings or early evenings and rebroadcasted several times a day so that even career women are able to watch. Also, the types of advertisements aired during commercial breaks re-emphasise the target audience. Adverts include chain stores, shampoos, Verimark, Glomail and time-specific adverts like

Mother's Day and Christmas. The main themes in local soap opera are of feminine interests and centre on family, romantic love and the portrayal of women in powerful roles and asserting themselves in traditionally male dominated corporate world (Marx, 2008).

Language plays a big role in South African soap operas. The South African constitution awards 11 languages with the official status and again as stated in the constitution, one of the responsibilities of the public broadcaster is to make its services available to the citizens in all official languages. However, like most countries, South Africa has a dominance of the Anglophone media where most of its local programming is done in English and imports a lot of English programmes. SABC has a subtitling policy whereby most local programming in languages other than English are sub-titled in English, further supporting the concept of Anglophone dominance even though majority of the people do not understand English (Kruger, 2012). According to the South African Broadcasting Act 1999, the public broadcaster is expected to;

- a) Make services available to South Africans in all official languages;
- b) Reflect both the diversity and the unique cultural and multilingual nature of South Africa and all of its cultures and regions to audiences;
- c) Strive to be of high quality in all of the languages served... (Republic of South Africa Government 1999: 13)

According to the South African Constitution, "recognising the historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages of our people, the state must take practical and

positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages” (Republic of South Africa Government 1996: section 6(2):4).

SABC, the public broadcaster has made this very visible in two of its three channels, SABC 1 and SABC 2, by commissioning its locally-produced programming like dramas, magazines programming and soap opera to reflect the multi-lingual society. Using multiple languages in soap opera makes it accessible to a wider audience and gives the audience an opportunity to interact with different languages and cultures (Kruger, 2012). South African soap operas try to incorporate the different national languages even though some become more prominent than the others. For example, Afrikaans is the main language used in *7de Laan*, a language connected to whiteness (Knoetze, 2018).

2.2.8 Tribal Base (Language) and Subtitling of South African Soap Operas

In South Africa, language had a political connotation where Afrikaans and English were the official languages spoken by whites during apartheid. In the South African context, multilingualism signifies a move away from apartheid and an embracement of multilingualism which allows previously undermined racial and ethnic identities through interracial understanding (Barnard, 2006). South Africa has 11 official languages which are Isindebele, Sepedi, Sesotho, siSwati, Xitsonga, Setswana, Tshivenda, isiXhosa, isiZulu, English and Afrikaans which was officially acknowledged in the 1996 constitution (Finlayson, Slabbert & van den Berg, 2008; South African, 1996 Constitution). South African soap opera promotes multiculturalism and multilingualism; they target audiences from different racial and tribal backgrounds. They are characterised by an interesting example of code switching (the use of multiple languages in a conversation) to accommodate a language-diverse viewer base (Van der Westhuizen & Niesler, 2016). Kruger (2012) states that, there is no single locally produced soap opera in South Africa where just one language is being used. The four locally produced soap opera examined in this study has shown a multilingual South Africa, hence promoting the nation’s national identity. The dominant language spoken in *Muvhango* is mainly Sesotho and some Venda, English, Zulu and Xhosa, *Generations* is multilingual and uses Zulu, Xhosa,

Southern Sesotho and Tswana, *7de Laan* is mainly Afrikaans and limited Zulu, Sesotho, English and Xhosa and in *Isidingo* the main language used is English and less of Afrikaans, Zulu and Sesotho.

Language plays a big role in South African history although on its own cannot be considered an adequate resource for nation building (Webb, 1996). South Africa is a multilingual anglophile country. Even though not in line with the South African constitution that stands to promote all 11 official languages, the dominant language used in subtitling is English (Kruger, 2012). This was further supported by SABC which has a policy that all locally produced programming that are in languages other than English be sub-titled in English (Gottlieb, 2004). A study carried out by Kruger (2012) reveals all four locally produced soap operas were subtitled in English. Of all the different translation modes, sub-titling allows people to experience the authentic flavour of the foreign language, mood and a sense of the foreign culture (Szarkowska, 2005). All the soap operas in the current study are sub-titled in English.

The Broadcast Research Council of South African in January 2020 released its latest viewership statistics of the ten most watched locally produced South Africa soap operas as follows (Maune, 2020):

Table 1: Viewership and Popularity Level of South African Soap Operas (January, 2020)

Title of soap opera	Viewership	Channel
<i>Uzalo</i>	9.6 million	SABC 1
<i>*Generations: The Legacy</i>	8.2 million	SABC 1
<i>Skeem Saam</i>	6.2 million	SABC 1
<i>*Scandal!</i>	4.7 million	e.tv
<i>Muvhango</i>	4.6 million	SABC 2
<i>*Rhythm City</i>	4.1 million	e.tv
<i>The Queen</i>	1.2 million	Mzansi Magic

<i>Isidingo</i>	780 000	SABC 3
<i>Isibaya</i>	731 000	Mzansi magic
<i>The River</i>	622 000	One magic

Note:

The soap operas with asterisk (*) are those selected to be analysed for the current study.

2.2.9 The Role of the SABC in Promoting Soap Operas

The South African Broadcasting Corporation was created in 1936 with its main aim being to service the white speakers of English and Afrikaans (Burton, 2012). Its main broadcasting languages were English and Afrikaans. In addition to the single SABC channel, in 1982, two more channels were introduced and started broadcasting in many other local languages (Teer-

Tomaselli, 2005). The SABC is South Africa’s only public broadcaster and produces radio and television content in all eleven languages of South Africa. The public broadcaster television package is made up of three free-to-air channels SABC 1, SABC 2 and SABC 3 (Ndayi & Du Plooy, 2019). SABC 1 broadcasts in isiZulu and isiXhosa with a little of Tshivenda, English and isiNdebele, SABC 2 broadcasts in Afrikaans, Setswana, English, Tshivenda and Sesotho,

SABC 3 broadcasts in English to accommodate its “sophisticated and cosmopolitan” audience (Teer-Tomaselli, 2005:558). Adopting this language policy was the beginning of several transformations that distanced itself from the former apartheid broadcasting structure. This was followed by the creation of several television programmes like soap opera which marked an important moment in the country’s history (Tager, 1997). In 1993, a year before the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa, SABC had as one of its aims to restructure the nationalist party, promote entertainment and promote Bishop Desmond Tutu’s affirmation of the country

as a “rainbow nation” for people of all races. This led to the use of the media as a tool for nation building (Burton, 2012:221; Milton, 2008), followed by the creation of many soap

operas like *Generations*, *Isidingo*, *7de laan* and *Muvhango* (SABC, 1994:7). All three SABC channels have a flagship soap opera, SABC 1 broadcasts *Generations: The Legacy*, SABC 2 *7de Laan* and SABC *Isidingo* (Ndayi & Du Plooy, 2019). SABC has the largest viewership in the country with 22.5 million for SABC 1, 19.6 million for SABC 2 and 14.1million for SABC3 (SABC group sales, 2019). Some of SABC values include providing content that show diversity, national development, non-sexism, non-racialism and eradicating stereotypical representations of women, blacks, homosexuals, disabled and any other marginalised group on mainstream media (SABC, 2019; 2018). One of the soap operas for this study, *Generations: The Legacy* is from SABC 1 which enjoys a large viewership and its language diversity.

2.2.10 DStv's Role in the South African Soap Opera Industry

Digital Satellite Television (DStv) owned by MultiChoice is the country's top pay-tv operations. Mnet's DStv is a carrier of South Africa's free-to air channels which include e.tv, SABC 1, 2 and

3 on their bouquets. The country's industry regulator ICASA (Independent Communications Authority of South Africa) in 2008 came up with the "must carry" regulation which stipulates that free-to-air channels must be made available nationwide on all paid-TV platforms (ICASA, 2008).

Even though the "must carry" regulation was contested nine years after its institution by SABC (Blignaut, 2017), nothing has changed. DStv through this has made the e.tv and SABC channels available internationally, hence giving South African soap opera a platform for international viewing. DStv subscription is available in many African countries including Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria and South Africa (Multichoice.com). According to Ferreira (2019) of channel 24, in early 2019, DStv had a total of 15.1 million pay-tv customers across Africa of which 7.4 million are in South Africa. In November 2019, its subscription viewers increased to 18.9 million with 8.2 from South Africa (Businessstech, 2019). Also,

the pay-tv service provider also invests in local content production. Some of DStv's local productions include reality shows, films and drama series like *Tracker*, *Survivor South Africa*, and *The River*.

2.2.11 Profile of Selected Soap Opera

a) *Rhythm City*

This is a South African musical soap opera that first premiered on e.tv, a free-to-air channel in 2007 to date. It airs from Monday to Friday from 19:00-19:30 for 30 minutes. The soap opera is created by Rolie Nikiwe and Neil McCarthy, and its directors include Siyabonga Mkhize, Welile Nzuzo, Kgomotso Medupe-Choane and Sarak K Roberts. (e.tv, 2020). *Rhythm City* is multilingual with a caption and airs in many other countries like Ghana, Nigeria, Botswana and Zimbabwe. The story revolves around power struggle in the music industry, family dynamics, love/romance, conflict and surviving Johannesburg. The main female characters are Puleng, Ma'am Blossom, Lerato and Reneilwe who all have very complicated lives. The main male characters are David Genaro, Suffocate Ndlovu and Khulekani Ngobese who clamour for power. These men are all gangsters who only show their soft side through their wives, partners and children. Also, there is David Genaro who lives with his son's mother and his grown-up daughter. He owns many businesses, murdered Khulekani's son and Suffocate's brother and feared by the community. Also, there is Suffocate Ndlovu, he is divorced from Puleng, also a business man who together with Khulekani killed David Genaro to avenge the death of their loved ones. Furthermore, Khulekani is married to Nandi who cheated on him with Suffocate and he also cheated on her with a gay guy Jamaica. He is a drug dealer and owns a security company. Apart from these gangsters, Bra kop is married to Ma'am Blossom, a very humble and respectful woman. He is a taxi driver while his wife owns a small tuck shop through the window of her house. Despite trying to make ends meet, they constantly welcome children into their home. They live with many children in their house that are not biologically theirs. Also, here is Mzi, a lawyer and Suffocate's son who is married to Reneilwe a singer who was raised by Bra Kop.

b) *Scandal!*

Scandal!, formerly known as the voice is another e.tv original South African production produced by Ochre Moving Pictures. It is created by Gloria Medupe and directed by Ian Nkulu (e.tv.co.za). It airs on e.tv from 19:30-20:00 from Monday to Friday for 30 minutes with commercial breaks in between. It first aired in 2008 and is multilingual with captions included. It is broadcasted to Africa on e-Africa e.tv in countries like Ghana, Botswana and Nigeria. The story is diverse but revolves around the newspaper industry. The themes feature family, conflict, love/romance and revenge. Main female characters include Layla, Grace Medupe, Yvonne, Boniswa Langa, Dintle and Gloria Legae. Boniswa is a widow with a son Chumani and a daughter named Xolile who is married to Romeo Medupe and an ex-wife to Mthunzi Meyiwa. Boniswa is portrayed as a manipulative woman and a murderer. She murdered her ex-lover, Mr Xaba and father to her son. Grace is a single woman, a mother to Romeo and a hotel owner who is married to a much younger man and step brother of her son Simo Shanbangu despite her son's disapproval. Gloria, Layla and Dintle are all single woman, while Gloria is a divorced woman, the other two just have a child each and have never been married. Layla is the mother of Quinton who is the father of Dintle's baby. He is the head of the family business, a newspaper organisation and was once CEO. Yvonne is portrayed as a socialite who has been married twice, she is a widow and a foster mother to Tebello. He and Lerumo are in a relationship. The main male characters include Mthunzi Meyiza, Romeo Medupe, Quinton Nyathi, Neo Mokheti and Simo Shabangu. Quinton is the ex-husband of Thembeke Shezi, Neo Mokheti is a reformed gangster and father to Lerumo, a police officer.

c) *Generations: The Legacy*

Generations: The Legacy, another original South African production is the remake of the 1996 soap opera *Generations* as it was initially called. It airs on SABC 1 at 20.00 from Monday to Friday for 30 minutes. *Generations: The Legacy* first aired on December 1, 2014. It is a multilingual production with subtitles. It is created and produced by Mfundu Vundla (SABC.co.za). Its story revolves around the advertising industry, the transfer of

wealth from one generation to another. Also, it is characterised by a lot of conflict, filled with gangsters, family life, surviving the street, love and romance. Its main male characters include Jack Mabaso, Kumkani, Tau Mogale, Cosmo and Mazwi Moroka. Main female characters include Sphe, Tshidi, Zitha, Fikile, Lucy, Palesa and Lesedi. The Morokas are the biggest family in the show and own one of the biggest advertising companies. They belong to the upper social class and are a closed-knit family and look out for each other. This family is made up of Kabisi, Mazwi and Smanga. Kabisi is married to Tshidi, an ex-girlfriend to Smanga. Mazwi is married to Sphe, the daughter of a notorious gangster, Jack Mabaso who is very violent and has some illegal businesses. Also, Jack Mabaso is an ex-boyfriend of Tshidi and dating Zitha. Palesa is a character in the show that is trying to make something of herself in Johannesburg, she works as a domestic worker to the Morokas and as a prostitute. Another family that is close but belong to the middle class is the Diales, these include two adult children, Lucy and Cosmos and their grandmother Gog'Flo. Gog'Flo is a kind woman that opens her home to many children like Palesa, Lerato and even adopted Lesedi. She is a matriarch in the show. However, her grand kids are nothing like her, they are gangsters, ex-convicts that are violent and feared in the community.

A total of three South African soap operas were used for this study and 20 episodes analysed per soap opera from October 2019 to September 2020. These soap operas were selected based on their popularity and characters analysed range from 16-65+ years.

2.3 GENDER REPRESENTATION IN TELEVISION SOAP OPERAS

A considerable amount of literature has been published on gender representation in soap operas. Majority of these studies have been carried out in the Asian continent (Anam, 2019; Jain & Pareek, 2018; Arokiaraj, 2017) and very few in Africa and South Africa in particular (Achando, 2019; Ndayi & du Plooy, 2019; Motsaathebe, 2009). Most of the current literature on gender representation pays particular attention to female representation in soap operas. Recently, there has been an increasing amount of

literature that includes male representation in soap opera such as Ncube (2019); Shukla (2015); Kojoyan and Gevorgyan (2014). It has been argued that traditionally, women have been given more of subordinate roles and placed mostly in the domestic environment, contrary to men. They are often portrayed as submissive while the men are the decision makers. The women are often portrayed as homemakers, fashion model, housewives and nurturers. (Anam, 2019; Kaul & Sahni, 2010). Soap opera has failed to accurately depict the reality of women's role in society (Achando, 2017; Kaul & Sahni, 2017). Men on the other hand are often portrayed as intelligent, bossy, rich and promiscuous (Gurkan & Serttas, 2017; Daalmans et al., 2017).

a) Gender representation in television soap opera in Europe

In Turkey, Gurkan and Serttas (2017) investigated the representation of masculinity in Turkish cinema and Turkish soap operas through an audience reception analysis. The aim of the study was to determine how the fictitious male characters are portrayed and how they compare to real life men. Using women and men from middle and upper-middle class and a set of openended questions, the audience determined that the male characters depicted in Turkish soap operas are a great deviation from what real everyday men in Turkish society look and act like. The fictitious male characters were stereotypically portrayed as rich, physically very attractive men and having positive behaviours like apologising to their wives. On the contrary, according to Gurkan and Serttas (2017), this does not reflect real life Turkish men who pay little attention to clothing and fitness and there are some men who even murder their wives in everyday life. The men are adulterous with women throwing themselves all over them; they are often involved in extramarital affairs and keep a wife and a woman (girlfriend) they love. The characters being represented are contrary to real life Turkish men who show persistence in maintaining a stereotypical and male-dominant role and traits in society over women. The woman is portrayed as an inseperable part of the male that needs to be loved and protected by a man.

In another study, Lacalle and Gomez (2016) drew our attention to the representation of working women in Spanish soap operas and arrived at some interesting findings. The

study revealed an overrepresentation of working qualified women compared to the actual percentage of working women in Spain and an underrepresentation of unemployed and retired women above 65 years. Not surprisingly, many women were portrayed in traditional stereotype roles like waitress, nurses and teachers, however, there was a prominence of female police officers, a non-traditional female role. These women were however portrayed as haven adopted masculine traits like being resentful, vengeful, aggressive and despotic in order to mask their feminine sensitive side.

One study on soap opera by Daalmans et al. (2017) carried out a comparative study in the Netherlands on two different gender-targeted channels in regards to the actual presence of the particular gender and the roles they were being portrayed in. Their study highlighted some unique findings. Men and women were represented differently in the different channels. The men targeted channel showed a lack of recognition of women as they were significantly underrepresented unlike the women targeted channel that had a somewhat equal representation of both men and women. Also, the study shows that the men's channel continues to represent women stereotypically in regards to occupation and age. A few of the studies that mentioned age shows that women who are portrayed far younger than men (Emons, Wester & Scheepers, 2010; Glascock 2001). Similarly, in Daalmans et al. (2017), a study was carried out to find out how the different genders were portrayed in gender targeted channels. Findings showed that the women represented on the male targeted channel were young adults while men featured as adults, however, on the female-targeted channel, both men and women were portrayed as adults.

b) Gender representation in television soap operas in Asia

Several studies carried out in India have revealed a lot of contradictory findings. For instance, Anamika (2014) carried out a gender analysis of four Indian soap operas and revealed that, soap operas are using a rather slow but steady radical feminism method to overthrow patriarchy. According to the study, the women are positively portrayed. Unlike some previous works where almost all the women were treated as inferior with very little rights in decision making and limited to work in the households (Anam, 2019; Achando,

2017), their findings showed otherwise. Women are now working outside the home and demanding for equal educational, political and social rights. Even though the number of working women and those demanding equality is still low, it is an improvement. However, working women are still very much neglected as their household activities take priority and a few of the women are still being portrayed in stereotypical roles. Most of the key female characters are victims of domestic violence. Furthermore, in the second part of the study, a reception analysis revealed the men think soap operas are used more as a platform to promote and sell costly products.

Like Anamika (2014), Jana (2016) identifies a great step up in the portrayal of women in recent Indian soap operas compared to previous studies. Even though there are a few stereotypical representations that still exist, it is almost insignificant compared to representations in the past. It was observed that the women portrayed are educated and sometimes even more educated than their husbands. In her study, women were represented as possessing more power and status than the male characters. The husbands were supporting their wives to be educated and get a job outside the home. Women in the old studies on soap operas used to be either perfectly good or perfectly evil. They were often represented performing household chores, taking care of family and mothers-in-law, and often at loggerheads with daughters-in-law (Anam, 2019; Sachdeva, 2018 and Achando, 2017). This has changed tremendously as the woman's role now goes beyond the household; wives are pampered by their in-laws (Anamika, 2014). There is no portrayal of the perfect woman as the wives portrayed in the soap opera make mistakes and learn from them to become better. This now portrays a more realistic scenario of what real life is all about.

Another study in India by Arokiaraj (2017) sought to determine the kind of images that the women in Tamil soap operas are portrayed in. Findings revealed that the women are being portrayed in a more constructive manner and as equal to men. They are represented as strong and independent women who owned wealth and could spend it the way they want. They were leading a very affluent lifestyle and involved in decision making.

The women were presented as equal to men and strong, not emotional but courageous to handle their problems.

Contrary to Arokiaraj (2017), still in India, Jain and Pareek (2018) carried out a longitudinal study from 1990-2016 on gender portrayal of domestic work in Indian soap operas and findings revealed that women were presented in a stereotypical manner. They are shown doing all the domestic work. Rather than portraying the transformation of gender roles over the years, women were still being portrayed in stereotyped roles playing fashionable housewives who are extra caring and tolerate all ill-treatments against them. A study by Somani and Doshi (2016) carried out in the United States of America, interviewed 50 Indian migrant couples who watch imported Indian soap operas via satellite. They appreciated the representation of a modern Indian woman. However, they were disappointed that the women portrayed were manipulative and not family-oriented, an image that did not reflect the values of Indian women before they migrated in the 1960s.

In Pakistan, a study to determine the portrayal of women in soap operas by Khan and Zaheen (2011) showed that its main focus was to promote radical feminism to discourage social inequalities and gender discrimination. Even though a large number of women were still portrayed in stereotyped roles, the few numbers of working women portrayed in contrast stereotypical were represented as influential, authoritative and had decision making powers. The few shown as victims of violence (physical assault and sexual harassment) took legal actions to expose and punish the offenders. However, still in Pakistan, a more recent study by Anam (2019) carried out a critical analysis of women's role in Pakistani soap opera and revealed that the men were negatively portrayed as being aggressive. The women faced physical assault from the men for dishonouring the family. Compared to studies in India where the women were shown in a more improved light, the women portrayed in Pakistani soap opera had no rights to decision making, no freedom to air their grievances and were represented as inferior to men. The soap operas portrayed male dominance and superiority. The men were the sole decision makers. They made all the decisions in the women's lives such as who they should or should not marry, whether or not they should go to school and how they should dress and behave to be regarded as

marriage material. Female education was discouraged, unless it was used as a means to an end and was considered secondary to men's designated primary role for them as caregivers, wives and mother. To further discourage education, according to Anam (2019), Pakistani soap operas have failed to represent up to the 25% of the working women in the country. Even though the study also reveals the portrayal of a few independent working women, they were presented doing stereotypical and menial jobs. Most of the women were teachers, a job typically considered feminine or housemaids who were single and had no choice but to get jobs (means to an end). Furthermore, they are also presented in a negative light and meet terrible fate if they fail to recognise their most important roles (family role) or dress in western clothes which were not considered religious. Findings in this study showed a gap in presenting a happy independent woman in Pakistani soap opera.

Ashfaq and Shafiq (2018) investigated the very much contested concept of the 'perfect' woman in Pakistani soap operas and yielded very interesting results. The study revealed that these soap operas were in fact reinforcing the patriarchal concept of the 'perfect' and 'imperfect' woman in Pakistan using both physical appearance and character traits. The perfect women identified in the soap opera usually plays the main role and are quite similar in character. However, they are a direct opposite of the supporting female characters. The physical appearance of the "perfect" woman is usually much younger, usually 18-20 years, fair in complexion, slim, long hair, dressed in eastern clothes with covered hair and an educated student with no professional degree, while the "imperfect" woman is older between 25-50 years, dressed in western or eastern clothes without a scarf to cover her hair. They are usually well-educated and independent and have a fair complexion enhanced by make-up. The "perfect" woman's physical appearance usually represents natural beauty while the "imperfect woman" stands for artificial beauty. Also, the character traits of the two are entirely different. The 'perfect' woman possesses character traits like submissiveness, piety, purity and domesticity while the 'imperfect' woman is portrayed as aggressive, a woman that will do everything to get what she wants even if it means to kill, will even propose to a man she likes, talks rudely to her

husband and even asks for a divorce. The researchers concluded that gender representation is not universal, but unique to different patriarchal cultures and those who challenge these stereotypes are usually considered 'imperfect' and often meet a bad end.

Ibrahim et al. (2017) point out the somewhat equal representation of the perfectly good woman and the perfectly evil woman in Malaysian soap operas. In their analysis, they identified two groups of women. The women are either beautiful, successful and evil who often end up dead or a woman who is well mannered, patient, intelligent, skilful and honest. Their study shows that even though women's portrayal on television has improved a lot with more women being represented as determined, educated and independent. Women in supporting roles are still negatively portrayed and beckon on content producers to also improve on their representation of these characters. The evil woman is often shown conspiring either to kill someone or to destroy their happiness.

c) Gender representation in television soap operas in Africa

In Egypt, Badaoui (2016) carried out a study to determine media students' perception about watching soap operas. Using a questionnaire and a sample of 200 students, the following findings were reached. Negative roles were assigned to divorced man, father, wife, working woman, son and daughter while a mother, divorced woman and separated women were positively represented. In his analysis, he explains the reasons for such perceptions. Divorced and separated women often face social accusations and are usually the family sponsors, a role closely related to the values of a mother in Arab and Islamic society which is respected. The negative role associated with a son is because they are often portrayed as stubborn and the working woman means a rejection of the traditional role of a woman which is to be obedient, raise children and take care of the home in the Egyptian society. To stay at home means avoiding harassment from men and same sex. Badaoui (2016) suggested that soap operas promoted and supported stereotypes of men and women in the Egyptian society. The man is negatively perceived because of his negligence of home affairs but credited for proper planning and intellectual superiority. Badaoui (2016:4) used an Egyptian proverb "a woman in the shadow of a

man is better than a wall shadow” to describe and emphasise a woman’s position in relation to men in that society. This is to further stress the importance of a man in a woman’s life even if he neglects his family and financial responsibilities. He further argued that television soap operas used socialisation and mixing of traditions for the false interpretation of religion to consecrate the idea of a woman’s subordination to men. Badaoui concluded that these perceptions did not just stem from watching series but that these roles emerge from the Egyptian societal environment as well, hence the soap operas are reflecting and reinforcing what the society already practice.

In Kenya, a study by Achando (2017) to examine the role of soap opera in framing the men and women in Kakamega Town revealed that men and women were portrayed in very distinct gender roles which were actually mirroring the beliefs and behaviours of men and women in the Kenyan society. The women were portrayed in gender stereotype roles and regarded as inferior compared to the male characters. The men on the other hand were put in a more elevated position while the women’s position was undermined. In the study, the men were in control and made all the decisions. However, not every aspect of the man’s character is positively portrayed. They are also shown being irresponsible, drinking recklessly, getting drunk and becoming violent towards their wives. Moreover, in the workplace, a majority of the women occupied subordinate positions. However, a few of the women resisted the traditional roles and went against it. For example, there was a female character who beat her husband for failing to provide for his family.

A study carried out in South Africa by Motsaathebe (2009) to investigate gender roles, images and behavioural patterns of males and females in the soap opera *Generations* came up with some interesting findings. It was revealed that even though males and females are portrayed fairly, males were still being presented as more dominant. The women are portrayed as dependent and rely heavily on men for help and support. Women portrayed in dominant roles often find themselves under a lot of pressure which they often could not cope with, and leads to the collapse of their businesses. This reinforces the stereotypical portrayal of women as incapable. The women were adorned with very negative personality traits such as being greedy, jealous, manipulative, arrogant, selfish

and emotional. However, the study reveals an attempt to shift from the traditional paradigm with more women now represented in positions that were previously associated with men. Men as well were represented in stereotyped roles. As usual, men were represented as independent, professionals, intelligent and adventurous. This is the only study on gender representation where the researcher found a gay mentioned. There were however a few focused studies in South Africa on masculinities and homosexuality in soap operas where gays were mentioned like Ncube (2019) and Sehlabi (2012). Still in South Africa, Neophytou (2012) carried out a study on the representation of femininities in the soap opera *Generations* and revealed very complex findings. Feminine representation in the study complies with, as well as resists the social construction of femininities in soap operas. The study reveals four main themes that construct femininity, the good girl theme, the matriarch, the mother and the villainess. The 'good girl' theme largely conforms to the western notion of beauty which is slim, tall and young, however, reference is also made to a fuller figure woman. The matriarch in soap operas is represented as strong but the matriarch in *Generations* shows vulnerability. Like the other themes showing conformity and resistance, the motherhood theme did not fall short. Findings reveal resistance to the idealised notion of motherhood; different types of mothers including single mothers and teenager mothers were represented. Also, the 'villainess' theme is complicit with the soap opera convention and society's construction of women where the woman is caught between the mother/whore dichotomy. A study by Ndayi and du Plooy (2019) about the differences in gender representation in the economic and business context in the South African soap opera *Generations: The Legacy* shows that males and females are being represented differently. Even though the roles of women have been elevated as professionals, they however still promote patriarchy. In a typical stereotypical manner, men are custodians of successful businesses and actively participate in the sociopolitical dealings of the country unlike the women who are placed in subordinate positions to support these business and economic dealings. Like Motsaathebe (2009), findings in their study revealed that most businesses that were headed by women ended up failing and were successfully rescued by men. This shows that women lack the ability to be independent and successfully participate in wealth

generation. Ndayi and du Plooy (2019) concluded that, though their depiction of difference of gender representation is true, the soap opera has however failed to challenge the patriarchal perception of the role of women in business and the economy and women's rights in general.

d) Queers and queer representation in television soap operas

The mainstream media has often failed to acknowledge the existence of non-heterosexuals (Fisher, Hill, Grube & Grube, 2007). As earlier stated, in the analysis of past studies on gender representation in soap opera, very few researchers have talked about queer representation except for a few focused studies on queer representation. For some young people, limiting gender to just males and females naturally often does not align with their biological sex, assigned gender and gender expression (Zeeman, Aranda, Sheriff & Cocking, 2016), therefore it is difficult to fit them into the male or female category. Queerness is regarded as the "other" and binary opposite of heterosexuality, masculinity and femininity. Hence, since feminine is aligned to female and masculine to male, in order to make sense of the heterosexual logic, it is therefore necessary to consider gay men as feminine and unnatural. The feminine gay man is attracted to men while the masculine lesbian is attracted to women (Bradley, 2012). Historically, soap opera has dealt with themes about social issues ranging from rape, domestic violence, alcoholism and abortion but homosexuality has been largely ignored (Griffin, 2005). As a possible reason, Griffin notes that introducing gay characters into a genre characterised by romance in general and non-heterosexual romance in particular is very difficult as everyone is expected to possibly become romantic with anyone. Usually in cases where a homosexual character is represented, they are used to illustrate their sexuality as a problematic paradigm, showing the consequences. Treating homosexuality as a problem was portrayed on TV through general rules of sympathetic representations (Dow, 2001). Portrayal of non-heterosexuals that are young has been very rare which may have contributed to the isolation feeling among them. Unlike heterosexuals, gay couples are rarely shown in sexual situations. Gay representation is often portrayed in a stereotypical way. For example, *Will and Grace* (an American soap opera) is criticised for its feminine

gay, promiscuous and flamboyant homosexual representation (Fisher, Hill, Grube & Grube, 2007).

“Increasingly....to have dignity, gay people must be seen as normal” (Warner, 2000:52). This is however not always the case. In Nicaraguan television, there is a very high number of homosexual representations and an almost non-existent of lesbian representation. In the TV show *Betty La Fea's* “Hugo the Gay”, the gay man portrayed is very flamboyant which raises questions on whether he is a plausible representative for all gay men. The character lacks monogamous coupling and has a loud gay persona which leaves advocates longing for a more normal homosexual subject who cannot be internationally identified as gay (Howe, 2008).

In a focused study on masculinities, Ncube (2019) investigated gender and naming practices and the creation of taxonomy of masculinities in the South African soap opera *Queen*. Four types of masculinities were identified and how they relate with women. These are; the traditional (the opposite of the modern man, negative and patriarchal and applied through female domination), ‘militarised’ (serial womaniser, violent and aggressive without any justification, physically and verbally abusive. They effect this by dominating women and other forms of masculinity), sober (this refers to men who even though are physically tough are emotionally soft in their relations with the women around them) and gay (often feminised and rendered less masculine and equated to a woman) masculinities. The findings, proved that some forms of masculinity were more desirable than others, of which gay masculinity was presented as the least desirable. The gay representation in this study challenges the heteropatriarchal meaning of masculinity and what it involves. The gaymen are given female nicknames, however, their embodiment of these names shows that they do not identify as inferior to hegemonic and dominant forms of masculinity, but see themselves as complete in their own way (Ncube, 2019).

According to Smith and Tyler (2017), there has been a high representation of lesbians in European and North American popular culture which symbolises the struggle of queers

to achieve social equality. However, the lesbians that often came out are a representation of the soft-porn hetero-masculine fantasies.

In a study by Sehlabi (2012) on the representation of homosexual men in the South African soap opera *Generations*, it is revealed that even though homosexual characters have been incorporated into the locally produced soap opera, their representation was usually portrayed as the “other” and contained a negative stereotype. The gay men were represented as moral degenerates. Also, homosexuals are shown as having problems that need to be solved. They are often faced with secrecy, guilt, shame, rejection and homosexual violence.

On the other hand, Vanlee, Dhaenens and Bauwel’s (2020) study on queer representation in the soap opera *Thuis* showed a more positive portrayal. The main character of the soap opera was a transgender (that is from male to female) who was represented with no oddity. Surprisingly, many of “her” friends who were initially shocked by the changes eventually got over it and accepted her regardless.

There are usually four predictable stages of media representation of minority groups, namely, non-representation (when a group is not represented in the media), ridicule (when the group is included only in the content of a joke), regulation (this is when minority groups react to ridicule, either through protest or violence to demand more socially acceptable roles, and respect (when the minority group is portrayed in both positive and negative roles, having romantic relationships and interacting with children) (Maulding & Bernardino, 2019). In a study by Raley and Lucas (2008), there is a mixed result which shows that gay and lesbian representation has moved beyond the non-representation stage and is at the ridicule stage while some have progressed to the regulation and respect stage. As earlier said, a study by Motsaathebe (2009), on the South African soap opera *Generations* was the only study on gender representation that the researcher found that actually checked for gay representation. However, his study did not find any representation of gays in the soap opera. Furthermore, Ncube (2019) in a more focused study on masculinities in the South African soap opera, *The Queen*, identified four types of masculinities; Tradional masculinity, (this is the partriachal form of masculinity where

men are given symbolic and social power that are expressed through female domination and heading of the household); militarised masculinity (such men are violent and aggressive in their strength and sexuality and expressed through objectifying and denigration of women); sober masculinity (men who do not conform to hegemonic masculinity that require male superiority over women) and gay masculinity (this includes all forms of non-normative sexual identities).

2.4 DOMINANT THEMES IN THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN AND MEN'S IMAGES IN SOAP OPERAS.

a) Marriage

Marriage is a common theme that is being portrayed in soap operas. A study by Anam (2019), found marriage as a prevalent theme throughout his study. Marriage was used as a way of upholding the family honour. Even an unmarried girl needs to uphold this honour by being virtuous and marry the man chosen for her by her family. A marriageable woman needs to possess the following characteristics, honest, humble, God fearing, beautiful, simplistic, obedient and family oriented. His findings were characterised by a lot of arranged marriages and women who refused to be married to the man chosen by their family is rejected by her husband's family and looked upon as failing to uphold the family's honour that may even result into dead threat. Apart from marriage, other themes in his study included motherhood, rape, rejection and physical assault against women (Anam, 2019). Similarly, Ashfaq and Shafiq (2018) is characterised by the theme of marriage. Many newly wedded couples are portrayed.

There are a few characters that remarry after their divorces. Furthermore, forced marriage is also being observed where a girl is forced by her parents to marry an uneducated rich boy. There were however some few women who married the man of her choice. Still in Ashfaq and Shafiq (2018), polygamy is highlighted. A single male character was

portrayed as having two wives. This relationship was characterised by a lot of fights between the wives that ended in separation between the husband and the second wife.

Furthermore, marriage is one of the main themes in Sachdeva (2018). Findings highlighted different forms of marriages, which included child marriage, the preference to marry fair women over dark-skinned women, late marriage, rejection of a daughter in law, interfaith marriage struggles, widow remarriage, forced marriage and marriage for superstitious reasons. Furthermore, there are several studies that men or women are faced with rejection by the in-laws as future son or daughter in law (Anam, 2019; Sachdeva, 2018; Ibrahim et al., 2017). According to Jain and Pareek (2017) another form of marriage highlighted is the age gap. This type of marriage is between an older woman and a much younger man. More studies that highlighted the theme of marriage included: Ahmed and Wahab, (2019), Ibrahim et al. (2017), Achando (2017) and Jana (2016).

b) Motherhood

According to Anam (2019), the role of a mother was portrayed as one of the most important roles in a woman's life, adorned with a lot of wisdom and placed in an undisputed position. A mother is portrayed as a bold figure who looks down on the daughter-in-law ensuring that she does not threaten the honour of the family. Still in Anam (2019), the mother is portrayed as her daughter's "secret keeper" with whom she shares a close bond. If the mother has evil intentions against her daughter-in-law, her son will never disrespect or argue with her. Even though the mother is portrayed as being very powerful, when it comes to honour, she yields to the patriarchal discourse and becomes powerless. According to Ashfaq and Shafiq (2018), the theme of motherhood is highlighted. A good mother is represented as loyal and family-oriented. A study by Neophytou (2012) of the soap opera *Generations* the former name of *Generations: The Legacy* portrays themes that centre on women and represents four types of women, the mother, the good girl, the Matriarch and the villainess. The motherhood theme was predominant and different types of mothers were portrayed; mother of the community, single mother and nurturer. The portrayal of mother in the study suggests three things;

that all women need to be mothers, all women need their children and all children need their mother. Achando (2017) revealed that motherhood was the most applauded role. Again, Ibrahim et al., (2017) highlighted the theme of motherhood through pregnancy, adoption and the representation of a bad mother.

Similar studies with the theme of motherhood include Badaoui (2016).

c) Violence and gender-based violence

According to Anam (2019), male as well as females were portrayed as victims of violence by the family patriarch for inappropriate behaviour. Also, some of the men were portrayed as victims of violence through an extension of a female victim, like a dishonoured son, husband, father and lover. Anam (2019) revealed that violence was a very dominant theme with 75% of the soap operas having violent scenes, 50% beating and 25% rape. Violence here includes rape and domestic violence like beating and being locked up. Perpetrators of violence are usually the family members and the mother-in-law of the girl. Violence in this study is intertwined with honour as used as a necessary means to restore honour. To restore honour, the use of physical abuse and threats to kill are usually used. The women in this study who suffer rape were further made to believe it is their fault. Rape symbolises dishonour which rendered them unusable by an honourable male. This made most of the rape victims to forgive their oppressors and remain silent with the hope that God will avenge them. Hence, very few oppressors get punished for rape and sometimes the woman even gets rejected by her family to restore that honour. A prominent theme in Sachdeva (2018) was gender-based violence. Some of the females in his study were victims of gender-based violence, like rape, stalking, victimisation and female feticide. Apart from gender-based violence against women, Achando (2017), highlighted a unique kind of gender violence when a woman beats up her husband. Like Sachdeva (2018), rape was also observed in a study by Ibrahim et al. (2017). Furthermore, Khan and Zaheen (2011) portrayed that few female characters were victims of rape. Some reported the perpetrators while others did not. Other with this theme included Ahmed and Wahab (2019).

d) Family

Achando (2017) elevates the family life. A woman beats up her husband for neglecting her family and failing to provide. However, many people saw it as a taboo and had issues with her actions. Anam (2019) and Ashfaq and Shafiq (2018) discuss the family dynamics in their study. These families share a strong bond. Similarly, Ibrahim et al, (2017) demonstrated a close family bond within families who continue to make decision for family members on who to marry and a family dynamic that is characterised by a lot of domestic problems with the children and the inlaws. Furthermore, another studies that highlights the family theme is Arokiaraj (2017) where some of the characters shared in the family wealth and enjoyed rich lifestyles. More studies that talk about family are Jain and Pareek (2018); Sachdeva (2018); Jana (2016) and Badaoui (2014)

e) Love and Romance

A study by Anam (2019) revealed there were a few love and romantic affairs. Such relationships were often not welcomed by the girl's family and in order to restore that honour, threats of deaths by the girl's family are made to both girl and boy in the relationship. According to Ashfaq and Shafiq (2018), there were many couples in a love relationship that ended up in marriage. However, due to the difference in social class, a couple had to break up their engagement.

Also, Jain and Pareek's (2018) and Ibrahim et al. (2017) are other studies characterised by love and romance as one of its main themes.

f) Women empowerment and self empowerment

Ibrahim et al. (2017) showcased a few powerful and driven women who despite all odds were determined to continue pursuing their career and becoming successful in life. There were two women represented in this category, one was rape and the other abandoned by her husband who admist this finished their school to becoming successful career women.

Further other studies like Jana (2016) and Khan and Zaheen (2011) portrayed women who were fighting for their rights.

g) Infidelity

According to Ashfaq and Shafiq (2018), the men were represented as unfaithful to their wives. Despite being aware, their wives remained in a faithful relationship with them. Similarly, Jana (2016) portrayed an unfaithful man.

h) Superstition

The theme of superstition was brought to the fore when an adopted dark complexion orphan girl was used to ward off evil from a father's biological fair daughter (Sachdeva, 2018). Again, still on superstition, a black girl is married off to a gangster so he can be healed.

i) Discrimination

According to Sachdeva (2018), women were discriminated against, like a fair woman chosen over a dark skin woman, a daughter's crusade for justice and equality and a daughter whose dream of someday climbing mount Everest was rejected by her father simply because she is female. Furthermore, Khan and Zaheen (2011) portrayed women that were discriminated against and demanding for equal educational, political and social rights.

j) Fatherhood

There were a few studies that portrayed the fatherhood theme (Anam, 2019; Achando, 2017). Several dynamics of fatherhood were portrayed. Anam (2019) portrays a fatherhood role as the decision maker, he arranges marriage for his daughter, he is respected and punishes his daughter for dishonouring the family.

k) Divorce

Divorce couples were represented in Ashfaq and Shafiq (2018). Some of the divorced couples ended up marrying other people. A particular female divorcee who had two children from her marriage found it difficult to cope and was tried to cope and ended up committing suicide. According to Badooui (2016), a divorce man was portrayed negatively while a divorce woman was positively represented. A divorce woman and separated woman was represented as such because they suffer social accusations of failing and often become the family sponsor.

Themes represented in South African soap opera

South African soap operas like many around the world deal with very similar themes. However, it should be noted that due to the country's apartheid history and racial structure, there are certain themes in South African soaps that are unique to the country. Hence, even though similar to American soap operas, South African soap opera is unique as it includes themes of social justice like discrimination, birth control, HIV/AIDS, sexual behaviour, social rejection, inequality and homosexuality (Burton, 2012).

Czarniawski (2011), on the soap opera *Isidingo*, revealed that the soap opera deals with lots of issues that reflect contemporary South Africa. The study suggests that women's career and work is built on sexual manipulation, a theme that reflects the traditional stereotype found in many other soap operas around the world. Another study by Marx (2008), on *7de Laan*, suggested that the soap opera is centred around themes that are of feminine interest like family, love and romance, fashion and women fitting themselves into traditional male roles. Also, the study deals with professional women with emotional and romantic issues, suggesting that women cannot balance their work, personal and social life. Other themes that characterise the study include domestic violence, rape, substance abuse and other crimes. According to Ndayi and du Plooy several themes were identified, which includes love and romance, marriage (marriage ritual) Infidelity, family (generational wealth) motherhood (child bearing) and succession.

Themes in queer representation

As stated earlier, very few studies have been carried out that include the representation of queers in soap opera. The few studies the researcher could find deal with themes that include

‘coming out’ where the character has to explain to family and friends about his sexuality while hoping to gain acceptance, followed the themes of love and romance, secrecy (keeps his sexuality a secret), shame (ashamed of his sexuality), rejection, discrimination and treated as the ‘other’ (Vanlee et al., 2020; Sehlabi, 2012).

Table 2: Summary of themes in soap opera

THEMES	STUDIES
<p>a) Marriage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -marriage rituals -Late marriage -Forced marriage -Age gap marriage -Rejected bride by in-laws -Polygamy -Interfaith marriage -Arranged marriage -Child marriage -Widow/widower remarriage -Marriage for superstitious reasons 	<p>Anam (2019); Ahmed & Wahab (2019); Ndayi & du Plooy (2019); Sachdeva (2018); Jain & Pareek (2018); Ashfaq & Shafiq (2018); Achando (2017); Jana (2016); Neophytou (2012)</p>
<p>b) Motherhood -Good/bad mother</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Single mother -Infertility 	<p>Anam (2019); Ndayi & du Plooy (2019); Ashfaq & Shafiq (2018); Sachdeva (2018); Ibrahim et al. (2017); Jana (2016); Achando (2017); Badaoui (2016); Neophytou (2012)</p>

c) Violence and gender-based violence -Physical abuse -Rape/sexual harassment	Anam (2019); Ahmed & Wahab (2019); Ndayi & du Plooy (2019); Sachdeva (2018); Achando (2017); Khan & Zaheen (2011); Marx (2008)
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-Stalking -Female feticide	
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d) Family -Family dynamics -Generational wealth -Decision making	Anam (2019); Ndayi & du Plooy (2019); Sachdeva (2018); Ashfaq & Shafiq (2018); Jain & Pareek (2018); Ibrahim et al. (2017); Arokiaraj (2017); Jana (2016); Badaoui (2014); Neophytou (2012); Marx (2008)
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e) Love and romance	Anam (2019); Jain & Pareek (2018); Ashfaq & Shafiq (2018); Ibrahim et al. (2017); Neophytou (2012); Marx (2008)
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f) Women self-empowerment -Education -Demand for equal rights -Women pursuing careers -Women taking legal action against offenders -Economic emancipation	Sachdeva (2018); Ibrahim et al. (2017); Arokiaraj (2017); Jana (2016); Khan & Zaheen (2011)
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g) Theme of infidelity	Gurkan & Serttas (2017); Jana (2016)
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h) Theme of superstition	Sachdeva (2018)
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i) Theme of discrimination -Gender discrimination -Complexion discrimination	Sachdeva (2018); Khan & Zaheen (2011)
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j) Theme of fatherhood	Anam (2019); Achando (2017)
k) Divorce	Ashfaq & Shafiq (2018); Badaoui (2016)
l) Themes in queer representation -Secrecy/shame -Rejection -Coming out -Romance -Regarded as the 'other'	Vanlee et al. (2020); Sehlabi (2012), Howe (2008)
Less prominent themes;	Jana (2016); Czarniaswski (2011)
- Murder -Abduction -Death -Sexual manipulation	

2.5 GENDER-BASED ROLES IN THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN AND MEN'S ROLE IN SOAP OPERAS

2.5.1 Female Roles

(a) Woman represented as a model

A large and growing body of literature has investigated the representation of women in soap operas with regards to their physical appearance. Ashfaq and shafiq (2018) used physical appearance as one of the aspects in analysing women's representation. According to him, physical appearance referred to beauty, age (women between 18-20 years), style, dress and looks. In his analysis, he divides the women into two groups; the 'perfect woman' and the 'imperfect woman' based on their physical appearance. The 'perfect women' mostly played the main role dressed in the traditional national attire, slim,

very beautiful and younger while the 'imperfect woman' on the other hand dressed in modern and western dresses. Anamika (2014) investigated the way women were being represented in Indian soap opera and also to determine the level of acceptance in their representation by viewers. With physical attraction and decoration being a major factor, the study observed that the women were portrayed as contemporary fashion objects dressed in makeup, wearing very expensive ornaments and dresses. This representation got a mixed review from the viewers. Using reception analysis, the author, Anamika (2014) indicated that women admired the way the female characters were physically decorated and saw it as a way of upholding the tradition and promoting cultural exchanges.

On the other hand, the men

Thought it was ridiculous, it impacted their relationships with their wives negatively as the wives demanded things they cannot afford. Similarly, Arokiaraj (2017) showed that the women that owned wealth wore jewelries and had nice car(s). Furthermore, Jana (2016) suggests that women with loud makeup are devil, hence, devils are easily identified by their makeup while the respectful woman wore minimal makeup. Jana (2016) suggested that India still possessed a lot of look bias in soap opera representation. Positive looks include fair complexion, big eyes, sharp nose and rose lips. On the other hand, Jana acknowledges the portrayal of more realistic women in the way they dress and wearing realistic makeup. Similarly, Sachdeva (2018) supported Jana's view of physical attraction and decoration regarding skin complexion. He suggested that this played a very important role in the lives of women. Finding suggests discrimination between fair and dark complexion women. While fair women find it easier to get marriage partners, the same cannot be said for dark complexion women who often struggled to get partners.

(b) Woman represented as a housewife, Mother and Nurturer

Majority of the women in soap operas are presented as mother, housewives and nurturer. They are usually presented in the house setting, taking care of the house and children. Studies that have identified the role of women as nurturer include Anam, (2019); Achando (2017); Ibrahim et al. (2017); Lacalle and Gomez (2016); Jana (2016); Badaoui (2016); Anamika (2014); Khan and Zaheen (2011).

Achando (2017) identifies a great similarity in the way women in soap opera and the real Kenyan women are represented. The study reveals gender representation in a typical stereotype fashion which is a reflection of the representation of femininity in the Kenyan society. In the Kenyan society, women are expected to be submissive. However, one of the characters in his study goes against societal norms by challenging patriarchy and beats up her husband for being irresponsible and not taking care of his family. According to Anamika (2014), more working women are being represented in soap operas instead of merely mothers and wives. However, a majority of them are still being portrayed in stereotypical roles as just mothers and wives.

According to Anam (2019), the role of the mother was elevated and packed with a lot of wisdom. However, at the same time the role of the mother was devalued by portraying evil mothers who conspire against their daughters-in-law and no one dared to question her for being wrong as it will mean disrespect to the motherhood institution.

Neophytou (2012) identified the role of matriarch. She is like a mother to the community and a business owner, however, her role as a mother shine more than her role as a business woman.

She takes her role as a mother very seriously. In comparison to the man, she is portrayed as the subordinate. Types of mothers identified include single mothers and teenager mothers.

Also, the 'villainess' theme is complicit with the soap opera convention and society's construction of women where the woman is caught between the mother/whore dichotomy. Furthermore, Ibrahim et al. (2017) also highlighted the role of a mother. In their study, this

role is negatively portrayed, the only mother portrayed has an evil heart. She plans with her daughter's best friend to destroy her own daughter's marriage. She speaks for her husband and herself, telling her daughter not to expect blessings from her or her dad if she goes ahead to get married and never to step foot in her house.

Jain and Pareek (2018) discussed the role of the mother and its importance is stressed. Even in cases where the woman was working and independent before marriage, after marriage, more often, she is shown just taking care of her husband, children and in-laws and not her job.

c) Woman represented as a homemaker

Previous studies (Anamika, 2014; Khan & Zaheen, 2011) have reported on women representation as the homemaker. Drawing on the role of homemaker, Khan and Zaheen (2011) found that some female homemakers were taking care of the household. While some of the women happily accepted their roles as homemakers, some were not satisfied with working in their homes for free and a few even demanded pays for household tasks. Also, some of the females had males that helped in these tasks. Like the housewife/mother/nurturer role, the role of the homemaker was elevated greatly. Anamika (2014) identified female homemakers who also worked outside the home but their role as homemakers was prioritised and given more importance. Their other role as career women was given less attention, hence stressing the importance of the traditional role of the woman as a wife and homemaker.

(d) Woman represented as an object of dignity

A study by Anam (2019) reports that the woman is being regarded as an object of dignity. Anam's critical analysis of women's role in Pakistani soap opera identifies character traits a woman is expected to maintain to make her family proud. She is expected to uphold the family's honour through modesty, obedience, religiosity and dignity with or without her concern. Similarly, Ashfaq and Shafiq (2018) identified the ideal characteristics of a good woman, this includes being submissive, homebound, humble and dress in traditional attire

to uphold family dignity. To further emphasise how a woman is being objectified to bring dignity to the family, Anam (2019) highlighted the joy of a father with an obedient daughter. A father forces his daughter to accept an arranged marriage and makes the following remark “daughters like her, were the crown in the heads of father and others” (Anam, 2019:9). Still in Anam, rape is considered a symbol of dishonour even though it is not the woman’s fault. There is a general reluctance by the rape victim to report her oppressor. Also, to ensure the family’s honour is maintained after being raped, the woman is expected and even advised by her family not to report. In some cases, rape victims were disowned by their family. This means that the family’s image was held in very high regards that surpassed the love they have for their child. Still, in some cases, honour-based violence was used on rape victims and women who went against their family to pursue a love affair against their family’s will were physically abused and even threatened to be killed to restore that honour.

(e) Woman represented as a decision Maker

Over the past decade, studies on gender representation in soap opera have emphasised on women’s role in the decision-making process in the family. These studies include Shankaran and Ilampariithi (2018); Arokiaraj; (2017); Anamika (2014) and Khan and Zaheen (2011). A number of studies have reported a positive trend of women’s representation in the right to decision making. Women were treated as equal men and had rights in the decision-making process of the family (Shankaran & Illampirithi, 2018). Similarly, Jana (2016) also displayed women being represented in assertive roles and having more rights in the decision-making process. Also, Arokiaraji carried out a content analysis of women’s representation in Tamil (India) soap operas and concluded that a majority of the women were given the rights to decision-making in their families. On the other hand, Khan and Zaheen (2011) found an unequal right to decision making between men and women as more women (three times more than men) than men were shown as having the main decision-making authority. However, Anamika (2014) suggests that position was used to disguise the woman’s lack of authority in decisionmaking. No matter

how powerful a woman is portrayed, she still depended on the male person to make the decisions.

(g) Women represented as victims of gender violence

Several studies revealed that women have suffered gender violence and endured ill-treatment from men as well as women (Anam, 2019; Ibrahim et al., 2017; Kojoyan & Gevorgyan, 2014 and Khan & Zaheen, 2011). Anam (2019) links physical violence on women with honour where a women were physical abused for having a bad character and going against the man in her life to restore honour. Anam's study identifies instances of violence against women like rape, beating and locking a woman in isolation. It is interesting to see that this study not only identified the perpetrators to be men but women as well which is unique to this study. Khan and Zaheen (2011) analysed the feministic perspective in the portrayal of women in soap operas and concluded that, the show promoted radical feminism by highlighting issues about women like being victims of domestic violence. In their study, not all the women took legal actions against their perpetrators. Also, in their study, Kojoyan and Gevorgyan (2014) highlighted how gender is empowered in Armenian soap operas. In their study, they found that violence and aggression have been an integral part of male representation in Armenian soap operas. This has been the main cause of gender violence against women in Armenia. Similarly, few of the women in

Anamika's (2014) study were portrayed as sufferers of domestic violence who accept injustice and forgave their oppressors. Some women were forced into marriage. Badaoui (2016) in his reception analysis of gender-based portrayal in soap opera highlights the positive role that is given to a divorced woman. It also highlights the aspects of soap operas that links a woman's feminine nature of sacrificing her money, herself and her life for her family to show her strength. Through a false interpretation of religion, the woman is still made to understand her position as a subordinate and how important it is to have a man in her life even when the man neglects his family and financial obligations (Badaoui, 2016).

(h) Woman represented as dependent on man

This refers to women who depend on men for support. Anam (2019) investigated the representation of women's role in Pakistani soap opera and noted that the cause of women who depend on men was because the women were either housewives or students who had no other financial means and had to depend on their husbands or parents. However, still in Pakistan, Ashfaq and Shafiq (2018) portrays two types of women, the one that depends on a man for decision making, financial and emotional support and another woman who after her lover stops supporting her was determined and refused financial help from everyone and supported her herself. Like Anam (2019), in an analysis of gender roles, Achando (2017) showed that majority of the women were placed as subordinates under the men. Majority of them depended on the men for financial support and decision making. The men made decisions and what they said was final.

(i) Woman represented as a sex object

From the feminist perspective in the portrayal of women by star plus soap opera, Khan and Zaheen (2011) reported that few women were represented as sex objects. Lacalle and Gomez's (2016) representation of working women found a representation of prostitutes, majority of whom were between the ages 18-23 years.

(j) Woman represented as a villainess

Villainess has to do with a role that is being identified in women and common in studies like Anam (2019), Ibrahim et al. (2017), Lacalle and Gomez (2016) and Mootsaathebe (2009), who found similar characteristics of villainess. They are usually educated and independent, aggressive, plot to kill someone and commit suicide (Ashfaq & Shafiq, 2018). Similarly, Lacalle and Gomez (2016) found that the villainess is vengeful, unscrupulous and resentful. They are usually plotting to destroy someone's life and even to kill. Ibrahim et al (2017) highlighted this when a woman plots to destroy her daughter's marriage and plots to kill her own brother. In another study, women like men were portrayed in dominant roles; however, the women displayed very negative character traits like jealousy and manipulation (Mootsaathebe, 2009). Neophytou (2012) analyses

femininity representation in South African soap opera and identifies four types of feminine depiction; the wife, the matriarch, the good girl and the villainess. The villainess in her study is portrayed as someone who lacks morals, manipulative, seductive and does not respect the marriage institution by committing adultery. She is rarely caught and punished and even when she does, she goes back to her old ways.

(k) Woman represented in stereotypical and Menial Job workers

Several studies like Anam, (2019); Jain and Pareek, (2018) and Lacalle and Gomez, (2016) indicated that women were represented in stereotype and menial jobs. Anam (2019) highlighted the lack of women in professions like engineering, scientific discovery and military living normal lives or living a happy life that is not dependent on family. Majority of the working women were teachers which is considered a 'respectable work' for women because it is empathetic and has safe avenues to work which addresses the woman's primary role of nurturing. Another role portrayed was housemaid, which is also menial job. Anamika (2014) analysed 45 female characters in four Indian soap operas and concluded that women were made for domestic help. Similarly, Jain and Pareek (2018) shows a high representation of women as domestic workers in their study, with just a man hired as a domestic worker. However, he is never shown doing domestic work. Lacalle and Gomez (2016) showed women working as waitresses and shop assistants. Ibrahim et al. (2017) study on gender representation portrays a woman who works as a hospital cleaner and also sells recycled items to cater for her three adopted children. According to Jana (2016) some women also work as journalists.

l) Woman represented as a career-independent woman

Recently, there have been an increasing amount of literature on the representation of career-independent women in soap operas. These studies include Anam (2019), Ashfaq and Shafiq, (2018), Arokiaraj (2017), and Jana (2016). Arokiaraj (2017) suggests that independent women were those living a rich lifestyle, owners of wealth, owned shares in

the family property and could spend money the way they wanted. They owned cars, wore jewels and lived in very sophisticated houses. Several aspects of the career-independent woman have been portrayed, and studies like Anam (2019) and Ashfaq and Shafiq (2018) have highlighted a trend with majority of such women are shown to be independent and unhappy. The supporting characters in a study by Ashfaq and Shafiq (2018) showed that the career-independent woman was negatively portrayed as an ‘imperfect woman’ in the Pakistani society. They were mostly financially stable, highly educated and belonged to the upper class. However, they were portrayed as being very aggressive. Anam (2019) investigated the representation of working women and concluded that their portrayal did not show true empowerment. Several angles of the working women were observed; first was the working woman who used her work strictly as a means to an end and not career driven. These are women that lack someone they could depend on. The second was career women portrayed in stereotypical female jobs like teachers, hence reverting to the traditional honour discourse in the care-giver role where her job is her second priority. Lastly, a career woman often adorned with negative traits. This looks like some sort of punishment for putting her career first. Khan and Zaheen (2011) highlighted gender discrimination in the work place. Their study shows a few working women, however, while majority of them were satisfied with

their rights and opportunities at work, a few were not and had a problem of not being happy to be discriminated against. Furthermore, even though a study by Anamika (2014) highlighted a few working women, there was little emphasis about their jobs. A few careers-independent women were presented like one woman together with her kids was abandoned by her husband, yet managed to complete her education and moved on to become a lawyer.

Table 3: Summary of female roles in soap opera

Gender role	Studies
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<p>Woman Represented as a model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Younger compared to men -Extremely beautiful -Slim -wear lots of jewelries -Dress nicely 	<p>Ashfaq & Shafiq (2018); Sachdeva, (2018); Arokiaraj (2017); Jana (2016); Anamika (2014)</p>
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<p>-Fair in complexion</p>	
<p>Woman Represented as a housewife, mother and nurturer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -House setting -Take care of children, in-laws and husband -Mother 	<p>Anam (2019); Jain & Pareek (2018); Achando (2017); Ibrahim et al. (2017); Lacalle & Gomez (2016); Jana (2016); Badaoui (2014); Neophytou (2012); Khan & Zaheen (2011)</p>
<p>Woman Represented as a Homemakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Housework -Career but emphasis is placed in the home 	<p>Anamika (2014); Khan & Zaheen (2011)</p>
<p>Woman Represented as an Objects of dignity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Uphold family honour through modesty, religiosity or dignity with or without their knowledge -Homebound, humble and submissive -Rape but kept silent to uphold dignity 	<p>Anam (2019); Ashfaq & Shafiq (2018)</p>
<p>Woman Represented as a Decision maker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Involve in decision making for the family 	<p>Shankaran & Ilampirithi 2018; Arokiaraj (2017); Jana (2016); Khan & Zaheen (2011)</p>

<p>Woman Represented as a victim of Domestic violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sexual violence -Domestic assault -Physical battery -Forced marriage -Insults 	<p>Anam (2019); Gurkan and Serttas (2017); Ibrahim et al. (2017); Badaoui (2016); Anamika (2014); Kojovan & Gevorgyan (2014); Khan & Zaheen (2011)</p>
<p>Woman Represented as Dependant - Economically, emotionally and in decision making</p>	<p>Anam (2019); Ashfaq & Shafiq (2018); Achando (2017)</p>
<p>Woman Represented as a Sex object</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Prostitute 	<p>Lacalle & Gomez (2016); Khan & Zaheen (2011)</p>
<p>Woman Represented as a Villainess</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Vengeful -Unscrupulous -resentful -Manipulative -Jealous -Mean 	<p>Anam (2019); Ashfaq & Shafiq (2018); Ibrahim et al. (2017); Lacalle & Gomez (2016); Neophytou (2012); Motsaathebe (2009)</p>
<p>Woman Represented in Stereotypical and menial job workers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teacher -Nursing Domestic worker -Slave -Sells recycle items 	<p>Anam (2019); Jain & Pareek (2018); Ibrahim et al. (2017); Lacalle & Gomez (2016); Jana (2016); Anamika (2014)</p>

<p>Woman represented as a Career-independent woman -Own wealth -Work out of home -Professional woman</p>	<p>Anam (2019); Ashfaq & Shafiq (2018); Arokiaraj (2017); Jana (2016); Anamika (2014); Khan & Zaheen (2011)</p>
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2.5.2 Male roles

(a) Man Represented as a Sexual Aggressor

The men are portrayed as promiscuous. They have a wife and a girlfriend (extra-marital affair), and will do everything in their power to get the girl they want and are self-confident in the way they talk to women (Gurkan & Sertas, 2017). A number of studies have reported on sexual violence like rape against women (Anam, 2019; Sachdeva, 2018 and Ibrahim et al., 2017).

(b) Man Represented as career-independent

The men are usually bosses or their own bosses and in charge of company affairs (Achando, 2017). Also, Gurkan and Serttas (2017) suggest that the male characters are financially stable and bosses who belong to either a holding, company or an agency, live in very good houses and are very confident. Some live in nice scenic houses, own or are members of an agency, dominate in company affairs and sole bread winners of their families (Gurkan & Serttas, 2017; Achando, 2017).

(c) Man Represented as model

According to Gurkan and Serttas (2017), the men portrayed in soap operas are usually fit, muscular, handsome, sporty and take care of their nutrition. However, the public thought the portrayal does not reflect in real life what Turkish men look like.

(d) Man Represented as abuser

Some men are portrayed as very violent on men and especially towards women. This includes domestic violence (physical assault, swearing, insulting and abuse). Both the antagonist and protagonist are inclined to gender violence and this is portrayed as an inseparable part of masculinity (Kojayan & Gevorgyan, 2014). According to Khan and Zaheen (2011), soap opera promotes radical feminism. Even though there was violence involved, the women took legal actions to expose and punish the culprits. Also, Sacheva (2018) reveals that female feticide was performed. Ncube (2019) identified the aggressive man under 'militarised' masculinity. This type of man does not hesitate to take out his weapon and uses aggression on both genders.

(e) Man Represented as Dominant and Decision Maker

According to Jana (2016), a brother negotiates an arranged marriage for his sister. Compared to the women, the men are presented as more superior (Anam, 2019; Achando, 2017), while the women are subordinates to men (Badaoui, 2016). This is more like what Ncube (2019) called the traditional masculinity which is patriachal, assigns social and symbolic power to men, and is synonymous to hegemonic masculinity which ideologically legitimates a woman's subordination to men.

Table 4: Summary of Male Roles in Soap Opera

Role	Studies
Man represented as a Sexual aggressor -Extra-marital affair -Rape	Anam, (2019); Ncube, (2019); Sachdeva, (2018); Ibrahim et al. (2019); Gurkan & Serttas, (2017)
Man Represented as career-independent	Ndayi & du Plooy (2019); Gurkan & Serttas, (2017); Achando, (2017)

-Company bosses -Their own boss -Financially stable -Sole bread winners in their families	
Man Represented as a model -Fit and muscular -Handsome	Gurkan & Serttas, (2017)
Man represented as an abuser -Female feticide -Domestic violence -Physical assault -Abuse/insult	Ncube, (2019); Sachdeva, (2018); Kojoyan & Gevoyan, (2014); Khan & Zaheen, (2011)
Man represented as dominant and decision maker -Sees woman as subordinate -Arrange/force women into marriage -Heads decision making in the family	Anam, (2019); chando, (2017); Badaoui, (2016); Jana, (2017)

2.5.3 Queer roles

(a) Queer Represented as as Sex Object

According to Sehlabi (2012), gay men are promiscuous, and one of the reasons is that they are confused about their sexuality and move from woman to man or have multiple partners.

(b) Queer Represented as a Decorative object

Gay characters are usually portrayed as flamboyant and are easily identified as such. They are rarely portrayed as normal (Howe, 2008). However, according to Vanlee et al.

(2020), in his study, gays were portrayed as normal people with no oddity, the opposite of flamboyant.

(c) Queer Represented as an Abuser

According to Sehlabi (2012), gay men are considered violent.

Table 5: Summary of queer roles in soap opera

Role	Studies
Queer Represented as a Sex Object -In multiple relationships	Sehlabi, (2012)
Queer Represented as a Decorative Object -Flamboyant -Normal (No oddity)	Vanlee et al. (2020); Howe, (2008)
Queer Represented as an Abuser	Sehlabi, (2012)

2.5.4 Gender Roles and Gender Stereotype

Gender roles are social positions that men and women are expected to occupy based on their sex. From a biological perspective, women are expected to have natural affinity to feminine role and men to masculine gender roles. These roles come as a result of an individual’s interaction with their environment which includes other individuals, groups and societies base on their sex and the values and beliefs of that society. These environments and interactions give cues on what behaviour is appropriate for a particular sex (Dicke, Nayssan & Eccles, 2019). Gender roles, also known as sex roles are used interchangeably to denote a set of behaviour, perceptions, emotions and attitudes individuals adopt for a self-concept of gender for a particular sex. This results in the production of stereotypical traits and behaviours used by individuals to describe them and to influence their dispositions (Levesque, 2011). These adopted traits are descriptive as well as prescriptive. Gender roles informs men and women about what is expected of

their sex in a particular context or situation while gender stereotype tells them what is desirable and expected (Eisenchlas, 2013). Gender roles are often distinct from one another as males are expected to perform roles that are completely different from female roles. Gender is often inscribed in the subject with many other discourses like class and sexuality and ethnicity. However, of the several discourses, the one that stands out the most to aid the understanding of gender and gender roles is patriarchy which among other social values stands as the main figure of gender stereotype (Kiran, 2016).

Gender stereotype refers to positive or negative attributes that characterise boys and girls into a group, ignoring their heterogeneity while exaggerating their between-group differences (Brown & Stone, 2016). Research on gender stereotype has identified two main themes, communion and agency. Communion is people's orient to other people and their well-being while agency is orient to the self and a self-mastery of goal achievement. Communion prevails in female stereotype while agency prevails in male stereotype (Eagly, Naater, Miller, Kaufmann & Sczesny, 2019). In typical stereotype fashion, men are thought to be superior in terms of agentic qualities like being competent, masterful, independent, assertive, achievement oriented while women are thought to be inferior to men with communal qualities like friendly, warm, interdependent, relationship oriented and emotional. These masculine and feminine stereotypes (gender stereotype) are complementary in that they balance out the weaknesses and supplement the strengths of the opposite sex. This complementarity further reinforces male superiority and female subordination, hence naturalizes these beliefs and makes them acceptable to both men and women (Eisenchlas, 2013), hence gender stereotypes. Gender stereotypes often include erroneous or exaggerated assertions about the male and female nature (Hentschel, Heilman & Peus, 2019).

The traditional feminine role is exemplified by a woman who nurtures her family and works at home full time rather than taking employment outside the home. The man on the other hand is expected by traditional views of the masculine role to be a leader in the household by being the provider, decision maker, non-emotional, task-oriented and an authority figure in the household (Sathisparsad, Taylor & Dlamini, 2008; Blackstone, 2003). As

mentioned above, women and men often occupy roles that are very different from each other. In various countries and cultures, women spend more time at home doing home activities irrespective of their employment status (Cerato & Cifre, 2018). Also, there is a clear distinction in terms of occupational roles based on gender, for example, at an early age, children learn that secretary jobs are for females while males are meant for business executive positions (Ünal, Tarhan & Köksal, 2018; Cortes & Pan, 2017).

Nonetheless, gender roles have transitioned over the years. The mid-20th century has experienced dramatic changes in terms of gender relations in the United States of America which witness a rise in the participation of more women in the labour force from 32% in 1950 to 57% and men from 82% to 69%. Unlike decades ago, more women are now going to school and earning bachelors, masters and doctorate degrees (Eagly, Nater, Miller, Kaufmann & Sczesny, 2019). In some parts of Europe, there have been changes in family patterns and a great decline in fertility rates that has been paralleled with an increase of women in the workforce who choose to remain employed even when they become married or mothers (Olah, Richter & Kotowska, 2014). In South Africa, even though women have made great strides, they are still below the

50% mark compared to men in influential positions and make up only 32% of managers, they dominate in jobs like technician occupations, domestic workers, clerks and unpaid work (Stats SA, 2018). Even though some traditional role changes have been examined, the changes in women's roles are more comprehensive while most countries are yet to experience the transformation of male roles. More women are taking up the role as economic provider and men taking up family responsibilities like childcare (Olah, Kotowska & Richter 2018). There has also been a transition of men's roles as "stay-at-home dads". This has recorded an increase in number from 68,500 in 2011 to 75,000 in 2016 even though the percentage remains at 4% (Baxter, 2017). Baxter refers to a stay-at-home dad as someone who is not working, living with a child under 15 years and has a partner or spouse who works some hours. Housework for stay-at-home dads include playing with the children, maintain and run household errands, helping the children with

personal care, teaching and supervising the children and driving them to places (Baxter, *ibid*). Despite the transition, gender role violations are met with a lot of criticism and penalties (Eisenclas, 2013).

Violation of gender roles may lead to false categorisation into a group that is stigmatised, for example, heterosexual men with female stereotypical behaviours are often misclassified and considered gay. This has led to the adherence of traditional norms guiding gender roles (Bosson, Taylor & Prewitt-Freilino, 2006). Also, heterosexual sexual behaviour is considered a social norm and any violation is negatively evaluated. Gays and lesbians are negatively evaluated than a heterosexual individual. Furthermore, feminine men are less liked, considered a bore and unintelligent and avoided than masculine male while caregiving men and breadwinning women are viewed more negatively than those performing the traditional men and women roles (Zaikman, Young, Marks & Zeiber, 2016).

The question remains whether an increase in the number of women's participation in the workforce and their educational gain and men in care giving roles have changed their perceived competence or reflection in agency roles in the media. Despite these changes, the gender stereotype still persists in occupational segregation in the uneven division of paid labour and domestic work between both men and women (Gerson, 2017). Patriarchy is the social system in South Africa that promotes social, economic and political hierarchy over other groups creating violence and putting men and those they intend to dominate at a higher risk (Malisha, 2020).

2.5.5 Gender Stereotype in the Mass Media

Even though there are many influences of gender stereotypes, mass media is the most pervasive and plays a key role in the socialisation process of individuals which leads to the building of their identity (Kiran, 2016). The media influences gender identity and gender role by defining how the respective gender should dress, look, feel and play games (Gaunlett, 2008). As people age, outside influences begin to affect people in the way they view the world. In the media, it becomes difficult for young viewers who may

lack the intellectual tool to distinguish from the harmful media messages what is real and what is portrayed just for story-telling (Goodall, 2016). The issue of gender and gendering in the mass media has been analysed by many researchers including Grassi (2017) for soap opera, Garcia and Larrarte (2018) in soap opera, Martin (2017) in children's television, Popa and Gavrilu (2015) in Digital media (social media) Steinhagen, Eisend and Knoll (2010) in advertising, Collins, (2011) in news media, social media, television and movies and Gauntlett (2008) in media in general.

2.5.6 Television and its Power

Television is a mode of transmitting visual images and sounds to audiences. It is a household good that is available in shops, restaurants, airport lobbies and more than 70% of world's households. Television has a wide coverage (Saglik & Ozturk, 2001). It is one of the most unavoidable medium and tool that are able to reach the common people (Morley, 1999; De Rooij & Hoover, 2015). It is a medium that entertains, educates and also provides information indirectly in regards to values and behaviour (Morley, 1999). Livingstone (1998) explains the importance of television to society in this way;

Television has come to dominate the hours in our day, the organisation of our living rooms, the topics of our conversations, our conceptions of pleasure, the things to which we look forward, the way we amuse and occupy our children, and the way we discover the world we live in. Many also argue that television has come to dominate what we think, how we think, and what we think about (Livingstone, 1998: 4).

Many aspects of television are exaggerated and do not provide an accurate portrayal of the world. Such distorted representation can lead to misconception of reality among viewers, blurring the borders between reality and the television world (Niemic & Schulenberg, 2011; Till, Truong, Mar & Niederkrotenthaler, 2016). Television is one of the greatest potential sources of gender stereotypes especially in children since it is very popular amongst them (Rideout, 2015). Gender stereotypes on TV are present in films, commercials and soap operas (Anam, 2019; Alzahrani, 2016; Menon, Pankambekar & Bhatia, 2015).

2.5.7 Impact of Gender Stereotypes

(a) Gender Stereotype leads to Discrimination

Gender stereotypes lead to a lot of discrimination especially towards women when it comes to wages and functions. Very few women are represented in top managerial position. This is often as a result of gender stereotype in society or in the labour market which creates a more suitable working environment for men (Mihalcova, Pruzinsky & Gontkovicova, 2015). Even in the 21 centuries, there are some organisations that make decisions based on the traditional beliefs of gender roles where women are offered parental leave while men are not. Also, still in the corporate world, women are expected to be secretaries while men managers and company executives (Blackstone, 2003).

According to Mihalcova et al. (2015), women in managerial positions hold lower-level management positions and are finding it hard to harmonize their career and family at the same time. In cases where a top position is occupied by a woman, the family is often neglected.

Respondents in the study presuppose that this could be the main reason for inequality.

(b) Gender stereotype Hinders Economic Growth

Gender-specific educational choices have hindered people from choosing careers according to their full ability. Gender stereotype can reduce economic growth, technology change and skills acquisition. Sociological evidence has proven men to be better with maths and science which will eventually affect women's behaviour if they believe this to be true. This may lead to unexploited ability where men although good in arts may choose to study science and women good in science may study arts which may have economic consequences (Boschini, 2003). In the occupational context, gender stereotype begins at an early age that later prevails into young adulthood (Hechtlinger & Gati, 2019). Boschini (ibid) notes that systematic investment like investing more in untalented men and less in talented women can distort skills level and cause slow growth.

Television is one of the most influential media when it comes to stereotypical portrayal of characters, like in talk shows, dating shows, news, commercials and soap opera (Kiran, 2016).

2.5.8 South African Legislation and Policy on Gender

The constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) has made certain obligations concerning women’s rights in particular and gender equality in general.

Table 6: Gender Legislation and Policy Framework in South Africa

Legislation	Brief overview
Promotion of equality and prevention of unfair discrimination Act 4 of 2000	The Bill of rights in section 9 of the constitution states that the state may not discriminate unfairly based on pregnancy, race, gender etc. The state must promote equality, prevent unfair discrimination on basis which may be based on race, gender, sex, marital status, pregnancy and sexual orientation through national legislation. Section 8 stresses on the prohibition of gender discrimination which includes gender- based violence, a system that prevents women from inheriting property, female genital mutilation and traditional practices, religion and customs that undermines equality between men and women.

Maintenance Act 99 of 1998	This act sets out as a legal duty for someone to financially maintain another. Here the court has the power to permit an employer to deduct maintenance from an employee who has been issued a maintenance order after documents have been served and information of the financial positions of both parties have been gathered.
Domestic violence Act 116 of 1998	Under this act, domestic violence includes actual or threatened physical violence, psychological economic abuse, intimidation, sexual, verbal, emotional, harassment, property damage, stalking and entering someone's home without their consent. This act affords domestic violence victims maximum protection under the law and reinforces protection
	against domestic violence. Provision was made under this act whereby a peace officer could arrest a perpetrator without a warrant if they are convinced of the violence against the complainant.
Choice of termination of pregnancy Act 92 of 1996	Women were issued a right of pregnancy termination within a 12 weeks pregnancy period under defined circumstances at a permitted health facility with professional medical practitioners.
Commission on gender equality Act 39 of 1996	Chapter 9 of the constitution and as amended in 2013 promotes gender equality through prescribed powers to advise, lobby, monitor, investigate, research and report on related matters.

2.6 TRENDS OF GENDER PORTRAYAL IN SOAP OPERAS

2.6.1 Common Trends in Gender Representation

Here, studies that deal with more than one soap opera will be examined and the roles that are common in most of the soap operas will be highlighted as the major trend. Majority of studies on gender representation in soap operas examined more than one soap opera.

Before role representation in particular, it is important to highlight some of the common characteristics of soap operas. In India, Jaggi (2011), based his study around the following Indian socio-cultural and identity issues;

The feminine-oriented narrative; Here the narrative is focused on women as the main protagonist and they are either represented either very positively or negative and they are gendered identified with emotion, romance, talkative and intuition.

Family relationships; The narrative context is focused on the family and based mostly on the joint family structure

Melodramatic, myth, realism and entertainment; A lot of loud emotional conflicts are expressed, contains realistic tones and entertainment

Women empowerment; The soap opera is trying to reshape the identity of the women and act as a change agent to empower women.

The rural connect; This is based on the use of language (dialects), attire and geographic setting.

Analysing Indian soap operas from 1990s-2011, Jaggi (2011) observed that the women in his study were selfless (self-sacrificing) and caring. There was a fluctuation of women going from the domestics to work in the early 90s which however changed in the late 90s where more women were going back to the domestic. Also, there was a glorification of family and the joint family in particular. Furthermore, the soap operas were based on a feminine narrative which was built around the family structure, rituals and patriarchy

where “women are increasingly being treated like doormats in the name of social relevance...” (Jaggi, 2011:145).

Anam (2019) carried out a study using seven soap operas to determine women representation in Pakistani soap opera. Dividing the sample into two groups, sample A (4 soap operas) and sample B (3 soap operas) findings reveals all 7 soap operas had instances of either loss or gain of honour/shame. Also, all seven serials had at least a woman as a victim of some form of injustice, abuse or violence and in need of mental or physical saving. Furthermore, all seven serials in the honour crime context in sample B had instances of rape, domestic violence cases like beating and locking up the girl up in the room. More so, all seven serials portray the women as economically dependent on men. Lastly, women in 6 of the 7 soap operas were captured praying. In Khan and Zaheen (2011), all the soap operas presented the majority of the females in stereotyped roles, most of them being housewives. Of the eight soap operas analysed, 5 of them presented the women as victims of domestic violence.

In another study by Shankaran and Ilampirithi (2018) on the representation of women in Tamil soap operas, using two soap operas, findings show both series represented women as strong characters who can manage their crisis, independent, leading rich lifestyle and had rights to the decision-making process in the family. Similarly, still in India, Arokiaraj (2017) had similar findings. Using a content analysis of 4 soap operas revealed that majority of the women in all four serials were financially independent while very few were dependent. Furthermore, even though very few women were portrayed as having rights to decision-making in the family, at least one woman in all the selected soap operas had this right. Also, all the soap operas presented majority of the women as strong and courageous to face crisis. Also, in Ibrahim et al. (2017), most of the women in all selected soap operas presented the women as strong. In Anamika (2014), all the soap operas presented working women as well as housewives.

Apparently, in all of these studies, queers were not even acknowledged.

2.6.2 Impact of Soap Opera on Setting Standards and Behaviours

Despite the fact that the soap opera is fictitious, many people still watch it and are influenced by it because of many factors. Soap operas are constantly being imported by many countries, hence, leading to increased viewership (Briandana & Ibrahim, 2015). According to the cultivation theory, repeatedly watching soap opera makes viewers take the fictional world similar to the real world. Soap operas are all about very relatable themes like love, culture, values, how romantic relationships survive after going through conflict, betrayal and vengeance (Borae & Jooan, 2015). Many people believe that soap opera reinforce the status-quo so they watch to be aware of what is accepted in society (Abbas, 2018). Also, many people rely on television for news and entertainment, and soap opera as one of the sources of such, structures how viewers think and respond. Soap operas are generally entertaining, showcasing the sanctity of marriage and characters that are physically very attractive which attracts viewers (Aljammazi & Asil, 2017; Wei, 2016; Briandana & Ibrahim, 2015). People rely on soap opera for the latest fashion trends, decide on a touristic destination and learn new cultures and language (Amaran, 2018; Wei, 2016). Despite all the positive things that people love about soap opera, these things have greatly influenced them in a subtle yet negative way. This has developed into negative behaviours like materialism, status-quo and inequality which may be harmful from a moral point of view (Shah & Khursid, 2017).

Soap operas are very entertaining, popular television soap opera bring people together and often provide the topic of discussion among family and friends. A study carried out among Pakistani to analyse the effect of Indian soap opera on them reveal soap opera have been used as a platform to set trends (clothing, hair) and influence buyer's behaviour which have become very popular in Pakistani society (Sajid, Young, Cao, Xinchun & Sajid, 2017; Ali, Khalid & Hassan, 2014). According to Shukla (2015), portrayals in soap opera are not always a representation of the local culture and are often very vulgar, stirring up sexual behaviours. Also, findings show women try to relate their partners to their favourite fictitious characters. An analysis of Indian television soap opera by Sujitha, Joshitta and Nivetha (2015) shows a threat to their socio-cultural values; many children

try to practise what they see on television. Soap operas have encouraged pre-marital relationships, extra marital affairs, nurture conflict between mother and daughter-in-law and cultural intrusion. A survey by Stern, Russell and Russell (2007) reveals that majority of the viewers evaluated their lives in comparison to soap characters and were disappointed. They start finding faults with their personal life and begin to think success is easily attainable when compared with the luxurious lifestyles on soap opera. Some viewers consider these fictitious characters as companions and even replace real friends. In Kenya, a study by Kimeu and Mareri (2013), reveal that a majority of viewers use soap opera ideologies as a yardstick on how they deal with their personal relationships.

Furthermore, according to a study carried out by Ngehndab (2018), Cameroon imports a lot of soap operas from the Philippines, China, Brazil, India and Thailand which have set a standard for the average Cameroonian woman about what beauty is. These viewers copy the appearance of their preferred characters. In a way, soap opera pressures the local woman to change her perception of beauty and emulate from these characters whom they believe to be portraying a more modern and contemporary look. These women copy the physical appearances (lipstick, hair, foundation and dress) of their favourite characters, home decorations and how they relate with others, hoping to boost on their confidence level, happiness, self-esteem, romantic and non-romantic rewards, employment opportunities and less criticism from friends. Hence, a continuous imitation of soap opera characters may lead to an everlasting pursuit of beauty and an erosion of the national identity.

2.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

A theory provides structure and rationale on how to approach the study. It is an important research aspect that builds and supports the research study by tying all the research components together like the research significance and problem to support the study (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). This study applied the feminist theory and the hegemonic masculinity theory which both play an important role in the study. The researcher used

two feminist theorists to further expatiate on the theory, Judith Butler's performativity theory (1988) and Betty Friedan's feminine mystique (1963). While the hegemonic masculinity theory is a concept by Connell (2005) based on the dominance of women by males, the feminist theory is based on the expectations of masculinity and femininity, hence promoting gender roles. It focuses on the marginalised groups due to their gender, sex or sexuality. Feminist theorists critique masculinity which promotes dominance, patriarchy and authority over others. Similarly, hegemonic masculinity theory explains the dominance of women by men, ideal image of manhood and inter-male dominance. In this study, the theories were used as a guide to understand and address unequal and oppressive gender roles. It highlights gender roles, gender inequalities and gender discrimination, how they manifest in South African soap operas and how it can be addressed. It also helped in the understanding of how men and women experiences within the society differ.

2.7.1 Feminist theory

The feminist theory focuses on gender expectations of masculinity and femininity behaviours and personality types that are exemplified by males and females in society as a result of societal norms. Feminist theorists are critical of masculinity and argue that it embodies dominance, promotes the patriarchal social structure and authority at the detriment of others. Masculinity as a socially constructed personality has led to a lot of oppression of women and other social ills while femininity on the other hand is a personality type through socialisation that is being forced on girls and women by men to serve their interests (Schippers, 2016). Feminist theory explains the lives of the marginalised due to their gender, sex or sexuality and to take a critical stance in an effort to effect social change on what society sees as legitimate or formally instituted by law like the power restrictions on girls and women that is associated with a social norm (Radtke, 2017).

In today's society, femininity involves having people skills and to know how to work with others. Also, it is closely associated with purity, piety and being submissive; freeing their bodies for men's sexual desires and to play the subordinate role to their male counterparts (Sahoo, 2015).

Distinct gender roles in society discourage men and women from pursuing certain professions. Men are supposed to be tough, assertive and focused on achieving material success while women are supposed to be modest and tender. Femininity, masculinity and gender roles are closely related to gender stereotype. Associating a particular behavioural pattern with a specific gender overlooks individual differences and uniqueness and people believe that associating behaviours to a particular gender inevitably leads to a gender stereotype. Gender stereotype is very influential and affects people's conception of men and women (Kamalakkannan & Manason, 2017). Some popular femininity theories include Judith Butler's performativity theory and Betty Friedan's "feminine mystique".

(a) Judith Butler's performativity theory

This theory was initially noted by Beauvoir, later by Goffman and again by Butler who viewed gender performance as an act or performance. Gender behaviour is not a natural or universal concept but changes overtime and across cultures (Milestone & Meyer, 2012). Butler (1988) stated that gender identity is made up of performed accomplishments by people that are compelled by societal sanctions and taboos and failure to abide by such gender performances has punitive consequences that are either direct or indirect. Hence the act creates the idea of gender and without these acts there will be no gender. These acts and bodily gestures are repeated overtime which creates an illusion of an abiding gender self. To Goffman (1959), these acts are portrayal of a culture's ideal femininity and masculinity. Beauvoir (1974) terms the woman's body a "historical situation", which undergoes certain cultural construction through prescribed conventions of not only how one should act with the body but also a convention of how the body is perceived culturally. According to Butler (1988), gender is a reality only up to the extent it can be performed and its fair to say that certain actions are interpreted as an expression of a

gender identity which either conforms or contests expected gender in some way. Hence, gender is not fixed but stable as society continues to reproduce the preferred meaning.

(b) Betty Friedan's Feminine mystique

The feminine mystique by Betty Friedan is the false notion that women were happy and content with their roles of being just a wife, housewife and mother. Women were convinced to believe that these roles were their only source of happiness despite their lack of fulfilment. Any other role like pursuing a career to fulfil an individual need criticises the “masculinity” of women going against the roles specially destined for them (Napikoski, 2019). It talks about the unsatisfactory lives of wives who want more than having children, husband and home. This notion has awakened the women whose roles in society were limited to domesticity to pursue other political, economic and social functions (Friedan, 1963). The media, consumerism and social science also played a crucial role as “agents” that maintained and reinforced the subordinate roles of women. Women were told by experts how to dress, act more feminine, look, raise children, catch a man, keep him and make marriage more exciting. They learnt that true feminine women do not want careers, political rights, higher education, independence and all the other opportunities that the old-fashioned women fought for (Friedan, Ibid). The feminine mystique is blamed for women's promiscuity. The roles placed on women in a patriarchal society as the subordinate limits their activities. Society degrades women to just housewives and nurturer position which leads to early marriages and motherhood, preventing them from pursuing higher education which makes them unhappy. In quest to be happy, women see sex as their only achievement and begin to see themselves as a sex object and engage in extramarital affairs (Dash & Sthitaprajna, 2017). Friedan encouraged women to get jobs outside the home and one of the first issues identified was to get equal employment opportunity where jobs are assigned based on gender stereotype roles. According to Friedan, men were given financial accounting roles while women were assigned as secretaries, call girls and stewardess that were forced to retire at the age of 30-35 years

to go and get married (Friedan, 1991). Examples of similar studies that use feminist theory include Anam, 2019; Shankaran, 2018 and Khan and Zaheen, 2011. The portrayal of women from a feminist perspective addresses the devaluation of women in communication and empirically.

2.7.2 Hegemonic Masculinity

Hegemonic masculinity is a concept by Connell based on the dominance of men by men and the hierarchy of inter-male dominance. The concept legitimises men's dominant position in society, justifies women's subordinate position and other male marginalised groups considered as "feminine" (Connell, 2005). Similarly, Donaldson (1993) describes hegemonic masculinity as a specific strategy for women's subordination which concerns the dread of and flight from women. He further describes it as;

A culturally idealized form, it is both a personal and a collective project, and is the common sense about breadwinning and manhood. It is exclusive, anxiety-provoking, internally and hierarchically differentiated, brutal, and violent. It is pseudo-natural, tough, contradictory, crisis-prone, rich, and socially sustained. While centrally connected with the institutions of male dominance, not all men practice it. though most benefit from it (Donaldson, 1993: 646).

Hegemonic masculinity has stereotyped features and any deviation from the norm is not manly and subject to stigmatisation and marginalisation. Alternative masculinities that derail from the norm include gay, intellectual geeks and transgender men (Kupers, 2005). According to Connell (2005), one of the features of hegemonic masculinity is the use of "toxic" practices like physical violence especially over women to maintain that dominant position. Toxic masculinity is a set of norms, beliefs and behaviours that negatively affect men, women, children and the society. Norms, beliefs and behaviors commonly associated to toxic masculinity include sexism, individualistic self-sufficiency, glorification of violence, chauvinism, heteronormativity, misogyny, objectification of women, entitlement to (sexual) attention from women, rigid conceptualisation of sexual/gender identification and roles and infantilisation of women (Sculos, 2017). Nontoxic masculinity on the other hand includes a caring man, the man who is in touch with his "feminine"

attributes and a father's dedication to his children (Kupers, 2005). Guran and Serttas (2017) is an example of a similar study that utilises the hegemonic masculinity theory. In this study, this theory addresses and helps in the understanding of the dominant forms of masculinity.

2.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter covered both primary and secondary discourse and data on gender, soap opera, its representation and theoretical framework. In contemporary South Africa, there is a lot of discourse around gender in the media. The television media often suggests ways in which gender should be interpreted and how interaction within and between genders should be. The role soap opera plays as a key driver in the gender discourse to either re-enforce or change gender narratives can not be overlooked. With its strength, popularity and influence, soap opera is being used as a great platform for gender discourse. However, transformation on gender issues still remain a problem as soap opera continues to portray stereotypical images and underrepresent some marginalised gender groups. The individual objectives of the study discussed in relation to past studies revealed great contradiction within and between studies from different and the same countries. Furthermore, even though some positive legislations have been stated in the constitution to encourage gender equality, there are still a lot of challenges. Discourse on the theoretical foundation is also provided, which serves as a guide to the study. The feminist theory and the hegemonic masculinity theory were identified and explained as suitable theories because they focus on gender roles and gender interaction, from which the core themes of this study emerged.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presented a discussion on the methodology in detail, providing the process on how the research objectives were achieved. This section of the study commenced with the preferred research method, population, sampling, data collection and data analysis, dependability and conformability of the study. The research method used was guided by the research objectives.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

Two main research methods are applied in social science research, that is quantitative or qualitative research and sometimes a mixed research method is used (a combination of the two). Quantitative research applies when something needs to be measured for comparison of people's behaviours, attitudes, emotional state and their way of thinking. They provide an indepth explanation of meaning behind an idea. They usually contain numbers, statistics and proportions. (Shield & Twycross, 2003). Qualitative research on the other hand deals with research in their natural settings and includes studying a phenomenon. With qualitative research, the researcher has the information right that is based on her viewpoints and research design inquiries which include narratives, ethnographies, phenomenon, theoretical studies and case studies (Mehrad & Tahiri, 2019). This is suitable when the meaning of something needs to be found and deals with descriptive and in-depth investigation (Shields & Twycross, 2003). Below is a further illustration of the differences between qualitative and quantitative research according to Mehrad and Tahiri (2019:4).

3.2.1 Qualitative Research Method

The current study used a qualitative research method. Qualitative research focuses on understanding human experiences and the way those experiences are reflected. Unlike quantitative research where there is little room for open ended questions, qualitative research relies on in-depth responses from participants on how their experiences have been understood or constructed (Jackson, Drummond & Camara, 2007). Qualitative research is based on fundamental “reality” that is subjective whereby all human beings construct their own views and their interaction with the world, hence majority of what is considered ‘reality’ by most people including researchers actually consist of a person’s opinions, inferences and sets of impressions. What one person considers reality is actually based on another person’s observation and interpretation of events (Cropley, 2015). Hence, this research method sought to explain ‘how’ and ‘why’ a particular social phenomenon or program operates the way it does in a particular context (Polkinghorne, 2005). There are several qualitative research methods, this includes focus group, interviews, observation, field research and case studies (Queirós, Faria & Almeida, 2017). The current study used the case study qualitative research technique. Case study is a suitable technique for complex situations with multiple variables to advance the field knowledge, give a good opportunity for innovation and challenge the current theoretical assumptions (Queirós, Faria & Almeida, 2017).

3.2.2 Advantages of Qualitative Research Method

This research method is very effective as it occurs in natural settings which allows the researcher to gain insight due to its high involvement level in the actual experiences (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative research is good to highlight themes, trends, describe behaviour and phenomenon (Du Plooy, 2002). Also, it produces detailed description of participants’ feelings, experiences, opinion and interprets meanings of their action. It can enable the researcher to understand different people’s voices, meanings and events and has a flexible design structure which can be constantly reworked overtime (Rahman,

2017). This method helped tremendously in the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon of gender representation in the individual soap operas and to compare them. This research method provided rich data to highlight themes, trends and behaviour which gave insight into the problem. It is the most suitable research method that best answers the research objectives of this study.

3.2.3 Disadvantages of Qualitative Research Method

Qualitative research approaches sometimes fail to acknowledge contextual sensitivities, and focuses more on meanings and experiences (Silverman, 2010). The issue of generalisability to the whole population of the research is often raised with a smaller sample size (Rahman, 2017).

It is labour intensive and results cannot be objectively verified (Mohajan, 2018).

3.3 SAMPLING AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

A sample is a subset taken from a defined population which the researcher is interested in. A sample is chosen in an effort to understand the entire population (Brink, Van der Walt & Van Rensburg, 2006:124; Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:86). The study used a non-probability sampling method. A non-probability sampling is a research method where not every element in the population has a chance of being selected and it is based on the researcher's judgement (Showkat & Parveen, 2017). Non-probability sampling techniques includes quota sampling, snowball sampling, self-selection sampling and purposive sampling (Sharma, 2017). Since most soap operas are theme based, where a particular theme may be highlighted for an entire month, the researcher employed a purposive sampling, also known as a judgemental sampling technique to ensure that all the themes in the selected sample were captured adding to the quality of the data and analysis. A purposive sampling technique is where selection is based on the researcher's judgment. The researcher selects the sample that will be best to meet the research

objectives (Etikan & Bala, 2017). This sampling technique is less time consuming and allows for particular events and settings selected to answer research questions or meet the research objectives (Taherdoost, 2016). This technique ensured that all the themes highlighted in the soap opera during the study period were represented in the study. This study was based on episodes broadcasted from October 2019 to September 2020. The researcher purposely divided the period into four groups of 3 months each, that is, from October 2019 to December

2019, January to May 2020, April to June 2020 and July to September 2020 from two channels, e.tv and SABC 1 with subtitles to ensure that all themes were included. Five episodes from each group was purposely selected, making a total of 20 episodes per soap opera and 60 episodes for the three soap operas. The same sampling method was used for all the three soap operas.

A total sample of 60 episodes from *Rhythm City*, *Scandal!* and *Generations: The Legacy* was selected for this study. These soap operas are available on free-to-air channels, e.tv and SABC 1. Free-to-air channels are either analogue or digital channels that can be accessed without any direct fee to the service provider (Punchihewa, 2014). Hence, a majority of South Africans are able to afford it after just paying a once off annual TV license fee. They are available to most South Africans unlike DStv which is a pay TV provider and requires a subscription fee and a monthly fee which the majority of citizens cannot afford. Also, Open View, another free-to-air panel has just a once-off subscription fee which according to the Broadcasting Research Council (BRC) of South Africa is represented as a Free-to-Air in the broadcasting platform structure for total broadcast share (BRC, 2020). The channels from which the soap operas were selected are available on a multiple of the platforms above. Apart from e.tv and SABC 1 being available for all as free-to-air channels, both are also available on DStv subscription and e.tv on open view. Hence, the selected channels have a wider reach. Also, since most South African soap opera characters speak in multiple local languages other than English, the researcher purposely selected the above soap operas that have English subtitles to avoid

translation costs. South Africa features four main television panels. These panels and their composition have been represented below;

Table 7: South African television panels and composition

Panels	Composition
Free to air households	51%
DSTV households	49%
Openview households	8%
DTT household	5%

Adapted: (The Broadcasting Research Council of South Africa, 2019:5)

The selected soap operas were used because of their popularity and high viewership level (Table 1). *Generations: The Legacy* is the second most watched show on TV and the most watched on SABC 1 with a viewership of 8.2 million, *Scandal!* and *Rhythm City* are the first and third most watched on E.tv with a viewership of 4.7 million and 4.1 million respectively. The selected sample size is closely related to what is commonly used in other studies, ranging from 50 episodes to 200. Also, the researcher hopes to publish this work in a high-quality journal, hence the sample was used to meet the international criteria of previously published works on gender representation on soap operas. Using a sample of 60 episodes was not a daunting task since the researcher is familiar with the soap operas and storyline. Even though the episodes have been flighted, archival episodes are available on VIU and YouTube.

3.3.1 Non-probability Sampling Method (Purposive Sampling Technique)

A purposive sampling technique, which is a non-probability sampling method was used in this study. A non-probability sampling method is where not all units in the sample have a chance of being selected while a sample is a subset of a population. A purposive sampling is applied in a situation where the researcher looks for some kind of a ‘representative’ sample to satisfy the researcher’s criteria (Vehovar, Toepoel & Steinmetz, 2016). The study selected individual characters that play an important role in the development of the

plot in that episode that will provide relevant information to meet the aim and objectives of the research.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION USING A CODEBOOK

Archival episodes used for this study were available on YouTube and Viu and freely accessible. The written storyline teasers for the episodes are available on the various broadcasting sites as well as other sites. The researcher used www.tvsa.co.za for teaser read-on. Since a purposive sampling method was used, the texts from the sites were first read and the episodes that best provide information to answer the research objectives were selected. This was a very easy process since the researcher is already familiar with all three soap operas and have been a fan, watching them for years. Also, the TVSA site provided the season, month and episode number which made it easy for the researcher to navigate directly to the episode number and watch it on YouTube and Viu. This saved time for the researcher who did not have to watch every episode for the three soap operas for an entire year before selecting what would become part of the sample. On YouTube, the researcher typed in the name of the soap opera, the year, season and the episode's number. The episode selection was guided by the teasers on TVSA. The researcher first read the teasers which made the process easier because it contained the year, month and episode number. The researcher used the episode number for the selected year and month to watch the particular episodes on Viu. The researcher then watched the episode two times. The first time was to get familiar with the storyline and characters while the second time was to code and gather some important text (quotes). The researcher made sure the data were well coded in their respective fields. The coding process was intensive and took about three weeks. The coding process was done manually with a pencil and a coding sheet.

The data were collected by watching all the selected episodes for the study, coded and recorded using a codebook. A codebook is a data collection tool that provides a list of codes used to organise and analyse data. In the current study, a codebook was used to

organise and analyse data. Also, it was used flexibly to include new categories that were found during the data analysis process. The data were divided into categories where each concept is defined, explained in detail and examples provided (Hampsten, 2017). As earlier said, a codebook was prepared purposely for this study and used as the data collection instrument. Categories used in the codebook were determined using findings from pre-existing literature. During the data collection process, new categories were identified and included in the codebook and categories without variables were removed at the end. (See appendix B for the codebook).

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data was analysed using textual analysis. Textual analysis is a data gathering information method about how people make sense of the world. This method is suitable for researchers working in cultural studies, media studies, mass communication, sociology and philosophy. Textual analysis is making an informed guess of the most likely interpretation of a text. Texts include film, television programmes, magazines, advertising and clothes (Allen, 2017; McKee, 2001). This method is used to describe and interpret characteristics of a visual or recorded message. There are 4 approaches to textual analysis, namely rhetoric criticism, content analysis, performances studies and interaction analysis (McKee, *ibid*). The current study used content analysis. According to Elo and Kyngas (2008:108), content analysis is a data analysis method that can be used to analyse data in an inductive or deductive way. A deductive approach was applied. This method can be used for quantitative and qualitative data to describe and quantify a phenomenon systematically.

Content analysis eases the categorisation of data and it is very flexible (Braun & Clarke, 2006:77). Content analysis focuses on a wide variety of texts like interview transcripts, focus groups, observational studies, open questionnaire, document analysis like mass media products, files protocol, secondary analysis and web pages. It is highly systematic and begins with an initial framework (Williamson, Given & Scifleet, 2018; Mayring, 2014).

Qualitative content analysis could be used to analyse video materials and, in such cases, they are treated as text, hence the coding was mainly language based (Mayring, 2014). One of the approaches of qualitative content analysis is a codebook analysis where a non-automatic manual coding process is applied following various codes that are well defined and sometimes examples are given (Neuendorf, 2002). The analysis method is usually adapted to suit the material and answer the research problems; however, a general model needs to be constructed for orientation. For precision level to be raised, the unit of analysis has to be established (Mayring, *Ibid*). A unit of analysis is the basic element in a scientific research project that informs on who or what of the study that is being analysed or which an analyst may generalise (Lewis-Beck, Bryman & Futing, 2004). It could be an individual, a group, photos, newspaper, arrests, episodes etc. This study used content analysis to breakdown data into more manageable parts like themes, roles and trend to meet the research objectives.

3.6 CONTENT ANALYSIS

The working parameters for this study was content analysis. Content analysis is a method of analysing written, verbal or visual communication messages (Elo & Kyngas, 2007). According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001) in Mohajan (2018:15), content analysis is defined as “a detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of materials for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes, or biases”. As earlier stated, content analysis can be qualitative and quantitative and can be used in either an inductive or deductive way. The inductive approach is recommended if there is no previous knowledge about the phenomenon or if the knowledge is fragmented while deductive content analysis approach is used when the analysis structure on the basis of previous knowledge is operationalised and when theory testing is the purpose of the study (Elo & Kyngas, 2007). Similar to Elo and Kyngas, Hsieh and Shannon (2005) identify three approaches; these are conventional, directed and summative. Conventional approach is the case where the coding categories are derived directly from the text; the directed approach is

where the analysis starts from relevant research findings and the theory to guide the initial code while summative approach involves counting and making comparisons which is commonly used in quantitative research (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The coding categories were derived from previous studies and the theories that guided this study.

In content analysis, the development of clearly defined and described categories is crucial; it determines the quality of the research and represents the conceptual plan of content analysis (Kassarjian, 1977). This study incorporated clearly defined categories and their examples. Content analysis can be conducted in different contexts like psychometric analysis, examining minority portrayals and gender roles (Neuendorf, 2002). Of all the various contexts mentioned, gender role is relevant to this study. In communication, gender roles in the media are frequently and widely analysed (Neuendorf, *ibid*).

There are numerous studies that have analysed gender representation and role in soap operas. Majority of these studies used content analysis as their primary research method while some used additional methods. While many of the previous studies simply used qualitative or quantitative content analysis, few other researchers were specific and incorporated textual qualitative content analysis like Lacalle (2016). Some of the studies that have used qualitative content analysis include Arokiaraj (2014), Kojoyan and Gevorgyan (2014), Ibrahim et al. (2017) and Sachdeva (2018). A textual analysis was incorporated into the content analysis for this study. Textual analysis is a research study method used in analysing texts that appear in different mediums like films, paintings, documents, webpages and newspapers. These 'texts' were used to assess meanings, values and messages that are sent through them (Smith, 2017).

3.6.1 Content Analysis Research Process

Table 8: Content Analysis Process

The content analysis process for this study is represented in the table below;

Absorb content
Units of analysis
Sampling
Develop unique codes
Pilot study
Final coding
Data analysis and interpretation

Source: Adapted from Neuendorf (2002:50-51), Riffe et al. (2005:55) and Roller (2019:3)

Absorb Content

This refers to what will be analysed and why (Neuendorf, 2002). The current study aimed to analyse gender representation in selected South African soap operas. Very few studies have been carried out on gender representation in South African soap operas. This study looked at both male and female representation as well as an analysis of LGBT (queer) representation. The aim and objectives, theoretical background (refer to chapter 2) and previous research findings (refer to chapter 2) will form the basis of the categories, hence a deductive qualitative content analysis. New categories that are not present were however added during the data analysis process. These categories were described in detail and examples were provided in the codebook that is discussed below.

Units of Analysis

This refers to the entity in science research that is to be analysed (Dolma, 2010). The unit of analysis for the current study includes male, female and queer and their physical

appearance, themes, settings, roles. Also, their attitudes are used as further attributes to enable the researcher further identify whether they are male, females and queers.

The e.tv and SABC television channels were selected because they are available on many platforms. These channels are free-to-air channels to all South Africans and currently used in majority of South African households. They are also available on DStv which is the second most used network in South Africa. DStv is a paid television provider and requires a subscription fee and a monthly fee which majority cannot afford. Also, e.tv from which two of the selected soap operas are from are available on open view network. This has just a once-off subscription fee which according to the Broadcasting Research Council (BRC) of South Africa is represented as a Free-to-Air in the broadcasting platform structure for total broadcast share (BRC, 2020). Therefore, the selected channels have a wider reach. Also, since most South African soap operas characters speak in many languages other than English, the researcher purposely selected the above soap operas that have English subtitles to avoid translation costs. A 12 months' period from October 2019–September 2020 was divided into four groups of 3 months each, where 5 episodes from each group was purposely selected from each soap opera, making a total of 20 episodes per soap opera for analysis. Since soap operas are themed based, the researcher will select a maximum of two episodes per month and at least one episode per month to ensure that no important themes are missed. This will ensure any bias is eliminated. The gender analysed included male, females and queer (LGBT- lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) characters. Only the characters in an episode that helped in the development of a plot were analysed. Apart from the characters, the setting, clothing and jobs of the characters were also analysed to determine gender representation/role. Episodes were purposively selected to include men, women and queers' characters that play an important role to highlight the themes and meet the research objectives.

Develop Unique Codes

Coding is a “method of constant comparison analysis” (Ngulube, 2015). Coding categories can be derived from the data, previous related studies and the theories used in the study. Qualitative research allows the assigning of a single text to more than one

category. A coding manual is usually required which consists of categories, definitions and examples to ensure coding consistency (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). The current study utilised a code book (refer to appendix B for the codebook). The variables of the codebook are discussed in detail below.

Codebook

A codebook was used to collect data. A codebook is a set of codes, definitions and examples that highlight relevant topics to answer specific research questions. It allows the researcher to track how the codes are being used and make sense of the data (Mihas, 2019; Gunby, Marshall

& McCulloch, 2011). Codes are defined as “tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study” (Miles & Huberman, 1994:56). Codes could be inductive or deductive. An inductive code is based on a new idea from data that has been reviewed while a deductive code is one that is based on a theoretical or conceptual framework (see chapter 1 and 2) (Mihas, 2019). As a starting point, the current study used a deductive coding method and later included any new codes from the data that had been identified. Codebooks are not meant to be exhaustive, similar abstract concepts are combined to form themes (Mihas, 2019). Applying codes to data enables the researcher to examine how their data supports or contradicts the theory that guides the research as well as enhance the current literature (Gunby, Marchall & McCulloch, 2011). This is also known as content analysis. The current study used pre-existing variables/categories from previous research, data and theory. At the end of the data collection/analysis, categories without units were removed. The code book provides descriptions and examples of variables that would determine what was included or excluded in particular categories. To avoid any confusion, the codebook contained information on the specific soap opera under analysis, the season, episode number and the month it was aired to make sure that all the different strata were represented. It should be noted that all the selected soap operas run at prime time from Monday to Friday for 30

minutes with commercial breaks in between. *Rhythm City* is aired from 7:00-7:30pm, *Scandal!* 7:30-8:00pm and *Generations: The Legacy* from 8:00-8:30pm. The variables included in the codebook are a brief description of the episode, gender (male/female/queer), age (16+), sexual orientation and role category. Physical appearance (outfit, makeup/hair, body size, and suggestive pose), activity/props (cooking, laundry, leisure, laptop), setting (home, office/outdoor) and behaviour (emotions, decision making) helped to identify the role the characters were portrayed in. All characters that helped in the development of the plot from the age of 16 years and above were included.

Pilot Study

A pilot study is a small scale or trial version of the full research that is done before the main survey is conducted with the aim of identifying and reducing potential problems (Fraser, Fahlman, Arscott & Guillot, 2018; van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002). As part of the content analysis process, a pilot study needs to be carried out on a sample of applicable content before the final study (Neuendorf, 2002) (refer to sampling). A pilot study was carried out before the final data were collected. The pilot study of the content analysis was done on the selected soap operas on e.tv and SABC1.

The researcher recruited and trained two independent coders to carry out the pilot study. The coders were trained about the concept, the codebook and the entire coding process. The aim was to get the coders familiarised with the codebook and then coding categories. Again, this was a way of identifying mistakes that the researcher might have not noticed. The code book was handed to the two coders plus the researcher who carried out the coding process on the same sample independently. The categories in the codebook were well described and ensured mutual exclusivity. During the pilot phase of the study, the codebook needs to be revised (Krippendorf, 2004a). Through this, a consensus was reached on the variables in each category. The completed pilot study highlighted problems

and identified new categories. The codebook was adapted where necessary to develop the final codebook. (Refer to appendix A for the pilot codebook).

Final Coding

After the pilot study was conducted, categories and variables were adapted for the final content analysis. The researcher was the only coder for the final coding. Every selected episode of the soap opera was watched twice, the first time was to gain insight and the second time to code.

(Refer to appendix B for the final codebook).

Data Analysis and Reporting

Data collected from the soap operas were qualitatively analysed. A detailed descriptive analysis was provided from the findings to ensure the research objectives are addressed. Analysis of the data was provided under sub-headings in relation to the objectives. Sub-headings include gender representation, themes, roles and a comparative analysis to identify trends or patterns in the selected South African soap operas. Data were analysed using content analysis. The various fields of the codebook were filled in accordingly into the different variables and categories. Themes were then developed abstractly from the codebook.

3.7 QUALITY CRITERIA

3.7.1 Dependability

This refers to the extent an analysis will yield the same results overtime under a different condition if replicated (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen & Kyngäs, 2014). To ensure that dependability was achieved, the current study has described in detail the criteria used to select the sample and the characteristics of the characters that were analysed. Also, the year in which the episode was aired, the season and the episode number is provided for easy replication.

3.7.2 Conformability

This refers to the degree to which the results can be corroborated. This means that data interpretation has to accurately reflect the data collected and not invented by the researcher's own predispositions (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Shenton, 2004). To ensure conformability, an audit trail was performed where the researcher has made sure details of data collection, data analysis and data interpretation processes are provided. Also, the researcher kept a journal as a reflexivity reminder of her own bias, preferences and preconceptions so that their position does not influence the research process. The categories were described in detail and grouped such that they are mutually exclusive.

3.7.3 Credibility

This refers to the confidence placed on the authenticity of the research findings, based on true information and not on the researcher's bias (Anney, 2014). Credibility is to establish confidence or believability of the research from the respondents' perspective and the context in which the research was carried out (Guba, 1981). Strategies to ensure credibility include data and triangulation, (the use of multiple sources of data and/or methods) peer debriefing, member checking, prolonged engagement and persistent observation (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Moon, Brewer, Januchowski-Harley, Adams & Blackman, 2016; Padgett, 2008). Peer debriefing is the sharing with peers about the research questions and findings who may have an additional perspective in interpretation and analysis while member checking involves the returning of research findings to participants to determine if the findings actually reflect their experiences (Padgett, 2008; Creswell & Miller, 2000). To ensure credibility, the researcher placed herself into the participants' world to gain an insight of the study and minimise distortion of information (Anney, *ibid*). Also, credibility can be ensured by asking the following questions; is the research credible? Does the literature collected and conducted interviews present a true and accurate picture of what is claimed? Does the research instrument (codebook, questionnaire etc.) used to collect data provide you with credible data? (Moon et al., 2016). The researcher watched the series multiple times to get familiarised with the

storyline and avoid misinterpretation, while ensuring rich data. Moreover, the main characters in the soap opera that are relevant to the problem under study were identified and observed in detail. The codebook categories were designed based on previous work. The categories were exhausted to avoid omitting any information and any category without any data was removed in the end.

3.7.4 Transferability

This refers to the extent to which results can be applied to different contexts, or generalised.

This could be ensured through the use of thick description and purposeful sampling (Treharne & Rigg, 2015:58). Usually, authors often provide details of how they identified and chose participants which help to determine the transferability of the findings or relevance of the research context. While some authors argue that the reader should judge for themselves if the study can be transferred to a different context, others think that the author of the study can assist by providing limitations for the application of the findings (Moon et al., 2016). To determine transferability, information about the process needs to be provided for others to replicate, for example, recruitment strategy and the extent used to maximise information diversity (for example, the use of snowball sampling where participants are asked to recommend others with views that are different from theirs. Also, to eliminate situational uniqueness and non-comparability, thick description needs to be combined with recruitment strategies (Guba, 1981). The researcher needs to provide a clear and detailed description of the selection and characteristics of the participants, context and culture, data collection and analysis (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). Rich and extensive description of the research was provided to facilitate replication by other researchers and for other contexts to be easily compared to the current study. To maximise information diversity, the researcher purposely selected a maximum of just two episodes per month for each soap opera. This was to ensure important themes are not missed and that the data collection process is not biased. Furthermore, since soap operas are mostly theme based and the same theme can be portrayed for up to one or two months, this method will ensure that different themes are identified, hence a rich data.

Moreso, Appendix C has provided information on the soap operas, the season, the episode number, the month and the year.

3.8 CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to outline the research process that was used for this study. The chapter has provided an overview of the research methodology that was used. A qualitative strategy was employed and a rationale for selecting the method provided demonstrating that it was ideal for this study due to its descriptive and interpretive nature. Due to the nature of soap operas which are usually themed-based where a particular theme can go on for months, a purposive technique was ideal due to its flexibility. Hence, particular episodes were selected and more themes included in the study. Reasons for choosing the soap operas which include, being originally South African, subtitled, and aired at prime time have been explained. Also, the undeniable popularity of soap operas in South Africa increases the potential to reform and as a conversation starter. Furthermore, e.tv and SABC stations from which the soap operas were selected were used because they are free-to-air channels and available to every South African at an affordable annual subscription fee. Several measures to ensure quality of data and eliminate researcher bias have been explained. This dissertation aimed to contribute to existing material on gender representation and gender portrayal.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This study sought to analyse gender representation in selected South African television soap operas. A qualitative content analysis was carried out to identify gender representation in general which includes gender presence (male, female and queer) gender age, gender workforce and gender behaviour, themes, gender roles and the trends observed across the three selected South African soap operas. A codebook based on categories from previous studies and theoretical framework were used for data collection and analysis. The codebook was however used flexibly and allowed room for new categories not identified in previous studies to be included. The discussion of the study was presented accordingly to meet the research objectives.

This study aimed to meet the following research objectives;

Objective 1

To analyse gender representation in selected South African soap operas.

Objective 2

To identify dominant themes in the portrayal of women and men's images in the selected television soap opera.

Objective 3

To identify the various aspects of gender-based roles in selected South African soap opera.

Objective 4

To examine the trends of gender portrayal across the three selected South African soap operas.

4.2 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.2.1 GENDER REPRESENTATION IN SELECTED SOUTH AFRICAN SOAP OPERAS

The first set of data presentation in gender representation in the three selected soap operas is in relation to gender presence, age representation, representation in the workforce and portrayal of behaviour. To determine this, only the main and supporting characters that were part of developing a plot were analysed.

a) Gender Representation in Relation to Gender Presence

This referred to the actual presence of the gender (male or female). However, as earlier discussed in chapter two of the literature review, since it is difficult to fit queers into a particular gender, their representation was based on their sexuality and not gender. Therefore, no male or female gender were assigned to them but their sexuality only.

In *Rhythm City*, some of the main female characters that played a role in the development of the plot include; Blossom, Puleng, Mapula, Pearl, Nandi, Gail, Lerato, Reneilwe, Kgomotso, Kea, Ziyanda, Sindiswa, Cuba, Dikeledi and Mampho. The main male characters include Suffocate, Fats, Bra Kop, Mzi, David, Gift, Jafta and Khulekani. Queer characters include Zintle and Jamaica. Representation of gender presence in the soap opera *Rhythm City* showed the presence of men, women and queers. The soap opera showed an unequal gender representation. More women than men and queers were represented with the women almost doubling the number of men. Queers had the lowest representation. Only two queer characters, Jamaica a gay guy and Zintle a lesbian teenager were portrayed.

In *Scandal!*, the main and supporting male characters are Lerumo, Vernon, Quinton, Ndumiso, Mr Xaba, Neo, Mlungisi, Wesley, Mthumzi, Romeo and Amo while the female characters include Grace, Yvonne, Boniswa, Xolile, Thembeke, Violetta, Lindiwe, Dintle, Phindile, Gloria, Mrs Ngema, Ingrid, Mary, Sheila and Layla. In the soap opera *Scandal!*, males, females and queers (gay) are represented. More females than males are represented, however, the difference between male and female representation is not very significant. Like the former, queer representation is not very prominent with just two queer

characters, Chumani and Tsepo. Furthermore, in *Generations: The Legacy*, the male characters playing the main and supporting roles included Kumkani, Mazwi, Mrekza, Smanga, Pele, Jerah, Jack, Mpho, Tau and Cosmo while the main female characters on the other hand are Tshidi, Lucy, Palesa, Sphesihle, Fikile, Lesedi, Ayanda, Zitha, Mam Zibondiwe and Gog'Flo. In *Generations: The Legacy*, results indicate that both men and women were to a greater extent equally represented. While there is an equal portrayal of both male and female, there was no representation of queers.

Summary of Gender Representation in Relation to Gender Presence

Summarily, *Rhythm City* had an unequal representation of male and female with more females while *Scandal!* and *Generations: The Legacy* had a more equal representation of both genders. However, while *Rhythm City* and *Scandal!* had a representation of queers, *Generations: The Legacy* had no queer characters represented. Furthermore, in comparison to males and females, queers had the lowest representation.

b) Gender Representation in the Selected Soap Operas in Relation to Age

*It should be noted that, most of the characters' ages were determined based on yardsticks that the researcher has used. For example, yardsticks used include whether the character is married, works, for how long he/she has been working, is the character still in school, if yes, secondary or university. Also, if the character is a parent, if yes, how old are their children. Findings showed that majority of the female characters in *Rhythm City* were between the ages of 30-45 years. Characters in this age group included Puleng, Gail, Nandi, Kgomotso, Ziyanda and Lerato. This judgment was based on the fact that most of these characters are mothers whose children are between 5 and 16 years. Also, their jobs could help to estimate their age.

For example Lerato and Ziyanda are CEO's in a record company and Kgomotso is a police woman. Also, Puleng made mention of her age to Kevin whom she thought was very much attracted to her "I'm in my 30s Kevin" (season 14, episode 3425). Also, most of the characters that are seemingly in the same age groups are friends. The next

popularly represented age group with almost an equal representation as the former are characters between the ages of 24-29 years. This include Sindiswa, Reneilwe and Mampho. The first yardstick used is that these women are all friends and new in the job market, Reneilwe (also known as Electra) is a singer, Sindiswa and Mampho work as radio presenters. Next, are those between the ages 16-18 years. This comprise of Kea and Zintle who are friends and about to write matric. The next age group of 56-65 years has two representations, this includes ma'am Blossom and Cuba who are both friends. Apart from their physical appearances, Cuba, has an adult daughter Puleng who is in her late 30s and a grandchild. Next, are characters between 19-23 years old. The findings reveal just one character, Mapula who is still in the university. There was no female representation for 66+ years old.

Still on *Rhythm City*, the male characters on the other hand are more concentrated in a particular age group. Compared to the females, there were no representations in many age groups. Like the females, majority of the males represented are between the 30-45 year old age group. Characters in this age group include Jamaica, Fats, Suffocate, Khulekani and Gift. The yardstick here is the fact that Gift and Khulekani are married. Khulekani has a teenage daughter in secondary school. Fats and Jamaica are friends and Fats is a manager at Kilowatts. The next most represented age group are those between 24-29 years which includes Sabelo and Mzi. Mzi is a young lawyer who is still being mentored. Like the former age group representation, the age group between 56-65 years have the same number of representations with characters like Bra Kop and Jafta. These two are friends and look older. Kop is a retired driver at Reds Record and now drives his private bus. There is just a single character represented in the ages 46-55 years, David Genaro, he has a daughter who is in her late 20s. There was no male representation between the ages 16-18, 19-23 and 66+ years.

From the above data, it is apparent that a majority of the characters for both men and women are represented between the ages of 30-45 years. Also, the next most represented group is still the same for both genders, that is, those between ages 24-29 years. Furthermore, no male or female characters aged 66+ years were represented.

Also, there are no male representation between 16-18 years and 19-23 years unlike female characters that are portrayed in these age groups.

In *Scandal!*, the results show that majority of the female characters represented were between ages 30-45 years, which includes Thembeke, Gloria, Yvonne, Mrs Ngema, Sheila, Boniswa and Grace. These women are all mothers to teenagers and Yvonne has a married daughter in her 20s except for Thembeke and Sheila who are not yet mothers. The next most represented age group are characters of ages 24-29 years. This includes Dintle, Phindile and Xolile. These women all work, Dintle and Xolile have kids who are between 2-6 years old. Phindile and Xolile were once married and currently separated from their husbands. Furthermore, the next most represented is the age group 19-23 years which includes Lindiwe and Mary who just finished college. There is just a single female character represented between the 16-18 years, Lindiwe's sister, Omphile and for 46-55 years age group which is Layla whose son is in his 30s. There is a lack of representation of characters in the age groups 56-65 and 66+ years.

Like the females, the most represented male characters in *Scandal!* are between 30-45 years, this includes, Lerumo, Ndumiso, Mthunzi, Vernon, and Quinton. They all work and have kids except for Mthunzi, however, he was once married. The next most represented, also like the females are those aged between ages 24-29 years are three characters, which are Romeo, Amo and Chumani. Romeo is a married university student who took a gap year, Amo and Chumani both work. There are two characters in the 46-55 years old age group, Mr Xaba and Mr Mlungisi Ngema (these two are married with kids in their teens and early 20s) and a single character for age group 56 to 65 years old. For this group there is Neo Mokheti, whose son is a policeman and has a foster child. Also, there is a single character for age group 19-23 years Kgosi who is Lindiwe's friend and old classmate. There was no representation of characters in the age group 16-18 years and 66+years.

In *Generations: The Legacy*, the most represented group are women between the ages 30-45 years which includes Tshidi, Zitha, Lucy, Ayanda and Sphe. These women all work and some own companies and businesses. There are three groups that follow the former group with equal representation. These are characters between 19-23 years, 24-29 years and 66+ years old. Characters between the ages 19-23 years old include Lesedi and Lerato who just finished high school. Next are those that fall between 24-29 years which includes Palesa, and Thembeke who are friends and Palesa is portrayed as the older sister to Lerato, while 66+ years are Gog'

Flo and Ma'am Zibondiwe. These two are grandmothers with kids in their 40s and older grandkids in their 30s. The next age group in terms of representation with just a single character each is between the ages 16-18 years which is Nontle who is still in school and Palesa's mom who is between 56-65 years and has daughters who happen to be between 19-29 years. There was no female representation between the ages 46-55 years. When Tau learns that he is the father of Nontle, her age is mentioned as he talks in frustration trying to bring her to order as she has been going in and out as she pleased. This is illustrated in their dialogue below; (season 29, episode 211):

Nontle: Hey Dad

Tau: where were you? School finished hours ago.

Nontle: I was with Melokkuhle, that's why I took some clothes. Not that you noticed

Tau: Next time, let me now where you are going.

Nontle: It was only for a few hours, it's not like I stayed out all night.

Tau: That's not the point, you are 17! You can't just..."

Like the women, the male most represented age group was characters between 30-45 and this includes Mazwi, Tau, Smanga, Mrekza, Pele and Cosmo. These men all work and some are successful business owners and even CEOs. The next most represented age group for males are those between 46-55 which includes Jack Mabaso, Ben and Kabisi with almost three times less representation than the first group. Also, these men are successful business men and Kabisi is the head of the Moroka clan. Lastly, there is

the age group of males between the ages of 24-29 years old and includes Jerah and Mpho. These are young men who finished high school a few years back and are working. It should be noted that, not all the age groups set for this study have been represented in the soap opera, *Generations: The Legacy*; there is no representation of male characters between 16-18, 19-23, 56-65 and 66+ years old.

Summary of Gender Representation in the Selected Soap Opera in Relation to Age

The results from all three soap operas indicate that majority of the characters represented are between 30-45 years old for both males and females. The next age group represented for both genders are characters between ages 24-29 years old. It should be noted that the male characters are portrayed in very few age groups compared to women. Also, there was no male character across the three soap operas who are represented in the 66+ years old. Comparing with the number of characters in the other age groups that were represented, it can be said that there was a massive neglect of characters in the 66+ years old. Furthermore, majority of the soap operas did not have male characters in the younger age groups. For example, in *Rhythm City*, unlike the women representation, no male characters were represented between 16-18 years old and 19-23 years old. Similarly, there was no male representation in *Scandal!* In the 16-18 years old group and 19-23 years old group. Furthermore, there were no male characters between 16-18 years in *Generations: The Legacy*. Moreover, there is an underrepresentation of characters above 66 years old. It can be concluded that more younger women were portrayed compared to their male counterparts.

c) Gender Representation in Relation to Occupation

Occupation in the context of this study refers to profession, level of education, level of financial stability and social class. In *Rhythm City*, women's occupations vary. There is Kgomotso a police officer, Gail, Mampho and Sindiswa who all work at the radio station as presenters while Ziyanda and Lerato work as radio station managers. Also, Ziyanda and her mentor are portrayed as *sangomas* (traditional healer) but Ziyanda is also CEO of a radio station. Reneilwe also known as Electra is represented as an artist (singer) in

a recording company, Red Records run by Pearl, a female who is the manager. Also, there are some few students that are represented like Kea, a high school student and Mapula who is in university. A small number of women are self-employed, like Puleng who owns a small *Shisa Nyama* (a barbeque place) and Blossom who owns a small tuck shop in the window of her home. Most of the female's educational levels are not identified except for a few like Kea, Zintle and Mapula who are still students. From their jobs and home settings, one can tell that some of the characters belong to the middle class like Ziyanda, Lerato and Kgomotso while Nandi, Zintle and Gail are from the upper class. Also, characters like Mapula, Kea and Ma'am Blossom belong to the lower class. Issues of finance are never highlighted with these women in the upper and middle class except for Reneilwe who once desperately needed money to buy a baby in season 13, episode 3316; (she lies to Suffocate, her father -in-law)

Reneilwe to Suffo: "I need money, things haven't been going well for me in my career. My last single didn't do so well...one more thing, please don't tell Mzi, can this stay between us?"

For female queer character, Zintle is portrayed as a lesbian is still in high school.

Still in *Rhythm City*, majority of the men portrayed were businessmen. For example, Suffocate is portrayed as a man who owns several businesses. He owns a snack bar called Kilowatt and is co-owner of another snack bar called Zero 99 with David. Apart from being co-owner of Zero99, David is also a business man and co-owns a record company, Redds Record. Khulekani is also portrayed as a business man who alongside his illegal businesses like drug dealing owns a security company. Apart from business owners, there is Fats, a manager at

Suffocate's snack bar. There is just a single male character, Mzi with a professional career. He is a young lawyer. Some of the male characters are into unskilled jobs like Sabelo, a waiter, Bra Kop is a driver, and Jafta a handyman. Also, the educational level of these men is not mentioned. Men like David Genaro, Suffocate, Khulekani are the main characters and are financially stable and belong to the upper social class. Supporting characters belonging to the lower class include Sabelo, Bra Kop, Jafta and Jamaica. For

the queer character, Jamaica is portrayed as a gay man who owns and runs a local saloon.

Summarily, in *Rhythm City*, the women are more represented in the corporate world than the men. Mzi who is a lawyer is the only professional man portrayed. Also, the men that play the main characters are self-employed and own established businesses, this includes; Suffocate,

Khulekani. Unlike the men, the women like Puleng and Ma'am Blossom own businesses that are quite small. Puleng operates a 'Shisa Nyama' on one of Suffocate's businesses, meaning she does not actually own a business place while Ma'am Blossom operates a tuck shop through the window of her home. Jamaica, one of the two queer characters represented, owns a local saloon Bra Kop's backyard. Only women are portrayed as *sangomas*.

In *Scandal!*, the women are portrayed in both skilled and unskilled jobs. Thembeke is represented as the marketing manager of Thebelanga. Another character Grace owns and manages the Newtonian hotel, Layla is portrayed as the CEO of NFH, a newspaper and advertising company and Boniswa owns and manages a school. Boniswa is also co-owner and was once CEO of Thebelanga. Few women are represented in unskilled stereotype jobs, for example those with jobs in the domestic field, include characters like Gloria and Phindile who are cleaners. However, Phindile later got a new job as a receptionist, a position once held by Ingrid. Furthermore, Mrs Ngema is portrayed as a domestic worker for Quinton. Also few female characters were portrayed in stereotype jobs like Mary who is a secretary and there are waitresses like Dintle and Lindiwe. In *Scandal!*, Yvonne is portrayed as a socialite, she is unemployed but living comfortably, she belongs to the high social class, however, through Boniswa, we learn she is not very educated. This is revealed through her conversation with Boniswa when she asked Boniswa to help her with some school stuff, Boniswa replied "you finally decided to get your matric!" (Season 18, episode 3537). But the school stuff she was talking about was for her foster son, Tebello.

Still in *Scandal!*, some of the men are portrayed as business owner doing skilled jobs . For example, Quinton is a shareholder and was once the CEO at NFH. He is also a businessman and owns a snack bar called Q's. Lerumo is a police man, Chumani is a part owner of a successful construction firm, Thebelanga where he is CEO. A single male character, Timothy is represented as a receptionist, a contra-stereotypical job for men. Some of the men were represented in jobs that require less skill like Ndumiso, who is a waiter and part owner at a local bar, *Chillax*. Caiphus is portrayed as a cleaner, Vernon is a bar manager and waiter, Mlungisi is a driver for a hotel and Amo a photographer.

In *Generations: The Legacy*, women are represented in both skilled and unskilled jobs. For example, for skilled workers, there is Tshidi a board member and CEO at Ezweni. With the help of her husband Kabisi Moroka who convinced the other board members to make his wife Tshidi CEO, Tshidi is finally voted as CEO. He is happy as he announced to Tshidi who was anxiously waiting at home for the news; "you are the new CEO, congratulations!" (season 29, episode 211). There is Ayanda, another female board member in Ezweni. There are other skilled workers represented, however in stereotypical roles where they have to deal with people, like Bulelwa who is a lawyer and Sphesihle, a doctor. Furthermore, there are also business owners represented like Zitha who owns and manages a big and successful construction company, even though she is rarely portrayed in the office. Gog'Flo and Ma'am Zibondiwe are in the food industry (typically feminine industry) and co-owners of a breakfast outlet, *Mocha mamas*. Another business owner Lucy runs a Tavern and Fikile, a business woman who designs and owns a high-end jewellery line. To add, Ma'am Sonto runs an orphanage. Unskilled labour is also represented, for example, Lerato and Lesedi are portrayed as waitresses at *Skaftin Chicken* even though Lesedi later leaves to work as an errand girl at *Ezweni*. Palesa is portrayed as a young girl who has two stereotypical jobs. By day, she is a domestic worker and by night, together with her friend Thembeke are prostitutes. Lucy, a close friend to Palesa told her husband who was unaware of what Palesa does "don't you know Palesa is a prostitute?"

(season 29, episode 76). Their jobs were further revealed as some of the workers were often shown in their work uniform like Sphe a doctor, Palesa in a maid uniform and Lerato and Lesedi in server (waitress) uniform.

Majority of the men in *Generations: The Legacy* are portrayed as successful business men, managers and shareholders. Male characters like Smanga, Mazwi, Tau, Kumkani and Jack Mabaso are shareholders and board members at Ezweni, a Moroka family business. Also, Joshua Warren and Ben are portrayed as successful businessmen. Jerah is a junior staff at Ezweni, Pele is a police officer. Some of the men were portrayed as legitimate businessmen with illegal businesses on the side. Men involved in illegal businesses include Kumkani, Jack, Tau and Cosmo. Cosmo is the owner of a fast-food joint, *Skaftin chicken* and employs Mpho as a waiter. Like Cosmo, Mrekza is also a co-owner of a business, a snack bar with Mazwi. The educational level of these men are not men. They are financially sound and even someone like Mpho who is a waiter comes from very rich parents, Kumkani and Tshidi.

Summary of Gender Representation in Relation to Occupation

Summarily, in *Rhythm City*, the women were represented in diverse roles, both skilled and unskilled. While some of the women were represented as managers and CEOs', majority were business owners of very small business like a very tuck shop and a 'Shisa Nyama'. The men on the other hand have well-established businesses like radio stations, recording company and a bar. Some of the men portrayed are involved in illegal businesses. Majority of the men were financially stable while the women struggled financially. In *Scandal!* there is an equal representation of men and women in both skilled and unskilled jobs. The men were represented as corporate workers, police officer, business men, waiter, CEO, cleaner and business owners. Similarly, the women were represented in jobs such as cleaning waitressing, secretarial duties and domestic work. All the men in *Generations: The Legacy* are financially stable. However, their educational level is never mentioned. All the men belong to the upper and middle class. Men in the upper social class are Mazwi, Kumkani, Smanga, Tau and the men in the middle class

include Cosmo and Mrekza. Even though Mpho is a waiter and Jerah a junior staff, their families are financially very comfortable. Unlike in *Rhythm City*, the women in *Generations: The Legacy*, own bigger businesses like Lucy who owns a tavern, Zitha owns a construction firm, Gog Flo and Zibondiwe own a breakfast bar and Fikile is owner of a jewellery line. Unlike the women who are only in legitimate businesses, the men are into legitimate and illegitimate businesses. Some of the women like Palesa are portrayed as girls who try to make ends meet and work as a domestic workers by day and prostitutes by night. The men unlike the women are rich from their illegitimate dealings like race fixing, money laundering and drug dealing.

d) Gender Representation in Relation to Behaviour and Character Traits

This refers to the positive or negative representation of the characters. Also, if they are respectful, arrogant, soft spoken, have socially acceptable habits, helpful, forgiving, jealous, liars, act for or against societal norms and values, manipulative and emotional. In *Rhythm City*, an analysis of the character's behaviour and character traits reveals that majority of the women were negatively represented except for Blossom who is portrayed in a positive light. She is portrayed as a married woman who lives with a lot of children that are not biologically hers and some of which are not even family. Together with her husband, they make a lot of financial sacrifices and provide for these children even though they are not rich. Blossom is portrayed as kind, submissive and often modestly dressed woman. She is also compassionate. For example, when Dikeledi, a single mother had nowhere to go with her son, she took them in. She still continued to help her even when Hammer attempted to burn down their house. This shows how kind she is. In disbelief, she tells Mzi "I can't believe after everything ma'am Blossom is still willing to help me" (season 14, episode 3421). Besides Blossom, most of the female characters, both young and old are negatively portrayed. A character like Zintle, a 16 year' old teenager was analysed and portrayed as a victim of substance abuse and takes "slaza" drugs (season 14, episode 3398). Also, Cuba is depicted as a manipulator and a drug dealer. She bakes cookies with marijuana (drug) and sells to her friends and the community. Mapula is portrayed as a prostitute in a relationship with a married man named Gift. Reneilwe is

a criminal who failed in an attempt to buy a baby illegally and to commit marriage fraud. Reneilwe pays 25 thousands Rands to buy Hammer and Dikeledi's baby. When she realised that she was being extorted and could hardly afford it, she attempted to backout of the deal. However, Hammer blackmailed her saying, "the paper will love this...how Electra tried to buy a baby for 25 thousand... you leave now or I go to the papers" (Season 13, Episode 3316). Kgomotso another female character is portrayed as a corrupt police officer who would not arrest her boyfriend for a murder he is guilty of. Also, Lerato is portrayed as a manipulator and a murderer. Furthermore, Nandi, a married woman is represented as an adulterous wife. She later confesses to her husband about the affair in season 14, episode 3421 "the truth is, there's someone else, uh huh, but i'm not going to tell you who he is or was because that's not important. What is important is me, you and the truth. So that's why I'm telling you the truth, it happened but it's over".

Similarly, still in *Rhythm City*, an analysis of the male characters revealed that many of the men are negatively portrayed. like Khulekani who is a drug dealer. Khelekani and Suffocate are murderers, they are responsible for the death of David Genaro. Nonetheless, David himself is also portrayed as a murderer. He killed Khulekani's son. Khulekani in an attempt to kill Suffocate for sleeping with his wife Nandi and with his orders to his right-hand man mistakenly killed Kgomotso, Suffocate's girlfriend. Nandi angrily confronts her husband whom she suspects may be behind the murder asking; "what have you done Khulekani?" (Season 14, episode 3425).

Khulekani's failed murder attempt on Suffocate's life is confirmed when he confronts his hitman whom he deligated the job; "you failed, even now, the rat is still calling my wife" (season 14, episode 3425). Unfortunately, the perpetrators are never punished nor reported for these crimes. Furthermore, Khulekani, a heterosexual is also portrayed as an adulterous husband.

He is having an affair with a gay guy, Jamaica. Also, Hammer, Dikeledi's boyfriend is the only man portrayed to be domestically violent in *Rhythm City*. He beats her often and eventually killed their son. Similar to the women, few upright men like Bra Kop and Mzi were portrayed. Bra Kop is a representation of kindness, he takes in kids to live with him

despite his financial struggles. Also, Mzi is a lawyer who always tries to do the right thing. He tried to stop his wife from buying a baby illegally. Also, he is more like a father figure to Dikeledi's baby and provided Dikeledi with money and shelter when she ran away from her violent boyfriend. He is forgiving. He forgave Hammer for vandalizing his house and for beating Dikeledi constantly. In season 14, episode 3425. Mzi is portrayed as an ideal romantic partner and Dikeledi is pleasantly surprised and makes the following statement; "why aren't all men like you".

In *Rhythm City*, analysis reveals that a majority of both men and women in all three soap operas were negatively portrayed. However, a majority of the men were more negatively portrayed and involved in more violent crimes except for Lerato who is also a murderer like some of the men. While the men were more violent and involved in criminal acts, the women were portrayed more in negative subtle acts. The men were more like crime bosses and gangsters who never got punished by the law. While Khulekani is portrayed as a drug dealer, Zintle, a consumer comes across more like a victim. This highlights the impact of drugs in the community. Bra Kop and his wife Blossom and Mzi are example of good parents to children that are not biologically theirs. Mzi is portrayed is a father figure to Dikeledi's baby.

In *Scandal!*, findings shows that majority of the female characters were neutrally portrayed; however, some of the characters were negatively portrayed. Analysis shows that Thembeke is a manipulator and a murderer. Thembeke is portrayed as a dangerous woman. Her ex-husband even warns Romeo about her; "she's a born liar and she's brilliant at it" (season 18, episode 3537). She also manipulates Mary into failing the lie detector test which led to Mary's dismissal from her job. She is very disloyal and switches sides easily. Like Thembeke, Boniswa is another female character negatively represented. Boniswa is adulterous and faces the consequences. This caused a strain in her relationship with her children and eventually her freedom when she was abducted and locked up by her son. Boniswa's husband died not knowing that Chumani is infact not his biological son. Like Thembeke, Boniswa is also a murderer, unscrupulous and a

manipulator. This is shown when she managed to turn Chumani against Mr Xaba who is his biological father. She lies against Mr Xaba and eventually murdered him. Some of the excerpts between Boniswa and Mr Xaba below from season 17, episode 3421 highlight her character traits and behaviour;

When Mr Xaba learns Boniswa accuses him of being a paedophile, he is shocked and says;

“you have no proof, there are no such accusations” “I’ll fight you till the death to clear my name”

Still in *Scandal!*, Sheila is portrayed as an unfaithful partner to Neo. Sheila’s cheating causes Neo to have a heart attack that lands him in hospital. Also, Yvonne’s mother was never a great mother to her. This made her run away from home at the age of 16 years. On the other hand, there are some women like Yvonne, eventhough portrayed as a socialite has a good heart. Also, she is caring and forgiving. She becomes a caregiver to her dying mother and forgives her mother for neglecting her as a child, “i’m not angry anymore, i forgive you mom for everything you did” (season 17, episode 3496). Also, her kindness is exemplenary. For instance, after her mother died, she adopts Tebello, a boy that was abandoned by his own mother with Yvonne’s mother and made a promise to give him a future.

Like the women, the men were also negatively portrayed. However, more men than women were portrayed negatively. Characters negatively portrayed include Amo. He is accused of sexual harassment by two ladies. Mthunzi is a murderer. Also, Chumani is portrayed as a son who is revengeful towards his mother. He held her hostage for accusing him of murder and drugging him. In his discussion with Romeo, his evilness was further revealed “if my mom dies in captivity, it makes a whole lot problems go away” (season 18, episode 3615). Furthermore, in the analysis of character traits, Romeo is portrayed as a sneaky young man. He even tried to have his mother-in-law killed and was the mastermind behind Thembeke’s betrayal to

Mthunzi. He tells his wife, Xolile “I need Thembeke to lead Mthunzi into a trap” (season 18, episode 3567). Mr Xaba is an adulterous husband who cheated on his wife resulting to an illegitimate son. Also, Quinton is a vengeful man as he sets out on a mission to avenge the death of his ex-wife. In the process, he even held Mthunzi’s mother hostage. Kgosi is a thief in the community. Furthermore, Simo is portrayed as a gold-digger who dupes his half-brother’s mother of five million rand and later married her with an agenda to own her hotel. Romeo even calls him a “gold digger” (season 18, episode 3645). Ndumiso sleeps with Neo’s fiancée knowing quite well the two are in a relationship. On the other hand, Lerumo is a police officer who was positively portrayed, he is a good father figure to his foster child Tebello. Neo Mokeki, Lerumo’s father is a reformed gangster who is trying hard to change from his evil ways. He is kind. He takes care of Tebello, acts like a grandfather figure in his life and often buys him gifts.

In *Generations: The Legacy*, most of the female characters are negatively portrayed. The women overwhelmingly use sex to get what they want and a solution to their problems. For example, Zitha and Tshidi offer sex for information and make sure their secrets are kept; still, somebody like Fikile uses sex just for fun which is unethical. Fikile sleeps with both father (Kumkani) and his foster son (Mpho) to satisfy her sexual desires. Palesa and Thembeke are portrayed as prostitutes, something socially unaccepted to make ends meet. Tshidi sleeps with Smanga to keep her secret. Zitha also sleeps with several men like the Pharmacist and Jack’s *right-hand* man so that he can act like a spy to her and gain other favours. Apart from being sex objects, another negative trait that most of the female characters’ display is being sneaky and manipulative. They are always shown working together to uncover something or keep a secret; for example, Tshidi with the help of Sphehile who is a doctor fakes her death to avoid Jack’s wrath. Lucy is portrayed as a gangster who threatens a lot of people to get what she wants. For example, she helped Palesa commit insurance fraud. When they got caught, she threatened the insurance guy to pay out 10 million Rand which he did. Majority of the women are shown to be extremely dangerous.

However, not all the women in the soap opera *Generations: The Legacy* are negatively represented, there are characters like Maam Sonto who runs an orphanage and is dedicated to helping orphans. Also, Gog'Flo is portrayed as a matriarch in the community. She welcomes everyone into her home and takes in a lot of children like Palesa and Lerato. She even adopted Lesedi. She is a dedicated grandmother to Lucy and Cosmo and always offers good advice. However, it can be observed that the younger female characters are negatively portrayed while the older ones are positively portrayed.

Similarly, a majority of the men were also negatively portrayed. Most of the male characters like Jack Mabaso, Kumkani, Tau and Cosmo even though they have legitimate businesses are also involved in money laundering, murder and drug trafficking. These men are gangsters who are very violent towards men and women and are feared in the community. Most of their negative traits are maintained throughout the show. Similar to the women, most of the men are represented as womanizers. Kumkani is also represented as a womanizer who treats women unrespectfully. He dates multiple women at a time. Mazwi is portrayed as a cheating husband. In their session with the therapist, his wife gets angry when Mazwi says she is avoiding the real issues as he says; (season 29, episode 228):

Mazwi: "It's so typical of her to avoid the real issues"

Sphe: "And what is that? that you keep cheating on me, ask for forgiveness and do it again?" This comment seems to suggest Mazwi cannot control his sexual urge and cheats very often. Other men like Joshua Warren are portrayed as a rapist. He has raped several women and even made them sign a non-disclosure agreement so they cannot talk or report the incident.

Further analysis revealed that two male characters in their 20's Mpho and Jerah also received very negative portrayal. Mpho is portrayed as a member, leader and founder of a gang who takes the law into his own hands. He tried to revenge on Mavusana for an

attempted rape of Nontle, a 16 years old girl and to stop drug trafficking in the community. They train with guns, fight and even commit murder. Jerah is also portrayed as a very controlling irresponsible boyfriend. He impregnates Lesedi and tells her that he wants nothing to do with the baby and forces her to give the baby up for adoption. When his family asked him to join them to go to the hospital and show their support for Lesedi, he said; "I can't go with you, not after the way I treated Lesedi, she hates my guts" (season 28, episode 230). The except confirms Jerah's behaviour towards Lesedi and suggest he is aware of his immature and irresponsible behaviour.

Smanga is portrayed as sex addict. He does not mind having sex with his uncle's fiancé. He demanded sex and eventually slept with his uncle's fiancée on the eve of their wedding in exchange for his silence about her dating history. Even though a majority of the men are represented negatively, there are a few upright men like Pele who is a cop and works extremely hard to arrest criminals. Also, Mrekza is shown as a loving husband who prides in seeing his wife happy and even offered to pay off her debt which she refused.

Summary of Gender Representation in Relation to Behaviour and Character Traits

In general, in all three soap operas, men and women were portrayed in similar behaviour and character traits. They all use sex as a weapon to have what they want, both genders deal in drugs, commit murder and are manipulative.

Summarily, in *Rhythm City*, majority of the women like the men were negatively represented. The women were represented in negative roles like prostitute, drug dealer, corrupt, murderer and adulterer. Similarly, the men were represented in roles like drug dealers and murderers.

There were a few positive characters like Ma'am Blossom and her husband Bra Kop who were presented in a positive light. They were parent figures to many kids who were not theirs biologically and Mzi was a father figure to Dikeledi's baby. *Scandal!* on the other hand compared to the men, portrays the women to be more dangerous than the men. Majority of the women apart from being criminals were manipulators and liars. They hurt people and are not remorseful about it. Mthunzi is the only male that is portrayed in a

criminal light. Furthermore, like *Rhythm City*, the positive behaviour is again highlighted through the use of children and nurturing role. Yvonne and Lerumo are kind and great foster parents to Tebello and Yvonne is a great nurturer to her dying mother even though she was never a great mother to her. In summary, in *Generations: The Legacy*, both male and female characters were portrayed negatively. While the men were involved in more violent crimes like murder and physical assault, the women were represented in less violent acts that are against societal norms and values. For example, the women were involved in prostitution, infidelity, manipulation and fraud.

4.2.2 DOMINANT THEMES IDENTIFIED IN THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN AND MEN'S IMAGES IN THE SELECTED TELEVISION SOAP OPERAS

(a) Theme of Motherhood

The theme of motherhood includes characters and behaviours that develop the theme irrespective of whether the representation of the theme is good or bad.

Motherhood is one of the most dominant themes in the soap opera *Rhythm City*. Blossom is a typical representation of a good mother in the soap opera *Rhythm City*. She does not have any biological children but yet lives with many like Mapula, Kea, Ndumisani and Reneilwe. She is a foster mom who even though not rich, tries her best to provide for them. When Mapula starts dating a married man, she takes the role of a mother and confronted Mapula's boyfriend to end the relationship and Mapula is not happy about this. The excerpt below from Season 14, episode 3348 further illustrates this;

Mapula: "Ma'am Blossom, please stay out of my business please!"

Blossom: "Sorry?" (Rhetorical question)

Mapula: "You had no right to go and talk to Gift about me. No right at all!"

Blossom: "Is that so?"

Mapula: "Yeah. This has nothing to do with you"

Blossom: "When i get a phone call in the early hours of the morning to get to a hospital, then it does"

Mapula: "But you're not my mother"

Blossom: "Where do you live?"

Mapula: "here, but that"

Blossom: "Where do you live? While you are living here, you'll live by my rules. Otherwise, please do me a favour and leave"

Blossom: "We took you in, out of the kindness of our hearts...you're turning our house into a brothel...look at you, i hardly recognise you. Look what you are wearing!". This portrays her dedication and kindness as a mother figure despite not being recognised as a mother by Mapula.

Another character used to develop the theme is Dikeledi who is a teenage single mother with nowhere to go. She can barely feed herself and thus decides to sell her unborn child to Reneilwe, an artist. Reneilwe on the other hand represents someone who is desperate to be a mother. After her miscarriage, she would do anything to be a mother. She even attempts to buy a baby illegally. Reneilwe's desperation caused her to resort to force and eventually her arrest. While others will do everything to be mothers, further analysis not everyone wants to be one. Kea who is a teenage high school student would not compromise her future to be a mother recently had an abortion. Compared to Dikeledi and how her life became frustrated. Analysis shows the hardship and rejection of being a young dependent teenage mom. Dikeledi's was rejected by her father who threw her out of the house when she got pregnant. She endured physical abuse from her boyfriend and began begging for food and shelter for herself and her child.

Another type of mother represented is the biological mother. Gail is also portrayed as a caring mother to her biological child and genuinely worried when her child is sick. However, David, the child's father refuse to see it as an emergency and is hesitant despite Gail's plea to get medication. "I am asking you to get medication for our sick child. Please!" (Season 13, episode

3275). This shows women are more worried about children's wellbeing.

Summarily, analysis of the motherhood theme in *Rhythm City* reveals ma'am Blossom as a caring and kind mother, she represents the 'good mother'. While she is blessed to have kids in her life even though they are not biologically hers, Reneilwe is not so lucky and will do anything to have a child. While Reneilwe does not have a child even though she can afford, Dikeledi is blessed with a child but cannot afford to take care of her child. Even though poor, she is another representation of a 'good mother' who went through a lot to have her child in her life. Also, a character like Kea who is not ready to be a mom commits abortion.

Motherhood is also a recurring theme in *Scandal!*. Different dynamics of motherhood are portrayed. The first is foster mother. In this category, there is Yvonne who finds herself with a little boy of about eleven that was abandoned by his mother in her own mother's house. After her mother dies, she, together with her boyfriend Lerumo foster him. She promised to give him the best life and even said this to Boniswa about Tebello "i made a promise to the child, i promised him a future and i'm going to deliver on that promise" (Season 18, episode 3537). She tries to give him her best and even sends him to an expensive private school and always buys him gifts. Next, category are mothers who abandoned their children. Like Tebello's mother, Yvonne was also neglected by her mother. Her mother was not there for her and instead concentrated on prostituting herself so much so that Yvonne ran away from home at the age of 16 years. She is not happy about her childhood as she tells Timothy how bad her mother was "she was bad; she was not a good mother" (season 17, episode 3469). Also, she has not seen or heard from her mom in twenty years and is still very bitter with her mother, however, after hearing that her mom is sick, she reunited with her. Her mother apologised on her death bed and she forgave her. However, even though Yvonne's mother (ma'am Betty) was not a good mother to her, she was a good mother to her foster child Tebello. It is also revealed that Yvonne is a mother to an adult daughter who is about to get married. However, the child is never shown.

It was also revealed Yvonne does not have a good relationship with her daughter as she does not invite her to her wedding. Like ma'am Betty, Boniswa is also portrayed as a bad mother.

She drugs her son, lies to him about his paternity and blames him for his father's death. Gloria is another character portrayed as a mother to a son, Kgosi who is stealing from the community. She is a divorced woman who expresses disappointment in her son. She is portrayed as a good mother who sacrifices a lot to provide for her son. Still, Kgosi resort to stealing and eventually went to jail. She expresses her disappointment in the following excerpt;

"Kgosi as poor as we were, you've never gone without anything. I've gone into debts many times for you and Gontse. You've never for once gone to bed on an empty stomach" (season 17, episode 3500).

Also, another form of motherhood portrayed in *Scandal!* is the single mother. Dintle and Seipati are portrayed as single mothers. The single mother represents hardship and struggles. Dintle is a hustler who tries different things like waitressing to take care of herself and her daughter. Like Dintle, Seipati is a single mother who abandoned her child with ma'am Betty to keep him safe from an abusive boyfriend. When she returned after ma'am Betty's death, she explained to the social worker why she abandoned her child.

Social worker: "Seipati you abandoned your child".

Seipati: "My ex-boyfriend, he was a terrible man, he followed us and caught us, he threatened to do something to Tibi if I didn't go back to him" (season 18, episode 3636).

This excerpt shows the struggle and abuse unmarried single parents go through.

Even though most of the women are portrayed as desperate to be mothers, not all women actually want to be mothers and challenge the patriarchal concept of women as mothers. For example, Phindile, the first wife of Bhekumuzi did not want to have children and

secretly took contraceptives without her husband's knowledge. This is portrayed in season 18 episode 3624 in their argument below;

Bhekumuzi (husband): "Phindile is my first wife!"

Mathayile (2nd wife): "Who never gave you children"

Husband: "Because you used muthi on her"

Phindile (1st wife): "I didn't want to have children...I was using contraceptive" (the husband gets a heart attack).

Furthermore, in *Generations: The Legacy*, there is a significant portrayal of the motherhood theme. Several characters were portrayed as mothers, some biological and others adopted and yet others that just take up the role of being mothers to those that needed one in their life.

The first identified category is biological mothers. Lesedi, a young girl who just got her matric is portrayed as a teenage mother who is struggling financially to meet her child's needs. Also, she is finding it hard to cope with motherhood. She is also pressured by the baby's father Jerah, to give up the baby for adoption or give the baby to his rich paternal family. His family propose to take the child from Lesedi and give her a better life as her only option. After insisting on keeping the child, she finally hands the child over to Jerah's family to fight for a better life for herself.

Below are some of Lesedi's excerpts;

Lesedi to Jerah: "oh yes. Go ahead. That's what you know-dodging your responsibilities" (season 28, episode 230)

Lesedi to Lucy "no one said being a mother is easy, i didn't think it would be this hard. I am permanently exhausted and there's so much to do. I wish that there was a manual that explained everything" (season 29, episode 23). This shows she is finding being a mother very challenging.

Lesedi in an interview; “The fact that i’m a teen mom struggling to feed the child I brought into the world; Nappies are expensive” (Season 29, episode 23). Lesedi cannot afford to take care of her baby.

Palesa’s mom is portrayed as the “*lawnmower*” mom. This is the type of mother that will remove any challenges, struggles and discomfort for her child. Even though she is sick and has nothing, she still wants to keep something for her daughters before she dies. Even though she commits insurance fraud, her role as a desperate and caring mother is more prominent. She does not want her children to suffer when she is gone. She is suffering from a stage 4 cancer and hides the fact that she is dying to the insurance staff. She takes out a life insurance policy for one million to secure their future. They later benefitted from this after her death.

Palesa’s mom to insurance company over the phone: “No, I don’t need funeral policy, I need life insurance” (season 29, episode 125)

Palesa’s mom with insurance man: “so if I die my girls will get all the money?” (Season 29, episode 125)

Fikile is also portrayed as a desperate divorced mother who does not have custody of her children who live with their father. All she wants is to see her kids. She confronts her ex-husband

Ben who would not let her see the kids as illustrated below; (season 29, episode 13)

Fikile: “Ben, I’m not asking you to take me back. i want to see my kids!”.

Ben: “I won’t let my kids associate with a criminal. If you have any self-respect left, you’ll stop phoning me; otherwise, I’ll put lawyers on you”. This finding is strange and challenges the gender role of the mother who always gets custody of her children after divorce.

Moreso, Ayanda Majola is being portrayed as a very protective, yet an absent career mother. She has a 16 years old Nontle, who is head strong. She is portrayed as a protective mother running away with her daughter to keep her safe from her father. This is illustrated in the following extract; “he never forgave me for leaving him and taking his

daughter, so if Aliko tells him where I am, he'll kill me" (season 28, episode 259). However, she is a career mom and is not very present as her daughter complains to her; "you're always working even when you are home i hardly see you" (season 29, episode 13).

The next form of motherhood represented is adoption and caregiver mom. Lesedi is an orphan who grew up in an orphanage. She was later adopted by Gog'Flo, a grandmother in her 70's.

Gog'Flo is portrayed as a kind hearted woman who later welcomes other kids into her home like Lerato and Palesa. Gog'Flo is the biological grandmother to Lucy and Thembinkosi (also known as Cosmos) Diale. She is the mother figure in their lives and makes sure they are always fine even though they are adults. She even organises a party when Cosmo is made the brand ambassador of a Cologne for men and often goes to the orphanage to volunteer and donate gifts. Below are some excerpts from her to Lesedi when she felt she was being a bad mother to her son for wanting to go back to school; (season 29, episode 125):

Lesedi: "Gogo, I'm I a bad mother for being excited about this?"

Gog'Flo: "No my baby, you are not a bad mother, you are doing it so you can have a good future"

Gog'Flo to Cosmo: "Where are you? Breakfast is ready"

Like Gog'Flo, Tshidi is also a mother who adopted Mpho from the orphanage together with her then husband, kumkani. Also, she was once pregnant but had a stillborn.

Other characters portrayed as mothers but with less developed plots include Zondiwe who is the mother of Tshidi and Tau, two adult children, Tshidi confides in her mom a lot. Sphe is the mother of one and Lucy is like a mother to Mbali from the orphanage. Mbali moved in with her during the measles outbreak at the orphanage.

Summary of Motherhood Theme

The motherhood theme is realised in all the three soap operas. The three soap operas highlighted different dynamics of motherhood that was used to further develop the theme. In *Rhythm City*, motherhood is highlighted through fostering, teenage mom, miscarriage, biological mothers, infertility, abortion and women that are desperate to be mothers. Summarily, in *Scandal!*, There is a representation of a 'good' as well as a 'bad' mother, a single mother, a mother who abandoned her child to keep him safe, a foster mother and a woman who does not want to be a mother yet and uses contraceptives.

(b) Theme of Fatherhood

The theme of fatherhood is highlighted in all three soap operas in different ways. In *Rhythm*

City, Hammer is the biological father to Dikeledi's son. However, he is the representation of a "bad" father. He receives money from Reneilwe in exchange for his son and eventually kills his son by throwing him off a roof. Mzi is portrayed as a father figure to Dikeledi's baby. Also, Kop plays the same role as Mzi to Reneilwe, Mapula, Kea and her brother who are not his biological children. Mzi and Kop on the other hand are a representation of "good" fathers.

In *Scandal!*, the foster father is highlighted through Lerumo's character. He plays the role of a "good" father to Tebello. He lives with him in his hotel suit. He takes him to school every day and a provider. However, there is also a representation of a "bad" father. Romeo only got to know his father when he was already in the university. His father only came briefly into his life and left again. When he discovered he had a brother (his father's son), Simo, they both sat and discussed how horrible of a father he was in the excerpt below; (season 18, episode 3624):

Romeo: "That pig, he only came into my life to extort money from us...he was just a sperm donor"

Simo: "He was never a father to me"

Also, Chumani only found out later in life that the man he knew as his father was not actually his father, he was a product of adultery. His mother, Boniswa kept it a secret from him his whole life and only found out after his mother killed his biological father when he threatened to tell Chumani the truth. Chumani was made to believe that he committed the murder, so he helped to dispose of his father's body.

In *Generations: The Legacy*, the trend of foster parent (father) still continues. Kumkani is the foster father to Mpho. Jerah is Banele's biological father and like Hammer (in Rhythm City), he is not a committed one. He is very reluctant to have the child in his life and proposes adoption. Also, like Jerah, Minister Nkaba is another representation of a "bad" father. He controls his daughters' love life and exploits the father daughter relationship to his advantage. This is illustrated in the excerpt below (Season 29, episode 211);

Minister Nkaba (father): "Have you and Jack sealed the deal?"

Refilwe: "Your deal not mine". Moments later, she is shown half-naked with Jack in bed and again later she met her father in a restaurant. Their conversation below further portrays the strained father/daughter relationship;

Father: "Thembi says she saw you at the theatre this weekend"

Refilwe: "Yes, Jack took me to see a show"

Father: "I hope that wasn't all you did"

Refilwe: "I spent the weekend with him, that should make you happy"

Father: "I knew you wouldn't let me down my girl (Refilwe frowns), what now? I just want to make sure everything goes well, that you and Jack are connecting" Refilwe: "Connect?! Is that what you are calling it now?"

Father: "Why are you being like this? You like Jack don't you?"

Refilwe "I enjoy his company"

Father: "And he treats you well?"

Refilwe: "Yes"

Father: "So what's the problem?"

Refilwe: "Nothing, there's no problem, I slept with him just like you asked me to"

Father: "Keep your voice down"

Refilwe: "why, it's what you wanted, isn't it? We've sealed the deal". The excerpt shows he is an irresponsible father.

Furthermore, Tau just discovered he is the biological father to Nontle and is finding it very hard to cope as a father as he tells his sister, Tshidi;

Tau: "I forgot how much hard it is to raise a child"

Tshidi: "I thought you and Nontle were getting along"

Tau: "We are...were getting along but now I don't know...it's like shes trying deliberately to defy me"

Tshidi: "She's a teenager, what do you expect?"

Tau: "I thought you'd say something that would help me".

Jack Mabaso is presented as a father to a child who was a still-born, however, he still does his traditional rituals to the dead child.

Summary of Fatherhood Theme

The theme of fatherhood is highlighted in all three soap operas. There is a representation of "good" and "bad" fathers. The most common types of father figure that runs throughout the soap operas are foster fathers and caregivers. These are men who play the role of father to kids that are not biologically theirs. This includes men like Mzi and Kop from *Rhythm City*, Lerumo from *Scandal!* and Kumkani and Tau from *Generations: The Legacy*. After taking care of his daughter for some time without knowing he was the biological father, Tau was shocked when he eventually found out. Furthermore, there are some irresponsible fathers like Hammer from *Rhythm City* who tried selling his son to Reneilwe. Also, Romeo from *Scandal!* first met his father when he was in the university. In *Generations: The Legacy*, another irresponsible father Jerah, asked Lesedi to give their son up for adoption. Still in *Generations: The Legacy*, Minister Nkaba was also portrayed as a bad father who sends out his daughter to have sex with

men in return for favours. Also, some of the men are struggling to fulfil that father role in their children's life. In *Scandal!*, Chumani learnt the man he had known as uncle all his life was in fact his biological father only when he was dead. In summary, the types of fathers identified in this study include foster/caregivers, irresponsible fathers, and fathers who had no idea they had children.

c) Theme of Family

All three soap operas centre around family. *Rhythm City* is all about family. The main families represented in *Rhythm City* include Genaro's, a blended family, also known as step family (includes man and woman plus children from previous relationships) which includes David, his daughter Pearl from a previous relationship and his girlfriend Gail and their son. This family is involved in a lot of crimes and despite this, they are still very united. Also, there is the Khuse family, a nuclear also known as traditional family, (a family made up of mother, father and children) made up of Bra Kop, his wife Blossom and foster children Reneilwe, Mapula, Kea and Lefa. Even though most of the members of this family are not biologically related, they have love for each other and despite their conflicts, they still manage to stay together. Lastly, another family that manages to stay united despite their ups and downs is the Ngobese family, another nuclear family, made up of Khulekani and his wife Nandi and their daughter Zintle. Despite Khulekani's drug dealing and Nandi's adultery which almost led to a divorce, they still decided to stay married for the sake of their family. Overall, the main families represented in *Rhythm City* are the Genaro's, Khuses' and the Ngobeses'.

Furthermore, the soap opera *Scandal!*, is also about family and different types of families are represented. The main families represented are the Ngemas, a nuclear family which include Mr Ngema, his wife Zinzile, their two daughters and sister/sister-in-law, the Langas, a single parent family (a family with either a man or woman with his/her children) is made up of a widow

Boniswa, her daughter and son. The Ngemas are poor while the Langas are a wealthy family.

However, the Langas are more of a broken family that is characterised by a lot of lies and secrets. Apart from these two, there are other small families like the Legaes', an extended family (two or more relatives related either by blood or marriage and may include aunts, uncles etc) and the Mambas', a blended family. The Legae family is made up of a divorced woman, Gloria, her son Nkosi, her boyfriend, Caiphus, her ex-son-in-law and her grandchild while the Mambas are made up of Mr Mamba, his much younger wife, Violetta and his daughter from a previous marriage.

The soap opera *Generations: The Legacy* is also based on family life and its different dynamics.

The soap opera focuses on the Morokas', the Diales', Mogales', Mabasos' and Phakades'. These families are intertwined together either through marriage, a close friendship or relationship. The soap opera is centred on these families and any new character is often linked with one of these families. The Morokas are an extended family and the most influential family in the soap opera. They are made up of Mazwi, his wife Sphe, his cousin Smanga, grand uncle Kabisi and his wife Tshidi and grandson Jerah. Also, Tshidi and Sphe are linked to the Morokas' by marriage to Kabisi and Mazwi respectively. The Morokas own the biggest successful advertising company in the show and take pride in their legacy. They are family oriented and look out for each other. They will do whatever it takes to protect one of their own and guarantee them a bright future. For example, when Jerah's son got missing, the family is very worried and together try to find the missing baby. Also, after Jerah refused to send his child to family in Rustenburg, his great uncle gets angry and began treating him as a non-family member. However, after struggling financially and returning to his family, he is welcomed. He later accepts to hand the child for adoption to a family member.

Jerah to uncle Kabisi: "Lesedi and I have been talking, we want back in with the family...I want the family involved in my child's life". (Season 29, episode 101). He is taking back by the family. This shows the importance of family.

Another family that plays a great role is the Diales, a grand parent family. The Diales include

Gog'Flo, her grandchildren Lucy and his brother Cosmo and her adopted grand daughter Lesedi. Lucy is married to Mrekza and Cosmo is married to Mei. Also, they are family oriented and confide in each other. Unlike the Morokas who are legitimate business people, they are gangsters. Cosmo is a criminal, involved in a lot of illegal dealings with Jack Mabaso, Tau Mogale and Kumkani Phakade who are notorious gangsters. Lucy, like her brother Cosmo is wayward and has been in and out of jail. She owns and runs a shebeen. However, their grandmother Gog'Flo is the opposite and a very compassionate woman. She is family oriented and a matriarch to the community. Also, she offers advices and always gives a listening ear to other people's problems. Lesedi, the adopted child is a single mother who is trying hard to turn her life around.

The next family identified in the analysis is the Phakade family, a small nuclear family which includes Kumkani, his wife (who soon became his ex-wife) Tshidi and their adopted son Mpho. Kumkani is the head of the Phakade family and a notorious gangster. Like his father, Mpho is a founder of a dangerous gang. Like the Phakades, the Mabasos' are another small but influential family in the soap opera *Generations; The Legacy*. Jack Mabaso is the head of the clan; he is the father of Sphe and has a history with Tshidi who was pregnant for him. He is in a relationship with Zitha Langa. This family is portrayed as a very disconnected single parent family and are not very close. He is a notorious gangster and deals with those that cross him accordingly. He is a merciless man who hardly smiles.

The next influential family is the Mogales which include Tau and Tshidi who are siblings and their mother Zondiwe. Mpho is an adopted son of Tshidi who was once married to Kumkani Phakade. The Mogales are in between and neither gangster or righteous. They are more like gangsters in suits. Their roles as gangsters are not very evident but are very much involved in illegal dealings. Tau, who is a close friend to Kumkani Phakade is influenced by his ways, though not a true gangster, he is as bad. Tshidi is more of a cunning and sneaky girl. She knows what to do to get what she wants even if it is illegal.

She even faked her own death and uses sex a lot as her biggest weapon. Their mother Zondiwe is also very cunning. The mother/daughter relationship between Tshidi and her mother is very close. She confides in her mother regarding all her plans whether good or bad. Her mother is supportive and her secret keeper’.

Summary of Family Theme

There are different family dynamics that are highlighted in all the three soap operas. These includes, the nuclear, the blended, extended and single parent family. In *Rhythm City*, three main families were identified, these are the Genaros’ a blended family, the Khuses’ another blended family and the Ngobese, a nuclear family. The Genaro family is headed by David Genaro who is a murderer and a gangster and often puts his entire family in danger. Similarly, the Ngobese family headed by Khulekani Ngobese is a gangster, a drug dealer and an adulterer. These two families are involved in illegal dealings and are rich. Unlike the former families, the Khuses are poor and very humble. They are kind and foster many children. In

Scandal! There are four main families represented, the Ngemas’ a nuclear family, Legaes’ a blended family, The Langas’ a single parent family and the Mambas’ a blended family. The Ngemas and the Legae are two poor families that try to make ends meet while the Langas and the Mambas are two rich families. They are characterised by a lot of secrets and murders. There are five main families in the soap opera *Generations: The Legacy*, the Morokas’, The Diales’,

The Phakades’, the Mabasos’ and the Mogales’. The families are influential in different ways.

The next family is the Diales that are involved in a lot of illegal activities like fraud and drugs. Like the Diales, the Phakades and Mabaso are also involved in illegal activities like drug trafficking, money laundering, fraud and murder. The last family identified is the Mogales; they are between good and evil, they perform illegal activities in a more subtle way.

(c) Theme of Marriage

The analysis shows that marriage as a theme is represented in all three soap operas. In *Rhythm City*, old marriage couples as well as newlyweds are represented. Old couples include Bra Kop and Blossom, Nandi and Khulekani. For the newlyweds, Reneilwe and Mzi perform their marriage rituals. Furthermore, the theme is taken a step further in the representation of marriage through fraud. Reneilwe is portrayed as a woman desperate to be married. Before getting married to Mzi, she attempted to marry a foreign national named Mark who only wants to obtain a permanent stay in the country. She gave up the idea when the public learnt about it and gets married to Mzi. She is happy and the excerpt below illustrates that:

Reneilwe to Mzi: "I'm just glad people won't mock me now, like they did with my issue around

Mark. Like I'm actually getting married...For real" (season 13, episode 3275). This suggests society mocks and put a lot of pressure on single women. She was desperate and just wanted to be a wife, despite not being romantically connected to Mark.

In *Scandal!*, newlyweds include Xolile and Romeo and Grace and Simo. These two couples after a romantic relationship got married. However, not all the couples are in a genuine relationship. While Xolile and Romeo have a genuine marriage, the same cannot be said for Violetta and Mamba and Grace and Simo and some other married couples whose marriage was identified as one of convenience. Violetta is married to Mamba and still dating Simo who use to be her boyfriend even before marriage. They plan to steal Mamba's money and leave the country together. Similarly, Simo is portrayed as a gold digger, who together with his girlfriend, Violetta plan for him to get into a relationship with Grace and extort money from her to pay off his debt of R5 million. Even after getting the money from Grace, he still continues with his marriage with Grace to fulfil a new agenda of owning her hotel. Below is an excerpt of Violetta and Simo's conversation which shows Simo's marriage to Grace is a marriage of convenience.

(season 18 episode 3640)

Violetta: "Simo, how did it go, did she fall for it"

Simo: "Grace Medupe has agreed to invest her money in my company"

Violetta "Now we just have to transfer the money into mamba's account and then we are free"

Simo: "I refused the offer, because if i take it, she will suspect i want her for the money"

Violetta: "Simo, we are here for the money, that's the whole point, just take the money and run"

Simo: "What if Grace finds out the company is fake and calls the cops"

Still in *Scandal!*, we learn Yvonne has been married twice and both husbands were deceased.

When Tebello who lives with Yvonne's mother ask her how she got rich, she had this to say

"she married well, she got married twice, two very rich men" (season 17, episode 3469).

There are some polygamous marriages represented in *Scandal!*. These are characters with two or more wives whether deceased or not. In *Scandal!* polygamy is represented in two instances. First, Phindile is represented as the first wife in her marriage while Mathanyile is the second wife, both married to Bhekumuzi. Caiphus sees the way Bhekumuzi is struggling with his two wives and remarks "two wives, having one is a stress, imagine two?" (Season 18, episode 3624). This highlights the stress in polygamy. Secondly, Yvonne is represented as a co-wife to Boniswa. Their husband is deceased and they have to share the dividends from their husband's company, Thebelanga. Yvonne comes in from time to time to ask Boniswa for her dividends; (season 18, episode 3537).

Boniswa (1st wife): "So why are you here?"

Yvonne (2nd wife): "I want my dividends pay-out". Both wives are represented as equals.

In *Generations: The Legacy*, married couples include Cosmo and Mei, Lucy and Mrekza, Tshidi and Kabisi, Mazwi and Sphe. Tshidi and Kabisi are newlyweds. Ironically, a couple Cosmo and Mei are portrayed as a married couple but not romantically involved, hence a representation of fraud or fake marriage which is similar to what is portrayed in *Rhythm City* between Reneilwe and Mark. He informs Hlubi that he just wants to help her get a permanent residence. Cosmo, is a South Africa who is married to Mei, a Chinese girl. Cosmo tells Hlubi;

Cosmo: "Mei and I is a marriage of convenience"

Hlubi: "As in an arranged marriage?"

Cosmo: "Yes, it's something like that, Mei is from China, so she needed papers to stay in the country" (season 29, episode 106)

Hlubi warns him "if you get caught, you could sit for like, I don't know...a long time, that's fraud" (Season 19, episode 106). This shows such a marriage is illegal and a criminal offence.

Summary of Marriage Theme

The theme of marriage can be summarised as follows; old married couples as well as newlyweds were represented in all three soap operas. In *Rhythm City*, old married couples include

Bra Kop and Ma'am Blossom, Nandi and Khulekani while newly weds are Mzi and Reneilwe. In *Scandal!*, old married are Violetta and Mamba while newly-weds include Grace and Simo and Xolile and Romeo. In *Generations: The Legacy*, old married couples include Sphe and Mazwi and Lucy and Mrekza while newly-weds are Tshidi and Kabisi. Another type of marriage found only in *Scandal!* is polygamous marriage. This include Phindile and Mathanyile who were both married to one man and Yvonne and Boniswa who were wives to the late Mr Langa. Furthermore, another form of marriage portrayed was fraudulent marriage which was found in all three soap operas. This includes couples that attempted or got married for other reasons. This includes Reneilwe from *Rhythm City* who tried to marry Mark so that he can obtain a permanent stay in the country. Similar, In *Generations: The Legacy*, Mei and Cosmo got married for the same reason as the

former couple. Simo from *Scandal!* even though not in love with Grace, married her with the aim of duping her of her hotel. Moreso, another subtheme is remarriage, Yvonne from *Scandal!* has been married twice.

(e) Theme of Love and Romance

This refers to couples that are not married but romantically involved. From the analysis, heterosexual, gay and lesbian relationships were identified. Suffocate and Kgomotso are in a romantic relationship. Again, Suffocate is also romantically linked to Nandi. The queers in a relationship hardly find fellow gays or lesbians to enter a relationship with. Khulekani is a married heterosexual man who is in a sexual relationship with Jamaica, a gay guy. Similarly, Zintle who is a lesbian is in a brief romantic relationship with Kea, a heterosexual female. Furthermore, Mapula is portrayed as a young university student in a relationship with Gift who is married. The excerpt below by Mapula suggests women dress up mainly for male attraction;

“Friends lets go to Sandton, plus I need to get something sexy to wear for Gift” (season 14, episode 3351).

In *Scandal!* one of the most prominent themes is love and romance. This theme has a lot of dynamics, while some couples are truly involved in a romantic relationship, others are just faking it and have an agenda. Analysis reveals that there is both a portrayal of heterosexual and gay relationships. Older as well as younger characters were portrayed in a romantic relationship. This includes Layla and Wesley and Hlengiwe and Amo who are in a genuine romantic relationship. However, the same cannot be said for Sheila and Neo and Thembeke and Mthunzi. These relationships have an agenda. Sheila and Neo are portrayed in an unreciprocated relationship. Sheila is portrayed as a gold digger. She cheats on Neo with Ndumiso. Like the former, Thembeke and Mthunzi’s relationship also has an agenda. They initially got together to get revenge on the Langas’ for Mthunzi and for Thembeke to win back her ex-husband’s love. Mthunzi falls in love with Thembeke, not knowing Thembeke is now out to destroy him. Thembeke, together with the Langas’ plan to reap him off all his wealth and return it to the Langas’ whom he stole from.

Thembeke is still very much in love with her exhusband Quinton. She promised Mthunzi to help him carry out his revenge if he helped her win Quinton back. She even took a bullet for Quinton and ended up dead. Some excerpts from Thembeke shows her desperation to win her ex-husband back;

“I’ll help you punish Thebelanga if you will help me win Quinton back” (Season 17, episode 3496).

Thembeke to Mthunzi: “If anyone has to die or shot because of your anger, it’s me. It’s me, please spare Quinton” (season 18, episode 3581). This shows she is willing to die for Quinton.

Thembeke to Mthunzi: “You will never experience love like ours, never!” (Season 18, episode 3581). This suggests that even though they are divorced, they still share a strong bond

Violetta and Simo are portrayed in a romantic relationship even though they are both married. Their love is very much reciprocated. They plan for Simo to marry Grace, divorce her and get a 50% settlement so they can run off together. Yvonne and Lerumo is another couple that is romantically involved. They even adopt a child, Tebello. Also, gay relationship is also represented. Chumani and Tsepo are two gay men involved in a relationship ven though it did not last. The except illustrates this; “Its just that..., hard to keep my hands off you, you know” (season 17, episode 3401).

Similarly, love and romance is one of the most prominent themes in the soap opera *Generations: The Legacy*. There are lots of romantic relationships represented. Those in romantic relationships include; Tau and Ayanda, Pele and Palesa, Mpho and Lerato, Jack and Zitha, Smanga and Bulelwa. Most of these relationships are characterised by infidelity, for example, Kumkani is romantically linked to other women like Fikile, Palesa and later dates Zitha. Further analysis of the soap opera *Generations: The Legacy* observed that many of the characters are historically known to have been romantically involved. Also, Fikile has dated Mpho and Kumkani. Mazwi is married to Sphe. Sphe was

once in an adulterous relationship with Kumkani. Kumkani's ex-wife Tshidi has also been romantically involved with other men like

Smanga and Jack Mabaso and is now married to Smanga's uncle, Kabisi. Zitha has dated Jack Mabaso and Kumkani.

Summary of Love and Romance Theme

In summary, all three soap operas are characterised by love and romance with different couples having different reasons for getting into a relationship. Heterosexual as well as gay couples were represented in two of the soap operas, that is *Rhythm City* and *Scandal!*. Some couples are presented as genuinely in love with their romantic partners while some just want to catch fun or gain favours. Also, findings revealed that there are some married people involved in a romantic relationship with people other than their partners. Married people committing adultery include Khulekani, Nandi, Sphe, Mazwi, Simo, Violetta and Gift. Another type of romance portrayed are those who are romantically involved with people to gain favours. This includes Tshidi who offers sex to keep her secret and Zitha who sleeps with Kumkani in order to hurt her ex-boyfriend. Furthermore, there are people presented who are romantically involved with multiple partners at the same time. This includes Kumkani who is involved with Palesa and Fikile, Palesa who prostitutes herself with several men like ministers, renowned politicians and Kumkani.

(f) Theme of Superstition

From the analysis, it is observed that there are two 'sangomas', represented in *Rhythm City*. Ziyanda is portrayed as a traditional doctor who sees the past, spirits and the future. To demonstrate the belief of *sangomas* and how they have supernatural powers, in an episode, Ziyanda was accurate when she revealed to Lerato that she can see in the spirit how she murdered Bongzi Diamond. She threatened to report to the police if Lerato does not hand over her radio station to her. The guilty Lerato leaves and Ziyanda became CEO of the station. She always tries to warn people of what she sees in the spirit. There is hierarchy in spiritual leaders. Ziyanda has a spiritual mentor whom she consults when she is worried. For a period of time, Ziyanda had the spirit of the villain David Genaro

living in her. After acting out in public several times, she eventually goes to her spiritual mentor to cleanse her; (season 14, episode 3341).

Ziyanda: "I just want this spirit to go away"

Spiritual mentor: "This is your body; don't let this man rule over you, you must conquer him.

Don't let him, it'll wear you out. An evil spirit is scared of medicine, prayer and petition. Evil spirits are scared of people like you and me who work in the light, like our great ancestors. I'll cleanse you" A ritual is then performed. No male sangomas were represented.

Rituals and spirits are another theme that run throughout the soap opera *Scandal!*. In the soap opera, the characters believe in ancestors, spirits and performing rituals. When Chumani learns that his paternity has been a lie all along, he believes Mr Xaba's wife must give him her blessings in order to perform a ritual and become part of their family. When she refused, her daughter

Yanga is not happy and insists; (Season 18, episode 3624)

Yanga: "Just give him your blessing for the rituals to go on"

Yanga's mom: "Over my dead body".

Also, at Xolile's wedding, this theme is further highlighted when Chumani sees his late father's

(Mr Xaba) ghost telling him "you are not a Langa, you don't belong here" (season 17, episode 3486).

Furthermore, still on rituals in *Scandal!*, when Gloria learns that Phindile's husband suffered a heart attack at Chillax, she recalls the same thing happened at Chillax with Neo when he learnt Sheila was cheating on him. She thus advises Ndumiso who is the owner of Chillax to perform a ritual; "you should slaughter a goat or something, this place

is clearly cursed” (season 18, episode 3624). This suggests elderly people are known to give blessings and rituals are performed to wade off badluck.

Moreso, a few characters are portrayed to see and feel spirits in the soap opera *Scandal!*. Phindile’s ex-husband even claims he gets instruction from the ancestor. In spite of Phindile’s doubts, things happen exactly as has been said, again showing the belief and supernatural powers of the ancestors. An excerpt from Phindile’s ex-husband is shown below;

“The Cele ancestors want you to come back, they also sent me a sign, my winning lottery numbers, they were your date of birth, if you don’t give the ancestors what they want, bad luck will strike” (season 18, episode 3615). Her husband dies when she refuses to return. Also, there are few characters portrayed that claim to see and feel spirits, Boniswa, Yanga and

Chumani. Boniswa sees Mr Xaba’s ghost when she was drugged and hallucinating by Chumani who wanted his mother to feel the same thing he has felt for a long time while his mother was drugging him. She hysterically narrates what she saw; (season 18, episode 3615). The excerpt below shows the belief and fear of spirits.

Chumani: “What did you see”.

Boniswa: “you know what i saw”.

Chumani: “I want to hear you say it”.

Boniswa: “I saw your father”.

Moreover, Yanga is portrayed as a character with a spiritual eye who can sense when there are spirits around. She moves to Johannesburg from Bisho after the death of her father to understand what really happened. She requested to stay in the hotel room where her father lived shortly before his death and could feel his spirit. Also, she visited Thebelanga where her father had been to talk to Chumani, she makes the following remark; “my father was in this office, i can feel it” (season 17, episode 3454).

Also, the belief in *muthi* (traditional medicine prescribed by traditional healers use for both good and evil) and its the power is introduced when Phindi's ex-husband accuses the second wife for using *muthi* on Phindi which caused her infertility. However, Phindile later explained that she took contraceptives. This shows that people always attribute something bad that happens to *muthi*.

Furthermore, analysis suggests the belief in ancestors and spirits and the importance of rituals. In *Generations: The Legacy*, Jack Mabaso performs a ritual for his dead son. He dug the grave of his son who was buried in a strange land. he was not happy and dug up the grave so that he could be buried on the ancestral family burial ground. The excerpt below illustrates this;

"We've finally arrived nephew. This is your father's house Kefentse Sibusisi Mabaso, welcome to your father's house, Mtungwa, Mbulazi Mabaso, Nkoyeni, we've brought the spirit of your lost grandson Kefentse Sibusiso Mabaso...the child is with the ancestors now" an uncle recites (season 28, episode 177).

Another excerpt illustrates this: "Son go in peace, when the time is right, we'll perform a ceremony to introduce you to the ancestors. Goodbye" (season 29, episode 177). This again illustrates the belief and power of rituals and life after death.

Summary of Superstition Theme

In summary, all three soap operas are characterised by rituals, spirits and ghosts. This is elaborated with the portrayal of *Sangomas* in *Rhythm City*. *Sangomas* claim to see the past, the future and spirits. They are taken seriously and people often believe what they say. Superstition is further highlighted in *Scandal!* where there are suggestions of several rituals that needed to be performed for particular problems. First, Gloria suggested that Ndumiso should perform a ritual when people kept getting heart attacks in his business place. Also, Chumani begs his late biological father's wife to give him her blessings to perform rituals so that he can be accepted into the family. Also, the theme of superstition

is further developed when Boniswa and Chumani see the ghost of the late Mr Xaba. Yanga is portrayed as a girl with a spiritual eye who was able to feel his father's spirit in the last places he visited before he died. In *Generations: The Legacy*, Jack dug up his son's grave and took his remains to another site where his ancestors were buried and performed a ritual to introduce his son to the ancestors. To further summarise, the theme of superstition was developed with the use of *Sangomas*, seeing of ghosts, ritual performance and spiritual eyes.

(g)

Theme of Crime

Crime is another most represented theme in all the three soap operas;

- **Murder**

The sub-theme of murder is portrayed in all the three soap operas. In *Rhythm City*, both male and female characters like Suffocate, Lerato, Hammer, David and Khulekani are portrayed as murderers. Suffocate and Khulekani killed David Genaro to revenge the death of their brother and son respectively. Also, Khulekani who attempted to kill suffocate and mistakenly kills

Suffocate's girlfriend. Also, Hammer kills his own son by throwing him from the roof of his house to the ground. It was also revealed by Ziyanda, a *sangoma* (traditional healer) that Lerato murdered Bongzi Diamond, which turned out to be true. She even gave up her position as a radio station manager to Ziyanda to keep her silent.

Both male and female murderers were portrayed in *Scandal!* This includes; Mthunzi, Thembeke and Boniswa. Mthunzi felt betrayed by Thembeke who seduced him just to get information and take his money and eventually murdered her. We also learn that Thembeke was once accused of murder and she even points it out in her conversation with Mthunzi.

Thembeke: "you want me to make a person forget that I was accused of murder?"

Mthunzi: “Boniswa is also a killer” (season 17, episode 3496).

Boniswa is another character who commits murder. She committed adultery with a married man, Mr Xaba and had a son, Chumani. In order to keep Mr Xaba away and keep the paternity of her son a secret, she kills him and disposed of his body.

Similarly, in *Generations: The Legacy*, both male and female characters are portrayed as murderers. The pharmacist is killed by Zitha Langa and one of Mpho’s gang members got killed in a gang fight. Also, Aliko is also a fraudulent pastor got beaten, shot and murdered.

- **Fraud**

In *Rhythm City*, Reneilwe attempts to carry out a fraudulent marriage which is against the law with a guy so that he could have a permanent permit to stay in South Africa. She was however exposed by the media and had to put everything on hold.

In *Generations: The Legacy*, Palesa, her mom and Lucy are linked to an insurance fraud. Palesa’s mom who is dying of cancer and knows it takes an insurance to secure a future for her children and pretends she is healthy. She takes out a life insurance. When she eventually dies, Lucy helped Palesa threatens the insurance staff to pay out or get killed. Also, Lucy suggests that they should cremate the remains of Palesa’s mom to cover the crime and prevent an autopsy; “we should cremate her...if we cremate her, all evidence will be destroyed” (season 29, episode 136). They are eventually paid the sum of 1 million rand. Cosmo committed fraud in his marriage with Mei. They got married but not being romantically involved solely for a permanent residence permit.

- Stealing**

In *Scandal!*, stealing is another crime that is being portrayed. Kgosi and his friend are stealing from the community. Gloria trusts his son and believes he did not do it eventhough everyone around her including her boyfriend thinks otherwise. She blames Lindiwe for wrongfully accusing her son; “this Ngema girl got my son arrested for

something he did not do” (season 17, episode 3500). Gloria finally learns the truth when she visits him in jail and ask him if he in fact stole from the community; “are you the one stealing from the community?” (season 17, episode 3500). Kgosi finally paid for his crime. He was later found guilty and sentenced.

Money Laundering

In Generations: The Legacy, Tau, Jack and Kumkani are the three main male characters that are involved in money laundering. They use fraudulent ways like horse race fixing to ‘clean’ their illegal gotten cash. They even drug some of the horses to ensure they win. The excerpt from season 29, episode 178 below from Mazwi to Sphe as he begs his wife to investigate more illustrates this;

“So, are you okay with how these animals are being mistreated? Because they are being drugged and poisoned. The syndicates torture these animals and murder them”

Compared to men, there are no females involved in money laundering. For example, an angry Zitha after breaking up with Jack Mabaso betrays him by telling his rival, Kumkani that Jack will be moving money;

Zitha “He’s moving money”

Kumkani “Jack?”

Zitha: “Tonight” (season 29, episode 211)

That night they dressed in balaclava and interrupted the heist. They are later shown celebrating with the stolen cash. Jack is not happy about the failed heist and is surprised he got caught this time “It’s never happened before because we’re careful and no one knows when we move the money and how”.

Also, Tau and Kumkani have some illegal dealings. Tau is mostly influenced by Kumkani and always tries to resist copying his friend’s illegal ways. Despite this, he is not exactly a saint as seen in this conversation from season 28, episode 228 below;

Tau: “I’m not about to get on the wrong side of the law”

Kumkani: “But the scheme you’re running with the priest is illegal”.

Kumkani’s response however shows that he is already involved in illegal business. Tau is involved in money laundering with the church priest, Aliko. This is made known to the detective when Smanga snoops in on them and reports to the police.

Smanga to Police: “I think my uncle; Tau Mogale is involved in money laundering. He’s been making huge cash donations to Pastor Aliko Oboli’s church, the same church he’s been borrowing money from”. (Season 28, episode 228)

Another conversation Kumkani had with Tau below shows the church was successful used for money laundering. (Season 29, episode 178)

Kumkani to Tau: “Brother have you noticed the money coming in, good, clean and fresh”.

Tau: “Winning every race makes people suspicious and this whole money laundering thing might go down the drain”.

Tau, Kumkani and Jack are all syndicates involved in “race fixing”. They pay large sums of money for the horses to be drugged and some are even murdered. Eventhough Mazwi reports Kumkani and Jack to the police, they always outsmart the police. Some excerpts from season 29 episode 177 are outlined below;

Mazwi to Pele (police): “Are you aware that he and Phakade are part of a syndicate that fixes horse racing? Mabaso too”

Pele to colleagues: “The time to go after the bastards who use horse racing to clean their dirty money?”

In *Generations: The Legacy*, the church is used as a front to ‘clean’ ill-gotten money, so it is a business. This is what Tau, Kumkani and Jack use. Aliko the head of the church tells Jack “The church is not really my business, I manage it for a friend, Jonathan Okiri, he’s reaping the benefits, not me” (season 28, episode 259).

- **Gang robbery and murder**

In *Rhythm City*, a guy named 'Chicken' is identified as a gang that is responsible for burning down Sabelo's house which left him homeless. When Sabello later joined his gang, "Chicken" had this to say to him; "what I did to your shack and your family wasn't at all personal. It was a matter of principle" (season 13, episode 3316). Furthermore, in *Generations: The Legacy*, Mpho is the founder of a very violent gang that uses weapons like knives and guns to fight against drugs in the community. The detective asks him "is it true that you and your friends have been terrorising drug dealers in Alex?" (season 29, episode 136). They are involved in kidnapping, torture and murder. In this gang, all the members are males, hence no female characters are gang members. The dialogue below by Mpho and his friends from season 29, episode 125 further illustrates this when he tells his gang mates to carry on after accidentally killing a gang member:

Mpho: "if we let these drug dealers carry on hurting people, if we stand back and watch, we are no longer different from them"

Gang mate: "we get the guy, beat him up, teach him in a lesson, put him in ICU"

Mpho: "ICU? That is a bit lenient, I say body bag".

- **Kidnapping**

In *Scandal!*, Quinton is responsible for kidnapping Mthunzi's mother to lure him in so that he can avenge the death of his ex-wife Mthunzi he killed. Also, in *Generations: The Legacy*, Lesedi is worried after finding out her son is missing while Jerah despite the news remain calm, portraying women as more emotional; (season 29, episode 106).

Lesedi to Jerah: "Banele is missing, he's gone"

Jerah to Mpho: "We left Banele in his cot and now he's not here"

Lesedi: "You are busy having coffee while our baby is out there in strangers"

Also, another character Abeo who has been stalking Zitha and threatening her is kidnapped by Jack (Jack's girlfriend). He is humiliated, tied up and beaten as he pleads for his life as Jack tells him; "When you targeted my woman you asked for it" (season 29, episode 70). Also, Joshua Warren, a serial rapist was kidnapped by Kumkani and Tau who took the law into their hands, beat and branded 'rape' on Joshua's forehead.

- **Drug Dealing**

In *Rhythm City*, Khulekani is portrayed as a drug dealer, his drugs have destroyed the lives of many children in the community including his own child who steals drugs from him and consumes without his knowledge. She finally ends up in a rehabilitation centre where she gets therapy as her mother Nandi tells Kea, Zintle's friend; "Zintle left this morning, she's at a hospital" (season 14, episode 3409). Some drug dealing excerpts are shown below;

Khulekani to his right-hand man: "This is good business, fast money, but we can't continue with it if it's affecting our children...okay" (season 14, episode 3379). This suggests heinfect cares for the community.

Furthermore, another character that deals with drugs is Cuba. Cuba consumes and uses marijuana to bake cookies which she gave her friends to eat which made them misbehave and sells some to the community without their knowledge. This is illustrated in season 14, episode 3409 below;

Blossom to Cuba: "My sister is there something you know that you are not saying?"

Cuba: "I changed the recipe a bit and added some ingredients...marijuana". In *Rhythm City*, both genders are involved in drugs.

In *Generations: The Legacy*, there are a lot of drug dealings being portrayed. Characters involved in drugs include Jack Mabaso, Kumkani Phakade and Tau Mogale. No women

in *Generations: The Legacy* were into drugs. Even when Zitha was being stalked, Jack refused to let her report to the police for that fear his drug dealings will be uncovered “they’ll use it as an excuse to dig into my business” (season 29, episode 69). This shows a certain level of control Jack has over Zitha. Mpho and his gang take it upon themselves to fight against drugs in the community. Also, it is exposed that Cosmo also known as Thembinkosi use to be a drug dealer and ironically, he begins an anti-drug campaign called “take back our streets”. Smanga is so surprised when Mazwi tells him about the campaign and remarks;

“Thembinkosi Diale!! heading up an anti-drug campaign, now I’ve heard everything”

Mazwi: “Alex is riddled with pushers; this could change the lives of thousands”

Smanga: “Didn’t he and Lucy sell drugs not so long ago?” (Season 29, episode 34). This shows that reform is possible and a lot of lives have been destroyed by drugs.

Summary of Crime Theme

From the three soap operas, the types of crimes identified include murder, fraud, stealing, money laundering, gang robbery kidnapping and drug dealing. These are illegal activities that are punishable by law. All three soap operas have both male and female murderers. In *Rhythm City*, the murderers include David Genaro, Khulekani, Suffocate and Lerato. Similarly, in *Scandal!* the murderers are Boniswa, Mthunzi and Thembeke and Mpho and Zitha for *Generations: The Legacy*.

In *Generations: The Legacy*, a crime that is highlighted is fraud. This includes marriage and insurance fraud. Furthermore, Jack, Tau and Kumkani are involved in race fixing and money laundering. *Rhythm City* and *Generations: The Legacy* have the portrayal of violent gangs that commit murder, with ‘Chicken’ and Mpho as gang founders and leaders respectively. Some of kidnapping end in murder. *Rhythm City* and *Generations: The Legacy* are two soap operas where drug dealing is portrayed.

(h)Theme of Violence

This includes vandalism and physical violence towards women and or men. In *Rhythm City*, Hammer is portrayed as a very violent man who physically abuses his girlfriend all the time.

This is highlighted in Mzi's explanation to the nurse in season 14, episode 3425;

Mzi: "She has a boyfriend and we are not together and this is not the first time he has done this"

Nurse: "Did he attack her?"

Mzi: "yes"

She is often left in pains from the bruises and sometimes faints and is rushed to the hospital.

Kea and Mapula are fed up with Hammer's behaviour as portrayed in the excerpts below;

Kea about Hammer: "That guy is an animal, an animal" (season 14, episode 3421). This suggests Hammer beats Dikeledi frequently.

Also, vandalism is evident when Hammer tried to burn ma'am Blossom's house and destroy Mzi's property when they took his girlfriend, Dikeledi and her son in.

Mzi to Dikeledi: "Hammer lit their house on fire, imagine if he comes back and finishes the job, these are good people" (season 14, episode 3421)

Mzi to Dikeledi: "Somebody broke into my house. I found broken glasses everywhere, I found furniture everywhere" (season 14, episode 3425).

In *Generations: The Legacy*, Mavusana and Joshua Warren are two characters that have sexual violence (rape) allegations hanging over their heads. Mavusana attempts to rape a sixteen years old girl, Nontle. He however did not succeed as Mpho interrupts and shoot him. Also, Joshua Warren is accused of raping several women whom he had made to sign a nondisclosure agreement. His rape escapades were however made public when he raped Ayanda. When she was unsuccessful to have him sent behind bars, she seeks

the help of her boyfriend Tau and friend Kumkani. These two are violent as they kidnapped him, beat him up and made a scar on his forehead that reads “rapist”.

The excerpts below illustrate this;

Tau to Kumkani: “The bastard broke Ayanda, i want to be here and listen to him squeal like a pig!” (Season 29, episode 13)

Furthermore, Mazwi tells the police he suspects Tau is behind the Aliko (priest) torture and murder; (season 29, episode 211).

Another case of physical violence is portrayed when Aliko’s body was finally discovered;

Police: “Aliko took hell of a beating, they broke his ribs, bones and organs”

Mazwi: “He was working with Aliko, they were cleaning Tau’s drug money through Aliko’s church”

Also, with Mpho’s encouragement, Briian is portrayed as a bad son who beats his father for disciplining him all his life.

Summary of the theme of violence

Violence was highlighted in *Rhythm City* and *Generations: The Legacy*. In *Rhythm City*, Hammer was portrayed as a violent character who beats his girlfriend all the time and vandalised several properties. In *Generations: The Legacy*, Brian who is in his early 20s beats up his father severely that lands him in hospital. Furthermore, another type of violence portrayed is sexual violence. This was found in *Generations: The Legacy* and committed by Mavusana and Joshua Warren who attempted to rape and committed rape respectively. In summary, the types of violence portrayed include beating, sexual violence and vandalising of property.

(i) Theme of Revenge and Conflict

In *Rhythm City*, there is conflict between Khulekani and Suffocate. When Khulekani learnt that Suffocate slept with his wife, he is angry and wants him dead; Below is an excerpt of the order he gave to his guard; (season 14, episode 3421)

Khulekani: "It's time to eliminate him"

"I want him dead. A painful death. Then i'm going to burn his bones and scatter his ashes right across Diepkloof. In years to come, when people tell their children bed time stories, they need to tell the story of a man who crossed Khulekani Ngobese and died. I want Ndlovu dead".

Guard: "You have spoken, it will be so"

Khulekani: "Good, very good. Ndlovu is going to learn a lesson he will never forget"

Also, Suffocate and Khulekani carried out a revenge on David Genaro for killing Khulekani's son and Suffocate's brother.

"Genaro killed my son like a dog" (season 13, episode 3281).

Revenge is also characterised in the soap opera *scandal!* is revenge. Mthunzi, who is still a bitter ex-son-in-law to the Langas' plots a revenge against them and he says; "I want to see them suffer". Also, Quinton goes to sought revenge on Mthunzi for killing his ex-wife and Chumani revenged on his mother for making him believe he is the one that killed his father and for drugging him so bad that he had to end up in a rehabilitation centre. When he became stable, he returned and executed his revenge on his mother. He kidnaps and locks her up in an old Thebelanga building in a cage where he drugs her food. A dialogue between the two is shown below; (Season 18, episode 3615).

Boniswa: "Did you poison it?"

Chumani: "I didn't poison it but i mixed something else in there. Drugs. Don't worry it won't kill you"

Boniswa: "What kind of drugs?"

Chumani: "It makes you hallucinate"

Boniswa: "Chumani how could you do that to your own mother?"

Chumani: "You drugged me too and I'm your son"

Boniswa: "How can you be so cruel?"

Chumani: "It's not cruelty; I'm doing to you what you did to me. You kept me drugged for weeks". Eventhough Boniswa did wrong to Chumani, his revenge portrays him as a bad son.

Also, the soap opera is characterised by a lot of conflict and power struggle between families and individuals. People in conflict fight, make-up, breakup and make-up. Enemies sometimes work together for common goals and afterwards return to being enemies in cases where they are rivals or do not agree. They plot to bring each other down.

For example, in *Generations: The Legacy*, there is conflict between Tau and Kumkani on one hand and Jack Mabaso on the other. Also, Zitha, an angry ex-girlfriend and Jack are in conflict and she "rats" him out to his enemies. Furthermore, the Diales are in conflict with the Morokas because of their grandson, Banele. Ayanda is in conflict with Joshua Warren for raping her and Fikile and her ex-husband are in conflict over custody battle of their children. In *Rhythm City*, Suffocate and Khulekani are enemies. When Nandi heard her husband was involved in the murder of Suffocate's girlfriend she asked him in season14, episode 3409;

Nandi: "What have you done Khulekani?"

Khulekani: "Nandi, I've done nothing wrong...okay, Suffocate and I are enemies but we handle our issues in the boardroom" in a lie.

Summary of Revenge and Conflict

Summarily, all three soap operas are characterised by lots of revenge and conflict. In *Rhythm City*, Khulekani wants to kill Suffocate for sleeping with his wife and David for killing his son. Suffocate also wants David Genaro dead. In *Scandal!*, Mthunzi wants to revenge on his former in-laws, Quinton wants to kill Mthunzi for killing his ex-wife

Thembeke. In *Generations: The Legacy*, there is conflict between individuals and families. Tau and Kumkani are in conflict with Jack as they are rivals over money laundering and race fixing. Also, Fikile and her ex-husband are fighting over the custody of their children, Zitha, is portrayed as a bitter ex-girlfriend joins Kumkani to steal from Jack, Ayanda wants to revenge on her rapist Joshua Warren and will do everything to see him behind bars. Apart from individuals, families also also fighting. Families in conflict are the Diales and the Morokas from *Generations: The Legacy* who are fighting over the future of their grandchild and the disrespect by the Morokas who undermine their family.

(j)Theme of Infidelity

Rhythm City is characterised by unfaithful partners. Khulekani is cheating on his wife with Jamaica, a gay guy but she never finds out. Also, his wife Nandi is cheating on her husband Khulekani with Suffocate who happens to also have a girlfriend, Kgomotso.

Also, infidelity is a reoccurring theme in *Scandal!*. Boniswa is portrayed as an adulterous wife who ends up having a son with another married man, Mr Xaba. She manages to keep the secret from her son for more than 20 years. Mr Xaba who is still married continues with his infidelity and visits Boniswa after more than 20 years when her husband died to continue with their affair.

However, she is not interested. Mr Xaba however tries to convince her and says “but surely you need a man to comfort you and I’m that man” (season 17, episode 3401). Boniswa finally gives in and they make love. Still in *Scandal!*, Sheila is portrayed as unfaithful. She is engaged to be married to her boyfriend Neo but engages in an affair with Ndumiso. When Sheila makes an accidental call to Neo, Neo can hear Sheila making love with another man (Ndumiso) shouting

“hmmm my love, oh don’t stop!” (Season 18, episode 3567). This resulted in a heart attack and Neo is rushed to the hospital. Furthermore, Violetta is an adulterous wife. She is married but in a secret relationship with the family’s accountant. She moves into a hotel with her boyfriend while her husband is out of the country to enjoy their relationship in private. She plans to run away with Simo but not before they pay 5million rand of his

money they stole and gambled “i also want to run away with you but what’s the point if Mamba will crucify us?” (Season 18, episode 3645).

Further analysis also identified the theme of infidelity in *Generations: The Legacy*. Some of the characters are romantically linked to more than one partner without their partners’ knowledge. Both men and women are promiscuous. Sphele is a doctor married to Mazwi Moroka and is involved in an extra-marital affair with Kumkani. Kumkani is also portrayed as a character romantically linked to Fikile and at the same time paying Palesa, a prostitute for sex. When

Fikile learns about the cheating and tells Lucy; “he’s cheating on me, i’m telling you, lipstick says it all, why are men like this” (season 29, episode 69). Palesa has a boyfriend, Pele and prostitutes on the side without his knowledge. She sleeps with many different men like Kumkani, Bruce and a bunch of other businessmen and politicians. “My client at Zola Radebe wants to meet again, so i can’t be in two places at once” (season 29, episode 69), she tells a colleague who wants her for another man. Like Sphele, her husband Mazwi is also involved in an extramarital affair with Fikile. In one instance, he went out and cheated on his wife with Fikile, thinking she too was doing the same. When Mazwi learnt his wife did not cheat, he made the following remark to his girlfriend Fikile;

“So, the person who cheated is me, I’m the liar, I’m the adulterer” (season 29, episode 211). Also, Tshidi is portrayed as an unfaithful partner who had sex with her soon-to-be husband’s nephew a few days before her wedding. Smanga wants sex in exchange for his silence about their romantic history as Tshidi explains to her mother; (season 29, episode 163).

“I don’t want to sleep with Smanga but if Zitha doesn’t come through for me, if i don’t have the gun to counter his threats, I might have no choice”. Tshidi ends up sleeping with him. Furthermore, Zitha is shown as a promiscuous girlfriend who sleeps with other men despite her relationship with Jack. She sleeps with multiple men for favours like “the pharmacist” and Kgosi. Zitha and the pharmacist are often shown being romantic. The

pharmacist once said “If Mabaso knew what you were doing while he was away” (season 29, episode 70).

Overall, even though both men and women are involved in extra-marital affairs, the female characters are more promiscuous. The men involved in this immoral behaviour are Mazwi and Kumkani while the women include Tshidi, Palesa, Sphe and Zitha.

Summary of the Theme of Infidelity

In summary, both women and men are unfaithful to their partners in all three soap operas. While some may just be in a relationship, others are actually married. In *Rhythm City*, Nandi and Khulekani, a married couple cheat on each other. Suffocate also cheats on his girlfriend

Kgomotso. In *Scandal!*, cheating partners include Boniswa, Sheila and Violetta. Boniswa was actually married when she cheated and had her son, Chumani. Violetta is another married character portrayed committing adultery with her husband’s financial accountant, Simo. Simo in turn cheated on his wife, Grace with Violetta. Moreso, Sheila is money-oriented and dates Neo for financial reasons and cheating on him with Ndumiso which eventually led to Neo’s heart attack. In *Generations: The Legacy*, cheating partners include unmarried people in a relationship like Zitha, Kumkani, Palesa and Tshidi and a married couple, Sphe and Mazwi who also cheated on each other.

(k)Theme of Betrayal

Another prominent theme is betrayal. In *Scandal!*, Boniswa is one character that is very manipulative and betrays her husband, lover and her son. Her son is a product of an affair even though she was married. Her husband died without even knowing that Chumani was not infact his son. Also, she betrayed Mr Xaba, Chumani’s biological father when she lied about him being a pedophile just to prevent them from having a father and son relationship and maintain her secret. Moreover, she eventually murders Mr Xaba. Chumani is also betrayed by his own mother who made him think he killed his biological father. Chumani felt so guilty and disturbed that he even decided to tell his partner, Tshepo and attempted

to tell others. To prevent this from happening, Boniswa, resorts to weeks of drugging his son that made him end up in a mental facility. He stopped taking care of himself and became unkempt.

Thembeke is also another character that betrays those who trust her. When she got a job at

Thebelanga, she became close friends with Boniswa. However, this was a friendship of interest. She became an inside spy to get information and take back to Mthunzi. When Boniswa suspects her to be the sell-out, she lied; “i don’t betray my friends” (season 18, episode 3535). Also, when her alliance with Mthunzi to hurt Boniswa was discovered, she swiftly joined forces with the Langas’ and hurt Mthunzi. When Mthunzi hears this, he is so angry and tells Quinton “Thembeke will regret betraying me” (season 18, episode 3581). This betrayal had its consequences as Mthunzi finally fulfils this when he shoots and kills Thembeke.

Summary of the Theme of Betrayal

Summarily, only female characters are used to develop this theme. This was a less prominent theme and highlighted only in *Scandal!*. The two main characters that betrayed people who trusted them are Boniswa and Thembeke. Boniswa betrays his son by drugging him that he ended up in a mental facility. She also betrays Mr Xaba, the biological father of her son Chumani by killing him. Similarly, Thembeke also betrays Boniswa’s trust when he goes to work for her company. Little did Boniswa know that she was a spy for Mthunzi, the family’s enemy and former son-in-law.

(I)Theme of Gender Discrimination

In *Rhythm City*, when the chief finally announced Blossom as the rightful heir of her family land, her brother becomes very angry as shown below in season 14, episode 3398;

Chief: “Blossom is the rightful heir to the Mchunu land”

Blossom's brother: "This is nonsense!... Blossom is a woman". This suggests it is unnatural for women to be heirs.

Also, in *Scandal!*, when Mthunzi and Thembeke plan their revenge on the Langas', Mthunzi says "Boniswa is an ambitious person, just that she felt overlooked by the men around her". (season 17, episode 3496). This shows women are struggling to reach their full potential because of their gender. Furthermore, in *Generations: The Legacy*, Cosmo insinuates that the

Morokas are only interested in Lesedi's child because it's a boy. This is illustrated in his dialogue with Lucy and the Morokas which shows female children are being discriminated against in season 28, episode 230 below;

Lucy to the Morokas; "Still, you've tried to buy Lesedi's baby...it's the truth, you want to buy Lesedi's child".

Cosmo: "Sis, it's because it is a boy"

Lucy: "Exactly"

Furthermore, when Tshidi tries several times to get her husband's support in the boardroom and failed, she is frustrated and tells her mother; "I am trying so hard to survive in this male dominated world" (season 29, episode 228). Also, it was only when her husband showed his only tht she was supported by the other board members. This shows that men are more favoured than women in the professional world.

Summary of the Theme of Gender Discrimination

In summary, gender discrimination even though less prominent is highlighted in all three soap operas. The women and girl children are always the victims and discriminated against. In *Rhythm City*, Ma'am Blossom was discriminated against by her brother who was upset that a woman was made an heir in a family that had men. In *Scandal!*, it was revealed that Boniswa faced challenges at work simply because she is a woman. Also, in

Generations: The Legacy, Tshidi is discriminated against in the workplace. Still in *Generations: The Legacy*, discrimination is evident when it comes to choosing an heir. Banele is preferred over Rorisang as an heir simply because he is a male child.

(m) Theme of Inheritance

In *Rhythm City*, Ma'am Blossom was made heir and inherited the family land. Furthermore in *Scandal!*, Bhekumuzi makes Phindile (1st wife) the sole heir of his property which includes cash in the bank and a car. However, Phindile's brother-in-law is not very happy about this and tells her "you are a shameful woman...you will never enjoy my brother's money in peace, never!" (Season 18, episode 3636). Knowing she has inherited millions from her late husband, she changes her character and wardrobe. She moves out of her sister's house, resigns and starts acting like a wealthy woman eventhough she was still to receive the money. She thinks everyone wants her money. In the excerpt below from season 18, episode 3636, she tells Javas (policeman) this;

Phindile to Javas: "Now the police also want a piece of these millions just for doing their job...I'm not giving out money, I'm working".

Still in *Scandal!*, Neo who owns a stake in a hotel decides to transfer it to his son's name, Lerumo. He tells Lerumo; "My lawyer is finalising the transfer of my stake into your name" (season 17, episode 3401). All these symbolise generational wealth.

Summary of the theme of inheritance

In summary, In *Rhythm City*, Ma'am Blossom inherits the family land, while in *Scandal!*, Neo transfers his hotel shares to his son. Also, Phindile is made the sole heir of her late husband's properties despite having a co-wife, however, his brother-in-law fights with her to also enjoy the inheritance.

(n) Theme of Divorce

The theme of divorce is very prominent and found in all three soap operas. In *Rhythm City*, Puleng who used to be married to Suffocate but they are now divorced and have a son. Also, divorce is a common theme that runs in the soap opera *Scandal!*. We learn that Xolile was once married to Mthunzi and is now married to Romeo Medupe. Gloria is also a divorced woman who is now a single mother. Her husband comes once in a while to offer help for the kids, however, most of the responsibilities rest on her. Thembeke and Quinton are a couple that was once married but currently divorced, she however wants him back after several years. Gloria is the ex-mother-in-law to Ndumiso. Ndumiso was once married to Gloria's daughter, but after the divorce, he continued to live with her so that they can both take care of their son and grandson whose mother is out of the country.

Furthermore, Phindile is presented as a young wife who even though not officially divorced is separated from her husband. When he suddenly shows up to have her back, she is not happy and tells her sister "I don't want to go back home and be his wife" (season 18, episode 3615). She even tells him to his face "I've made up my mind, i'm not getting back with you" (season 18, episode 3624). Furthermore, we learn Mr Langa was Yvonne's second husband after divorcing the first. Also, in *Generations: The Legacy*, Tshidi was once married to Kumkani.

Summary of the Theme of Divorce

The three soap operas are characterised by numerous divorced couples. In *Rhythm City*, there is Puleng and Suffocate, in *Scandal!*, there is Quinton and Thembeke, Xolile and Mthunzi, Phindile and her husband who are separated and a single couple in *Generations: The Legacy*, Tshidi and Kumkani.

(o) Theme of Relationship Secrecy and Shame

This theme was common among the queer (gay and lesbian) couples in a relationship. All queer couples were represented in a once-off relationship and often associated to shame. Also, there is always a mismatch as majority of them were in a relationship with

heterosexuals who were just exploring their sexuality and ashamed of their partners. In *Rhythm City*, Jamaica, a gay guy was in a relationship with Khulekani, a heterosexual married man. They kept it hidden from their friends and only met in hotels where no one could see them. Similarly, this is the same thing that happened with Zintle, a teenage lesbian, Khulekani's daughter who is in a relationship with Kea, a heterosexual. They also kept their relationship a secret, however, while Zintle was willing to let everyone know, Kea did not. Also, when Khulekani finally learns that his daughter was a lesbian, he was in denial as he expresses in season 14, episode 3398; "you are my daughter, you are not gay!". This shows gay relationships are regarded as shameful even for the parents.

Furthermore, in *Scandal*, Chumani a gay guy in a relationship with Tsepo appears to be uncomfortable telling people about his relationship. When Chumani hides their relationship from

Mr Xaba, he feels bad but Tsepo understands; (season 17, episode 3401)

Tsepo: "Yes, we are at work, i don't expect you to tell everyone who walks into the office that we are together"

Chumani: "It's just that i wanted to introduce you to Mr Xaba as...you know..."

Tsepo: "What, your soul mate? You are so freaked out right now, it's adorable hey"

Chumani: "As a boyfriend"

Tsepo: "It feels good to hear it. Does it feel good to say it?"

Chumani: "It does. I want you to know that I'm not ashamed of us"

In all the queer relationships portrayed, there is always someone if not one of them in the relationship is ashamed of that relationship and tries to keep it a secret. There were no queers represented in *Generations: The Legacy*.

Summary of Theme of Relationship Secrecy and Shame

Summarily, queer relationships portrayed in two of the soap operas, *Rhythm City* and *Scandal!* that had queer characters were filled with secrecy. In *Rhythm City*, queer

characters include Jamaica and Zintle on the one hand and Kea and Khuekani who appeared to be just exploring their sexuality. In *Scandal!*, queer characters are two gay guys, Chumani and Tshepo. All queer relationships were kept a secret and some were even ashamed to let the world know of their sexual preferences. For example, Kea was ashamed and ended the relationship immediately which left Zintle heartbroken. Khulekani and Chumani also wanted their various relationships to remain a secret.

4.2.3. THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF GENDER-BASED ROLES IN SELECTED SOUTH AFRICAN SOAP OPERAS

a) Woman Represented as a Mother, Matriarch and Nurturer

The soap operas were coded to determine the portrayal of mother, matriarch and nurturer role. The role of mother, matriarch and nurturer is very prominent. This refers to women that play the

'good mother' role to children whether biological or not. Dikeledi is portrayed as a dedicated teenage single mother who just gave birth. While pregnant, she was kicked out by her father and had nowhere to go. She was so desperate that she offered to give her unborn baby to Reneilwe so that the baby can have a provider. However, when the baby was born, she changed her mind and decided to keep her baby despite being unable to afford her. Despite being abused by her boyfriend whom she was living with, she persevered with the hope that he will change and take care of their son. After taking a lot of beating and sustaining injuries, she could not continue to persevere and went to Mzi where she begged for food and a place to stay with her son. Furthermore, she later moved to ma'am Blossom with her son. Below are some excerpts where she narrates her ordeal;

Dikeledi to Reneilwe: "My father dumped all my stuff in the bin" (season 13, episode 3313). Dikeledi to Mzi: "My child is hungry and cold" (season 14, episode 3398). This further shows her level of frustration as even her father does not want her with the pregnancy.

Ma'am blossom is also portrayed as a good mother and a matriarch. She is one of the female characters in *Rhythm City* portrayed positively. She is a mother to many like Kea, Mapula, Lefa and later Dikeledi, even though none of them are her biological children. She is always there to listen and give advice where she can. She is also like a mother to Reneilwe who used to stay with Bra Kop, her husband. The excerpts below show her dedication as a mother to kids in the community;

Blossom to kids in her community: "You are still here. go home, your parents may be worried" (season 14, episode 3328).

Dikeledi to Mzi about ma'am Blossom: "I can't believe after everything ma'am Blossom is still willing to help me" (season 14, episode 3425).

Blossom to her husband: "I'm sick and tired of these kids, Mapula, our Mapula has a sugar daddy, a blesser" (season 14, episode 3351). She uses the word "our" which means she considers her like her own.

Blossom even beats up Kea when she tries to start dressing like Mapula and wanting to go out as she pleases. This discipline is done out of the love she has for her. She does not want the same thing that happened to Mapula to happen to Kea whom she loves so much as well.

In *Scandal!*, Yvonne is portrayed as a nurturer to her mother on her dying bed and as a mother to Tebello. She has been estranged from her mother for about 20 years, but when she hears that her mother is sick, she returns home to nurture her mother to health. She forgives her mother and tries her best for her to be comfortable and well. She even tried to look for a nurse for her but unfortunately, she dies in her arms. Furthermore, after her mother's death, Yvonne is obliged to take care of Tebello a boy of about 9 years who was living with her mother after being abandoned by his own mother. She takes this as a challenge to be a better mom and promised to give him a future. To fulfil her promise, and with Boniswa's help, she sends him to a prestigious private school; "Boniswa, this is

serious, this is actually about my foster child” “i made a promise to that child, i promised him a future and i’m going to deliver on that promise”

(season 18, episode 3537). Also, even though Yvonne’s mother was not a good mother to her, Yvonne is a good mother to Tebello and takes her promise very serious.

Also, Gloria is being portrayed as a good mother. She is a divorced mother who sacrifices a lot to provide for her child. She is disappointed when she learns Kgosi has been stealing from the community. Gloria tells Kgosi about her struggles and the sacrifices she made to provide a better life them (her children); “you don’t need to steal Kgosi, i give you everything...Kgosi, i’m your mother, i’m the one person who will love you always and till the end of time” (season 17, episode 3500).

In *Generations: The Legacy*, Gog’Flo is presented as a mother to her two grandchildren, Lucy and Thembinkosi and her adopted child Lesedi. She is also prayerful and gives a lot of advice to her relatives and others. Her doors are always open to anyone who needs a home. She has taken in a lot of children over the years like Lesedi, Lerato and Palesa. She is warm and very welcoming as she welcomed Mei whom she had never met.

Overall, a good mother is portrayed as someone who puts their children first, a nurturer, an adviser, provider, prayerful and someone who can endure.

b)Woman represented as a Housewife and Homemaker

Again, the soap operas where then coded to analyse the role of housewife and homemaker.

This role s not very prominent. Only two of the soap operas portray this role. In *Rhythm City*, Ma’am Blossom is portrayed as a housewife who has no formal job; however, she owns a small tuck-shop in the window of her house. She is rarely portrayed out of the house setting. She is the only housewife portrayed in the soap opera. She is married to Bra Kop, a bus driver. Ma’am Blossom again is portrayed as a homemaker, often placed in the domestic setting cooking, baking and cleaning all the time in an apron. Her main focus is taking care of her home, her kids and cooking for her family.

In *Generations: The Legacy*, Gog'Flo is not a wife but she is portrayed as a home maker. She is always portrayed in the house setting, the kitchen in particular, cleaning, cooking and dishing up food. Even though she is co-owner of a café restaurant and works there from time to time, her role and representation as a home maker takes priority.

b) Woman Represented as a Model

The characteristics of a model includes being young, slim, good sense of style, beautiful and fair in complexion. All three soap operas were coded for this. In *Rhythm City*, Nandi and Ziyanda are portrayed as women who are always well dressed. They put on lots of makeup, jewellery, attractive clothes and wear wigs. Also, there are some other well-dressed women like Pearl, Puleng and Reneilwe. However, some of them are out of shape like Nandi and Puleng.

Furthermore, to show that physical appearance plays a great role in women's life, Mapula changed her way of dressing when she started dating Gift. This shows women dress up to seek make attention. She changed from dressing modestly to dressing very sexy and started wearing makeup and wigs. Her way of dressing becomes very skimpy and flashy. It should be noted that the women that dress well are fair in complexion. However, not all the women have modellike characteristics like ma'am Blossom who is always very casual and wearing an apron all the time. Like Blossom, Cuba dresses modest. These two women are also not physically fit and are dark in complexion.

Furthermore, there is an equal representation of women who are physically in good shape and those who are not. There is no character that possess all the model-like features of being skinny, fair in complexion, tall or wear expensive clothes.

Moreover, in *Rhythm City*, it was observed that physical appearance in terms plays a very important role when Puleng, who is in her 30's is mistaken for an older woman because of the way she dresses. Hoping to have a date with a young man Kevin, Kevin instead

organises a date between Puleng and his father. Puleng got so angry and felt disrespected. This is further illustrated in season 14, episode 3425 in the excerpt below;

Puleng: "I might be approaching 40 but for you to hook me up with your dad is way out of line..." Kevin: "I'm sorry; look what I'm trying to say is that you look a bit older. No no no, not you, you know, I think it's the clothes, the clothes you are wearing, they make you look at least 48" It suggests that even though she dresses well, she dresses older for her age.

In *Scandal!*, many of the ladies are physically very attractive, wear a lot of makeup, wigs and are often very fit. Examples of such women are Yvonne who is a socialite and often dresses in very stylish clothes and wear a lot of makeup. However, she is older and even has a married daughter. Similarly, Layla and Boniswa are two older women who dress very well in nice corporate outfits. Other characters that also dress well include Xolile, Grace, Dintle and Thembeke. More so, Phindile changed her way of dressing when she got a receptionist job and thought she has inherited 10 million Rand from her late husband. When she first starts dressing differently and enters the office, her former colleagues notice and made the following remarks; (season 18, episode 3640).

Gloria to Phindi: "You look absolutely gorgeous Phindi".

Colleagues gossiping about Phindi: "So her millions finally got paid out".

Gloria: "She's probably on her way to buy a sports car". This shows certain styles of dressing suggest wealth and it causes attention even among fellow women.

On the other hand, some of the women in *Scandal!* appear more laid back like Mrs Ngema and Gloria who are domestic worker and cleaner respectively. They always wear their natural hair and without or a little less makeup. Moreover, they are not physical fit like the former group of women. Gloria is always in her cleaning uniform most of the time. There

was no single character with all model-like features. Majority of the female characters have dark-skin.

A majority of the women in *Generations: The Legacy* are represented as well-dressed women; such as Tshidi, Zitha, Lucy, Fikile and Palesa. The women all wear heavy makeup and a few sometimes wear wigs. They dress in fashion clothing. Also, a majority of the women are in good shape. However, a majority of the women portrayed are dark skinned, with most of them wearing their natural hair like Sphelele, Fikile, Lucy and Tshidi. Furthermore, it was observed that prostitutes are required to dress a certain way to attract men. Palesa, a domestic worker changed her way of dressing when she decided to start prostitution. She looked so different and began wearing very short clothes, wearing wigs, make up and heels. Also, a woman clothes or appearance has an important role to play in romantic relationship between a woman and a man. Kumkani uses clothes to remind him of his ex-wife Tshidi whom he was still in love with. He buys clothes Tshidi would wear for his prostitute girlfriend, Palesa. Similarly, Fikile, also in love with Kumkani goes on a shopping spree to look like Tshidi to make him fall in love with her. She shows Lucy the clothes she bought as she remarks; “this looks like something Tshidi would wear” (season 29, episode 76).

c) Woman Represented as Tenacious in a Relationship

Dikeledi is portrayed as someone who perseveres in a bad relationship and would not give up easily. In *Rhythm City*, after being beaten severally, Dikeledi still returns to her abusive boyfriend and has this to say to her concerned friend Mzi in season 14, episode 3409 below; Mzi: “Dikeledi this is such a bad idea”

Dikeledi: “He needs me, he was going to kill himself if i didn’t go back”

Mzi: “Can’t you see? You don’t see what he is doing?”

Dikeledi: “Mzi”

Mzi: “No...somebody who’s trying to kill themselves is not going to go around announcing it, he is manipulating you”

Dikeledi: "What if it's not like that?"

Mzi: "Really?"

Dikeledi: "Look, this is different, he's different. He needs me and my child needs his father. Thank you for your help but this is my family and i'm a woman, I must make it work"

The above excerpt suggests a woman is suppose to persevere and endure even in the worst circumstance. Dikeledi is treated unfairly by her boyfriend. She endures a lot of domestic violence in the hands of Hammer her boyfriend who beats her at every slightest thing. She sometimes faints rom the beatings and ends up in the hospital.

Also, what Mapula tells Hammer suggests men feel more masculine when they are violent towards others: "You think you are a big brave man when you are beating up a woman" (season 14, episode 3421).

She left him on several occasions and sought help from Mzi and Ma'am Blossom who took her in. However, she kept going back to her abusive relationship to prove she is a 'woman'. Hammer treat Dikeledi as a possession and even went to ma'am Blossom to get Dikeledi by force. When he was chased away, he came back later in an attempt to burn the house. However, despite all these, she still went back to him. Her stay in this abusive relationship eventually resulted in the killing of her child by Hammer. Also, after impregnating Dikeledi, he wanted nothing to do with the pregnancy but only reappeared when he heard a celebrity wants the baby to extort money from her. In season 13, episode 3316, Reneilwe tells Dikeledi which portrays Hammer does not care for her but the money he will get from Reneilwe;

Reneilwe: "Your boyfriend is trying to extort money from me"

Hammer: "The girl wants a baby, we have a baby, so the girl must pay for the baby, simple"

Dikeledi: "I thought you didn't want the baby"

Hammer: "That doesn't mean you just hand it over for free like some left overs at the robot".

When Hammer got the money, he abandoned Dikeledi and didn't give her any of the money. He only reappeared when the money got finished.

In *Generations: The Legacy*, Fikile is one character who is not treated well in her relationship with Kumkani. He treats her like trash and is rude to her at every opportunity he gets. Some of the excerpts below to her by Kumkani illustrate this when Fikile suspects Kumkani wants to meet up with Palesa; (season 29, episode 69).

Fikile: "Do you have plans?"

Kumkani: "What if i do have plans, you don't live here...Stop acting as if this is your house"

Here is another dialogue that supports his rudeness when she sees two used glasses from the previous night in Kumkani's house;

Fikile: "I see you have company (holding up the glass), yesterday you wanted to be alone, lipstick?"

Kumkani rudely replies: "What? Are you looking for a fight?" Fikile ignores him and instead, starts looking around for the other girl keeping Kumkani company.

Despite Lucy's warning to dump him when she sees the way she is being treated, Fikile instead goes on a shopping spree, buying clothes to look like Kumkani's ex-wife after forcing Lucy to tell her about Tshidi.

Kumkani humiliates her in front of her rival Palesa in season 29, episode 73;

Furthermore, Kumkani is disrespectful and humiliates Fikile in front of her rival Palesa. He tells

Palesa; "I ended things with her, chased her out. You saw it. We were seeing each other on and off, nothing serious"

Palesa responds: "You humiliated her; I'm so sure she hates me!"

d) Woman Represented as a Socialite

An analysis revealed *Scandal!* is the only soap opera that portrays this role. In *Scandal!*, Yvonne is portrayed as a socialite. She does not work; she just dresses up and goes around. She permanently lives in a hotel. In one instance when Tebello asked Yvonne's mother who Yvonne really is, her mother responded; "but my daughter is famous, she is in the news often". What she is famous for is not known. Furthermore, findings reveal she is rich. Her mother tells Tibi "That rich lady is Maleeto". Also, she does not go by the name 'Maleeto' which she is popularly known for back home. In Johannesburg, she is known as Yvonne and at home, she is called

Maleeto. Tibi even wondered and asked Yvonne's mother "why has she never visited before and why would she not say she is Maleeto?" (All the above excerpts from season 17, episode 3469). This shows that as a socialite, she decides to forget about her humble beginnings, her native name and her poor mother.

f) Woman Represented as Stereotype and Menial job workers

Compared to men, women are often portrayed doing menial jobs while the men are more of bosses in bigger businesses. Also, stereotypical jobs for women include nurturing jobs and jobs around the domestic environment. In *Rhythm City*, some of the women are portrayed doing menial and stereotypical jobs. This includes ma'am Blossom who owns a small tuck-shop at home where she sells snacks and the fried foods she makes. Similarly, Puleng is also another character with a small business, a 'shisa nyama'. Cuba is also portrayed as a character doing a stereotypical job. Like Blossom and Puleng, she too sells food. Also, a majority of the women are portrayed doing stereotypical jobs. Gail and Mampho are radio presenters. This is a job that deals with human interaction that is typically associated with women. Also, Sindiswa used to be a waitress. This may limit women from exploring their full potential in trying out other jobs and careers not traditionally meant for women.

The most popular menial job in *Scandal!* is that of a cleaner. In the soap opera, there is a cleaning company with many workers, majority of whom are females. Some of the

cleaners who are main characters include Gloria and Phindile. Other menial jobs include domestic servant, Mrs Ngema is a domestic servant at Quinton's house. Apart from menial jobs, there are several female characters portrayed in stereotypical jobs like Lindiwe who is a waitress and Mary who is a secretary at Thebelanga. Later in the show, Phindile attended an interview for a receptionist job and got the position, another stereotype job.

In *Generations: The Legacy*, there are some few female characters represented in stereotypical or menial jobs. There is Lerato and Lesedi who both have stereotype jobs as waitresses at a fast-food restaurant; these jobs are typically associated with women. Lesedi later finds a new job which is not any better but also a 'woman's job, a receptionist/errand girl at Ezweni. She is not happy at her job and complains to her grandmother "Gogo, i'm like on the lowest step of the Ezweni ladder..." (season 29 episode 125). Like Lesedi, Sphesile is also portrayed in a stereotypical job as a medical doctor. This involves nurturing, which is considered a feminine trait. She is often shown at work comforting and nurturing patients to health, soft spoken to her patients and often empathises with people. Her empathy is highlighted when she uses her job as a doctor to help Tshidi fake her death in order to save her from Jack Mabaso who wanted to take her life while carrying his unborn child. This shows that as a woman, she is able to empathise. Palesa and Thembeke's jobs are also stereotypes as well as degrading; they are prostitutes, hence taking care of men's sexual needs. Palesa is also portrayed as a domestic worker by day to the Morokas and the Mabasos'. She is shown in her domestic worker attire cleaning, serving food and nurturing a blind Smanga.

g) Woman Represented as a Sex Object

Mapula is the only character in *Rhythm City* portrayed as a sex object. She is dating a married man who gives her money and takes her on trips. She starts dressing very sexy and wears heavy makeup and wigs when she starts dating Gift. Ma'am Blossom is not happy with what she has become and calls her a prostitute.

Ma'am Blossom to Mapula: "Look at you, i hardly recognise you. Look what you are wearing!" (Season 14, episode 3348). This suggests a change in her physical appearance.

Mapula to kea: "And i feel really bad, but ma'am Blossom called me a prostitute". (Season 14, episode 3348)

Ma'am Blossom to Mapula: "You're turning our house into a brothel" (season 14, episode 3348)

In *Scandal!*, a single woman, Thembeke is portrayed as a sex object. After several failed attempts to get information from Mthunzi's laptop which he always keeps very close to him, Romeo suggests she sleeps with him. She seems appalled and asked; "you want me to sleep with him?" (Season 18, episode 3567). Hence Romeo sees Thembeke as a sex object. She later resorts to sleeping with him. He sheepishly falls in the trap and this marked the beginning of his downfall. Xolile, a fellow woman also sees Thembeke as a sex object, in order for them to get the information they want from Mthunzi, she too suggests Thembeke sleeps with Mthunzi;

Xolile: "Wear something sexy"

Thembeke: "I am not going to sleep with him" (season 18, episode 3567)

In *Generations: The Legacy*, Tshidi, ex-wife to Kumkani Phakade and ex-girlfriend to Smanga Moroka and Jack Mabaso is married to great uncle Kabisi Moroka. She uses sex to get what she wants.

After running away from Jack while pregnant with his baby, Tshidi reappears after a long time fearing for her life. She sees marriage with a Moroka as her only solution for security; she seduces Kabisi to ensure that. Another instance where she uses sex as a solution is when Smanga gives her an ultimatum to leave the Moroka household or he will tell Kabisi about their romantic history. Tshidi tells her mother about Smanga's ultimatum; "he's determined to block the marriage and get me out of the house! He wants me in his room

at 9 tonight” (season 29, episode 163). She heeds to Smanga’s blackmail and offers him sex to keep him quiet.

Below is an excerpt from season 29, episode 163 of their conversation when she decides to give him what he wants;

Tshidi: “Like what you see?”

Smanga: “Take it off, i want to watch you take it off”

Like Tshidi, Palesa is another character also portrayed as a sex object. She is a prostitute. We learn she moved to Johannesburg to get a better life. She ends up prostituting to make more money. Pele (Palesa’s former lover) tells this to his colleague about Palesa “She only got into sex work so she could help the people she loves” (season 29, episode 125).

Apart from prostituting herself to businessmen and politicians, she maintains a sexual relationship with Kumkani who pays her a month in advance for sex. When out to meet some new clients, she dresses very sexy in short and skin tight clothes with a lot of makeup. Palesa even blames her mother for being a sex worker “i got into sex work because of you!” (Season 29, episode 125). In one of the episodes, Palesa even engages in a threesome with her friend to sexually please a client. When Palesa tries to hide her prostituting job from an old colleague, the colleague, Linda tells Palesa that it’s obvious she is into prostitution.

The excerpt below illustrates that; (season 29, episode 70)

Linda: “The clothes, the hanging out and suddenly you have money, it doesn’t take a genius” Palesa: “i’m not selling myself”.

Linda: “fine, renting, whatever”.

Furthermore, Zitha Langa is also portrayed as such; she is in a relationship with Jack Mabaso and also has sex with multiple men. She even dates her boyfriend’s employee Kgosi and “the pharmacist” to gain favours. She uses her body without hesitation to get

what she wants. However, after offering sex to the pharmacist for several months, she finally decided to end it as she tells the unwilling pharmacist; “you never get to touch me again” (season 29, episode 70). Even though she uses herself as a sex object, she is also being used by her boyfriend, Jack Mabaso for that.

In one instance, Jack Mabaso asked her to offer sexual pleasure to a man so he can win his vote at a board meeting. Even though Zitha is angry and feels disrespected, she finally succumbs and sleeps with the man. Excerpts of her conversation with Jack when she returns are below; (season 29, episode 187)

Jack: “Is it done?”

Zitha: “Is that all you have to ask?”

Jack: “The vote is today i need to know” This shows women do not only see themselves as sex objects but men as well. Similarly, a father Mr Nkaba is portrayed who also sees his daughters as a sex object as he asks her to sleep with Jack Mabaso so that he can gain votes.

Additionally, Fikile is another woman being portrayed as a sexual object. She is a divorced woman trying to start up a business and uses sex more for her own pleasure. She is Kumkani’s girlfriend. When she is dumped, she moves on to Kumkani’s adopted son Mpho. Lucy is shocked by her behaviour and says;

“So, you moved from the father and jumped straight to the son” “not just any boy, your ex’s adopted son” (season 29, episode 177)

She dates Mpho strictly for sex and tells him; “just one-night stand, no strings attached” (season 29, episode 177). After a few weeks, she ends the relationship when Mpho asks for it to be long-term. Fikile then starts a new relationship with Mazwi, a married man, showing she uses sex just to have fun.

Surprisingly, Nontle is a 16 years old girl who is also portrayed as a sex object even though she doesn't actually have sex. She crushes on her step-father whom she later realises is her biological father, Tau. He is shocked when he notices her sexually suggestive moves and decides to confide in his friend, Kumkani "I think Ayanda's daughter Nontle has a crush on me...her behaviour is inappropriate" (season 29, episode 23). More so, she is portrayed as a sex object when she auctioned her virginity online. Furthermore, there was an attempted rape on her when she went out for a date with Mpho. She is approached by Mavusana who began making sexual advances on her, when she tries to resist, his response shows he sees her more like a sex object and asked "do you want me to pay? i have money, lots of it" (season 29, episode 101) and tries forcing himself on her to rape her. She however blames herself while talking to her mother "the guy recognised me from the internet. Maybe if i didn't auction my virginity" (season 29, episode 106).

However, it is not all the time that others make the women look like sex object, sometimes, they see themselves as such. In one instance when Lesedi is approached by a guy, she just insinuates all he wants was sex and tells him she is not interested in a one-night stand. The guy's response surprises her; (season 29, episode 125)

Lesedi: "Anyway, I'm not in the market for a one-night stand"

Guy: "Tell me, why do women always think men just want to have sex with them?"

Lesedi: "Oh, so you don't?"

Guy: "I have to get to know you first, I could find you boring"

Summarily, the sex object is the most prominent role that the women are portrayed in. Majority of the women in the soap opera are portrayed as sex objects, they have multiple sexual partners, see themselves as such and dress provocatively. Some of them use their bodies for prostitution, some for sexual pleasure, while some use it to conceal secrets

and others to gain favours. Men also see them as sex objects including a father who gives out his daughter for sex. Men make them use their bodies for the men's own gain.

h) Woman Represented as Objects of Honour

In *Rhythm City*, Blossom was used as an object of honour by her husband Bra Kop. After eating the drugged cookies and dancing in a bar, her husband was embarrassed. He felt that a married woman and a role model should not behave as such as he expresses himself below in season 14, episode 3409;

Kop: "A married woman with two young girls at home who look up to her as an example...wearing skimpy clothes and gyrating her hips on the dance floor for all to see"

Blossom: "Oh love"

Kop: "Why did you do that?"

Blossom: "I don't know, but believe me"

Kop: "You promise it won't happen again?"

Blossom: "It won't, ever!"

Kop: "Fine"

Also, even the rest of the women who ate the cookies and danced in the bar did not think they exhibited proper 'married women behaviour' when they ate the cookies as they said in season 14, episode 3409 below;

Friend to Cuba: "Your drugs turned us into disrespectful women. Dancing in a bar as though we have no husbands"

Cuba: "Majjuana doesn't make you do things you don't already have in your heart!"

Blossom: "You drugged us without our knowledge, you robbed us of the right to say yes or no"

The above excerpt insinuates that there is a general way a married woman is supposed to carry herself especially in public, hence they too see themselves as objects of honour to their husbands.

In *Generations: The Legacy*, after an attempted rape on Nontle by Mavusana, she refuses to report him to the police to preserve her honour. Her mother begs her several times to report to the police but she has this to say instead;

Nontle to her mother: “Do you know how mean school kids can be? They’ll make funny comments and we’ll go viral on social media. They talk about what happened to you, now to me and saying that we’re cursed or something. I just...I won’t...I can’t...” (season 29, episode 101). This suggests rape represents dishonour and shame for the woman so much so that the victims remain silent instead of reporting their aggressors.

i) Woman Represented as an Emotionalist

This refers to someone who has very strong emotions and passion. In *Rhythm City*, Zintle is so emotional after her breakup with Kea and attempts to commit suicide. In *Generations: The Legacy*, Fikile is portrayed as a very emotional ex-lover to Mazwi who is married. After their breakup, she is unhappy and tells Lucy “I really thought he would leave Sphe. He’s so unhappy, why would he stay? (crying), I’m such a fool...once again I allowed a man to use me and then throw me out like a piece of trash” (season 28, episode 228). Still in *Generations: The Legacy*, Zitha is portrayed as an emotional ex-girlfriend when she discovers Jack has moved on so fast after their breakup as she tells Sphe “It hasn’t been a month and he is already sleeping with someone” (season 29, episode 211). This means that women unlike men are all emotional while men are not and move on faster.

j) Woman Represented as a Career-Independent Woman

There are a few career women portrayed in *Rhythm City*. This includes Ziyanda, Reneilwe, Pearl and Lerato. These women are not married except for Reneilwe and occupy high positions as managers at work. Ziyanda and Lerato work as radio station

managers, Pearl works as a manager of a music recording company and Reneilwe as an artist. They are mostly portrayed in the work environment or in a snack bar setting meeting a client or discussing business, very little is revealed about their families. They are all portrayed as very stern bosses to their employees and have employees coming to them with files, reports and suggestions. Pearl is not happy when David holds her, her step-mother and brother to keep them safe. They went with him willingly but now he will not let them go. She expresses this in season 13, episode 3275 in the excerpt below;

Pearl to her father David: "Aargh...I left my life, my work, my career to be here with you. I deserve answers, Dad. What is going on? What is your plan?"

Several independent hardworking career women were portrayed in *Scandal*. Examples of career women include Layla who is the CEO of NFH, Boniswa who is a shareholder and was once the CEO of Thebelanga, she also owns a school. Thembeke is the marketing manager of Thebelanga who is very good at what she does. Grace is the Newtonian hotel owner of which she is a director. Hlengiwe is another character that is portrayed as a career woman and would not let anything get in her way. Hlengiwe, Amo's girlfriend is portrayed as a serious careerwoman. She got upset when Amo tried to touch her in the office. Below are some excerpts from Hlengiwe to Amo; (season 18, episode 3537)

"How could you do that? play footie footie under the table!"

"If you mess with my career again you will come last"

"I know this is a joke to you but i told you my career is no joke to me"

Majority of the women in the soap opera *Generations: The Legacy* are independent. They are either working for others in high positions or own their own businesses. Working for Ezweni, there is Ayanda, a board member and Tshidi who is made CEO after she marries Kabisi Moroka who nominates her as CEO at a board meeting; "the obvious choice for

this position is my wife, Tshidi Moroka” (season 29, episode 177). He later tells her “you are the new CEO.

Congratulations”. Zitha owns a successful construction company and has shares in other companies, Sphesile is a medical doctor, Lucy owns a shebeen, Bulelwa is a lawyer for Ezweni,

Maam Sonto runs an orphanage and Fikile has a high-end jewellery line business. Lucy is an independent woman who would not let her husband help her pay a *loan shark* she owes as she tells Cosmo; “I don’t need a man taking care of me. Look where that got Fikile” (season 28, episode 259). This suggests dependent women sometimes became frustrated after a divorce.

To sum, the women’s careers include CEO’s, doctor, lawyer, managers, business owners and board members. Also, there is a common characteristic among these women, apart from the Reneilwe and Grace who recently got married, they are without husbands or children or both. However, even the two that got married had an unsuccessful married life. Reneilwe who tried to buy a baby was later arrested by the police and Grace married a man who is interested only in her money.

k) Woman Represented as a Gold-Digger and emotionally dependant on men

There are no women in *Rhythm City* that depend on men for finance or emotional support. In the soap opera *Scandal!*, Sheila is one of the few women who is portrayed as dependent on a man. She relies on Neo for financial support. Neo provides for her and even pays for her birthday party. She is portrayed as a gold-digger as Yvonne points it out. Through their brief conversation we also learn Yvonne too has once been a gold-digger; (season 17, episode 3401)

Yvonne: “You’ve hit the jackpot”

Sheila: “Are you calling me a gold-digger?”

Yvonne: “It takes one to know one”

After being involved in a sexual affair with Ndumiso, Ndumiso pleads with Sheila to leave Neo for him. She hesitates so much that Ndumiso is angry and tells her that it is because of the financial supports she receives from Neo. This is shown in their conversation below; (season 18, episode 3567)

Ndumiso: "Or maybe you don't want to give up on the good life he is giving you"

Sheila: "I can't date someone who thinks I'm a gold-digger" (trying to end her relationship with Ndumiso for thinking she is a gold digger)

Ndumiso: "Then stop acting like one"

Apart from financial reasons, some of the female characters depend on men for physical security and emotional support. In *Generations: The Legacy*, Tshidi after running away from Jack while she is pregnant returns, however, she fears for her life knowing who Jack is. She decides to seduce Kabisi Moroka who is from a renowned family so that she can be physically protected from Jack. When Smanga threatens to tell Kabisi about their romantic history, she pleaded that she felt safe there and that Kabisi will kick her out if he knows in the following quote; "and then what, he will kick me out and Jack will kill me".

Also, another character who depends on a man for physical protection is Zitha. When she is being followed, she becomes scared to be alone and wants Jack beside her at all times. When Jack attempts to leave for a business meeting, she begs; (season 29, episode 69)

Zitha: "You can't leave me alone"

Jack: "I won't be long....the guards are on high alert, Kgosi is here, nothing will happen to you" Zitha: "Please don't go". This suggests a woman needs a man to feel safe.

Fikile is portrayed as a financially independent woman because of her divorce settlement. Even though her husband refers to her as a gold-digger, she makes him understand she is worth every penny; (Season 28, episode 259)

Fikile: "I supported you while you built your career"

Ben: "Exactly, I built it! You were just cashing in on it. You don't deserve the 20 million i gave you. But i guess gold digging was another thing you were good at" Fikile: "Go to hell".

Furthermore, when Fikile discovers Kumkani is cheating on her, Lucy tells her: “Don’t think that you are the only one that wants a rich and powerful man like him” (season 29, episode 69). This shows that many women are after rich men including Fikile.

l) Woman Represented as a Dumbhead

This includes women who are considered dumb by men and women. In *Scandal!*, Phindile tells her colleague Rorisang that she is preparing for her job interview to become a receptionist, she is mean to her and tells her “I knew you were dumb but I didn’t think you were this dumb” (season 18, episode 3593). Still in *Scandal!*, Hlengiwe insinuates Dintle is stupid and cannot do anything other than waitressing. When Dintle meets her in her office, she is surprised and asked what she was there for;

Dintle: “I’m here for a job interview”

Hlengiwe: “I wasn’t aware NFH was looking for a waitress” (season 17, episode 3401). (sarcastically).

In *Generations: The Legacy*, when Lesedi who is a secretary at Ezweni she tries to offer a client help with ideas about her advertising campaign, Jerah humiliates her in front of the client;

“Lesedi, how about you stick to the stuff you get paid for and leave the real work to the pros”

(season 29, episode 136). The client was however impressed with Lesedi. Often, women are considered dumb, naive and ignorant by men. The above excerpts show it is not just men that consider women as such, but women as well see fellow women as such.

m) Woman Represented as a Villainess

In *Scandal!*, Boniswa Langa is portrayed as a villain who killed her son’s father to prevent her secret from coming out, lied to her son that he did it instead and drugged him so bad that he loses himself in the process and eventually ends up in a mental hospital. Furthermore, Boniswa also lied to Chumani about Mr Xaba “It appears that Loyiso Xaba maybe a paedophile” (season 17, episode 3421). This caused a strain in the relationship

between Chumani and Mr Xaba. She went ahead to ask Mr Xaba to resign from his job as the principal of her school, move out of Bisho and never contact her or her son again.

Below is a conversation between Boniswa and Mr Xaba from season 17, episode 3421;

Boniswa: "I'll destroy you"

Mr Xaba: "Not if I destroy you first, I'll tell the whole world what a monster you are and you'll lose everything, you will lose your children"

Boniswa: "How dare you, I made you. I built your career and I'll destroy it" (Fights ensues and she murders him).

Thembeka is also portrayed as a villainess; she frames innocent Mary, the secretary of Thebelanga as being the one leaking out company information which costs her and her job. Moreover, she together with Mthunzi tried to bring Thebelanga down, she helps Mthunzi to execute his revenge on the Langas'. She tells Mthunzi; "i'm going to play to Boniswa's ego, get the job, get into the company and sabotage it from within" (season 17, episode 3496). She was once accused of murder. She is not to be trusted, when she got caught and the table got turned, she did the same for the Langas' against Mthunzi. She poisoned Mthunzi and helped the Langas' retrieve the money Mthunzi stole from them. This betrayal resulted in Mthunzi killing her. Below is an excerpt after she poisoned him;

Thembeka to Romeo: "mission accomplished, Mthunzi is puking out his guts as we speak...you have no idea how satisfying it was to give him that dodgy sushi" (season 18, episode 3537) In *Generations: The Legacy*, Zitha is portrayed as a villain. She, together with Kgosi killed the pharmacist, after Jack broke up with her, she said she wished she had killed him and immediately joins forces with Kumkani, Jack's enemy and rival to steal from Jack.

Summary of Motherhood Roles in Selected South African Soap Opera

Summarily, the following female gender roles were identified; Mother/matriarch/nurturer, Housewife and homemaker, model, tenacious in their relationship, socialite,

menial/stereotypical jobs worker, sex object, object of honor, emotionalist, career-independent woman, gold-digger, dumbhead and villainess. The most prominent roles were the mother/matriarch/nurturer role, sex object and the career-independent woman while the least prominent roles were socialite, object of honor and dumbhead. These results suggest that women are still being represented in gender stereotypical roles. Even though these roles are present, on the other hand, many more women are being portrayed in roles that were previously dominated by men like working out of the home (career-men). Despite this, the sex object role has still remained prominent which does not portray a good image of the woman. Also, it was noted that, the sex object role is not just for women who are financially needy; the woman doing menial job and the career woman still continue to be portrayed as such. Another role identified is the socialite role. This role is new and unique to this study. The woman is not a housewife nor working but does not have financial issues. She always dresses well with nice clothes and makeup. This portrays a woman in a negative light, with her physical appearance being the main focal point as if it is the only thing she has to offer. No woman was portrayed having all the model-like qualities. This suggests that the women's beauty is being embraced in different sizes, colours and shapes.

Manhood:

a) Man Represented as Fatherhood

Mzi is portrayed as a father. He has a soft spot for Dikeledi, a single mother and her baby despite the risk of what her boyfriend will do to him. He is shown on several occasions taking care of Dikeledi's baby, carrying him and washing baby bottles. He takes care of Dikeledi's baby for several days when she is admitted at the hospital after being beaten by Hammer.

When he visits Dikeledi at the hospital, she is really grateful and thanks him;

Dikeledi: "thanks for keeping him safe and looking after him"

Mzi: "you know that i will do anything for him" (season 14, episode 3425).

Also, he is devastated when Morena, the baby is finally killed and blames himself for not doing enough to protect him. Bra Kop is also portrayed as a father figure. He is just a driver and opens his home to many children that are not biologically his despite being poor and guides them often. In *Scandal!*, Lerumo becomes the father figure in Tebello's life when Yvonne leaves the country.

He, together with his girlfriend, Yvonne foster Tebello. When Yvonne travels out of the country, Lerumo takes complete charge of Tebello. He lives with Tebello, takes him to school; they eat meals and play together. He always makes sure he is fine and observes his mood swings so closely that he tells when something is wrong.

b) Man Represented as Apathetic

Furthermore, a character like Khulekani was shown to lack emotion when he had a discussion with his wife about her affair with his worst enemy. In their discussion, he still manages to stay calm that got his wife angry and confused. His wife is surprised as she asks him to show some emotions;

Nandi: "Khulekani, why so quiet? Talk Khulekani, say something... Hey show some emotion!"

Show me you care about this marriage. Scream, shout, do something...fight for us"
(season 14, episode 3421)

c) Man Represented as Rich

The male characters that play the main role are portrayed as very rich. In *Rhythm City*, these are David Genaro, Khulekani and Suffocate. They are all successful businessmen, gangsters and some like khulekani do some few illegal dealings on the side. They own businesses; hence they are their own bosses. These men are not emotional as their faces hardly reveal true emotions. They always keep a straight face that leaves many guessing what they could be up to.

In *Scandal!*, majority of the men who play the main roles are portrayed as wealthy and are their own bosses. Neo is an ex-convict and co-owner of the Newtonian hotel. He is financially stable and lives permanently in the hotel. His wealth attracts a gold-digger, Sheila, who gets into a relationship with him for financial gains. Also, there is Quinton who owns a nice snack bar and the head of a family newspaper company. He was once CEO of the company but later stepped down and is busy taking vacations abroad. He visits from time to time to make important decisions. He lives in a nice pent house and has a maid. Like Quinton, Chumani is also a young, rich and independent man who is CEO of a successful family construction company. He lives with his mother in a nice pent house.

Generations: The Legacy is characterised by a lot of men who are financially very comfortable and either their own bosses or bosses in an organisation. Characters like Kumkani and Jack Mabaso are the two main gangsters in the show who own shares in Ezweni, a reputable advertising firm with illegal businesses on the side. They have errand men that execute most of their illegal deals and are always shown taking about millions. Moreso, Kumkani is owner of an upscale residential/business complex (Siqualo). These two men are always in competition with each other about who is the bigger boss and both live in nice comfortable houses. Cosmo is another gangster that is his own boss, though not as rich as the former, he is financially fine. He is the owner of Skaftin chicken (a fast-food restaurant) and does illegal businesses on the side. He works closely with Kumkani and Jack. Other male characters who are financially stable and business owners or bosses in an agency include Mrekza, a classy snack bar owner, Tau is a shareholder at Ezweni and also does some illegal activities. Also, in the Moroka household, there are successful men like Mazwi and Smanga who live in a mansion, dress well, have maids and guards and are major shareholders in the family company Ezweni. They take pride in maintaining their reputation, and protect the wealth which they hope to transfer from one generation to another.

However, not all the male characters are rich. In *Scandal!*, when Gloria asked her ex-husband to provide bail money for their son Kgosi, he is unable to provide and said; "I

don't have much money, it's not the end of the month, I can't give more than that" (season 17, episode 3500). He offers to give just 1000 Rand.

d) Man represented as a Villain

In *Rhythm City*, Suffocate, David and Khulekani are represented as villains. They are all murderers who have killed one or more persons. David is responsible for the murder of Khulekani son and Suffocate's brother. This ignited the urge for revenge and together, Suffocate and Khulekani killed David Genaro. Also, Khulekani in his attempt to revenge on Suffocate for sleeping with his wife plants a bomb that ends up killing Kgomotso, suffocate's girlfriend. Also, these are gangsters who are feared in the community.

Similarly, some of the male characters in *Scandal!* are represented as villains. These include Romeo, Neo and Mthunzi. These characters are very manipulative and will do whatever it takes to get what they want including murder. Romeo is portrayed as a very smart guy who uses illegal and dangerous ways to make his problems go away. He protects his mom from men whom he thinks are gold-diggers. He says he has made sure all those men after his mother's money go away and warns Simo to expect the worst if he does not end his relationship with his mother "you need to watch your back from now on because big bro, accidents, they can happen" (season 18, episode 3645). Romeo's wife and his mother-in-law also know how dangerous he can be. This is confirmed when Boniswa makes the following remark to Xolile; (season 18, episode 3640)

Boniswa: "So you are finally admitting that your husband is dangerous".

Xolile: "He's just like you"

Furthermore, Romeo does not really care about his mother-in-law. He is aware that she has been held captive by Chumani but keeps silent. When he hears that the house where Boniswa is held will be up for demolition in two days, he is happy and remembers what Chumani said about killing Boniswa "Xolile won't find out that you knew about me locking up our mother and did nothing about it" (season 18, episode 3615)

Romeo is also the mastermind in exposing and identifying who Thembeke was spying for. He is also the mastermind who plots every step on how he wants Mthunzi to be dealt with. The excerpts below illustrate this;

Romeo to Thembeke: “Drug him. Phone me so i can talk you through hacking his laptop” (season 18, episode 3567)

Chumani to his mother “Romeo also thinks the world will be a much better place without you” (season 18, episode 3615)

Chumani is also portrayed as a heartless son. He executes revenge against his mother, holds her captive and even drugs her. He told Romeo of his plan “I’ll have to kill mom”. (Season 18, episode 3615).

Neo is portrayed as a reformed gangster; however, he continues to use aggressive methods to resolve his issues or express himself. When he learns that Sheila was cheating on him, he takes a gun to Chillax, hoping to kill the man who was sleeping with his girlfriend. Also, Neo reveals to Tebello, a boy of about eleven years old about his gangster life of drugs, jail and guns.

Furthermore, Mthunzi is also portrayed as a villain, he plans a revenge against the Langas and when things didn’t go as planned, he murders Thembeke for betraying him.

In *Generations: The Legacy*, Jack Mabaso and Kumkani are both portrayed as gangsters and the two most dangerous villains. They do not think twice about inflicting pain on anyone who double-crosses them and do whatever it takes to achieve their illegal desires even if it means committing murder, which they have done many times. Learning Kumkani, also known as

Gadaffi was behind the heist where his money was stolen, Jack gets so angry and said “Gadaffi wants war” (season 29, episode 211). Furthermore, below is a conversation he had with one of his hitmen in season 29, episode 211).

Jack: “How did Gadaffi die”

An employee: "He's dead?"

Jack: "I mean the real Gaddafi. The Lybian, the great leader Muammar Mohammed Abu Minyar Gaddafi"

Worker: "How did he die? i don't know"

Jack: "He died in a ditch, bayoneted, dirty, hungry, crying like a baby"

The above conversation highlights Jack's anger and how he plans to retaliate on Gaddafi. Also, Kumkani sets up a drug dealer's second in command for being a snitch so that his main rival 'the Ghost' will get arrested. This resulted in the second in command's death and his boss the ghost get arrested. When Cosmo who is not aware Kumkani is behind this heard of 'the ghost's' arrest after killing his second in command, he informs Kumkani and his responds was a kumkani usual. He replied with no emotion; "I'll do the same thing, people like me cannot afford to have snitches around them" (season 28, episode 230). This suggests he too can be that ruthless and will do the same to anyone who double crosses him.

e) Man represented as a womaniser and sex offender

In *Scandal!*, Amo is presented as a sexual abuser who touches women inappropriately without their permission. Lily Juice and Ingrid were the two victims that reported him. When he is first reported, he was given the benefit of doubt but when the second woman, Ingrid reports him, he was given a warning. He later apologised to Ingrid. Below are some of the excerpts from both women;

Lily Juice: "So yesterday I went on a shoot with Amo, he made me feel uncomfortable, a sexual harassment kind of way" (season 18, episode 3537)

When Ingrid's father (Wesley) and Dintle learn of what Amo did, they separately gave him a piece of advice as elaborated below;

Wesley to Amo: "Laying your hands on a woman who is not your partner without permission, that's always a power play, and we men we do it because we are trying to

assert dominance whether we realise or not, women don't like that and they have right to challenge it" (season 18, episode 3567). This above excerpt shows men often feel the need to assert their dominance over women. The use of the word "we" symbolises generalisation, hence it is a common phenomenon.

Dintle to Amo: "If you want to touch a woman, ask first. Let her say yes or no" (season 18, episode 3567)

Dintle to Amo: "Women are tired of being treated with no respect. The way men act around women, your attitude must change, full stop" (season 18, episode 3567).

The above excerpt from Dintle to Amo shows women too are aware of the dominance men display over them.

Still in season episode 3567, he feels bad and has to say this to Dintle and Amo in the extract below;

Amo to Dintle: "I don't want to be the guy women avoid because they think I'm some sort of a sexual predator".

Amo to Layla: "Now you think I'm some kind of a sex crazed predator or something? Boss I would never force myself on a woman".

In *Generations: The Legacy*, Kumkani is portrayed as a womaniser. He has a girlfriend, Fikile but yet still pays for Palesa's (a prostitute) services. He wants Palesa all for himself because he sees his ex-wife in her, for example, during one of their romantic encounters he tells her;

"that's it, my wife used to rub circles down there" (season 29, episode 70). Lucy even describes him as "a man with a wondering eye" (season 29, episode 69).

Furthermore, Mpho is a young character who dates an underage girl, Nontle and an older woman, Fikile with a wide age gap. Fikile, is his father's ex-girlfriend, a divorcee with kids who are close to his age. Even though Fikile is an ex-lover of Kumkani, Mpho cares less

and insist on pursuing a relationship with Fikile. Jerah is so shocked by Mpho's relationship with an older woman and asked; (season 29, episode 177)

Jerah: "Will you sleep with her?"

Mpho: "It's not every day a guy gets an offer from a sugar mama!"

This highlights moral deterioration in society.

Smanga is another womanising character who sleeps with his uncle's fiancée few days before their wedding. He demands sex from her in order to keep their past relationship a secret. Mavusana and Joshua Warren are sexual offenders. These are two characters who are involved in attempted rape and rape respectively. Joshua Warren raped Ayanda and several other women whom he made to sign a non-disclosure agreement. He even boasts to his lawyer saying "those women signed non-disclosure agreement; you don't have to worry about them" (season 29, episode 23).

Ayanda is the only woman that reported Joshua and in an interview said;

"To get justice for the women who have suffered in the hands of Joshua Warren....i'm not the only one Joshua Warren has done this to...you strike a woman you strike a rock" (season 29, episode 23).

Only the other hand, after an attempted rape on her by Mavusana, Ayanda's daughter, Nontle never reported the crime. Mavusana warns Mpho to ensure that the crime is never reported. Mpho recounts what he said to his father; "he told me I must make sure Nontle doesn't press charges or he's coming for me" (season 29, episode 106).

Also, 'the pharmacist', who is Zitha's secret lover drugs her and have sex even when she is unconscious. When Zitha tries to end their romantic relationship, he gets furious. Below is an excerpt from season 29, episode 70;

Zitha: "we are not doing anything"

The Pharmacist: "oh no, not yet"

Zitha: "That's not why i called"

The Pharmacist: “I don’t care, that’s why i came”

“You don’t get to tell me no; you don’t get to decide what i do to you”. This constant act of sexual abuse by ‘The Pharmacist on Zitha eventually led to his murders. Zitha, with the help of Kgosì killed the ‘The pharmacist’.

No character in *Rhythm City* in the selected episodes was portrayed as a sex offender and a majority of the men with such traits came from *Generations: The Legacy*.

f) Man represented as a Spy and Manipulator

In *Scandal!*, a lot of the men are very manipulative. Mthunzi uses Vincent as a spy so that he can plan his revenge on the Langas; “I said spy on Romeo and Xolile” (season 17, episode 3469). Also, Vincent in turn asks Vernon who works in a bar where these two often visit to spy on them as well; “I need you to be an extra pair of eyes” (season 17, episode 3469). Mthunzi in an effort to get allies wants Vincent to identify more enemies of the family. This further highlights this role; “I need you to identify someone who had bad blood with Thebelanga” (season 17, episode 3500). Still in *Scandal!*, Neo is also portrayed as a sneaky man who suspects that Sheila his girlfriend is cheating and employs a spy to follow her. Hence, he does not trust her.

This eventually turned out he had a need to be worried as Sheila was infact cheating on him.

However, when she noticed she was being followed, she confronts Neo; “If I find out you are having me followed, I’ll leave you” (season18, episode 3535). Neo in turn gets angry and reprimands the spy for being caught; “you’re useless, you don’t get caught if you are a spy, do you understand?” (Season 18, episode 3535). He later asked Ndumiso to spy on Sheila, ironically, the man sleeping with his girlfriend “I want you to keep an eye on Shishi all the time” (season 18, episode 3535). His friend Ndumiso is not trustworthy.

In *Generations: The Legacy*, Jack is always having someone spied on. In an effort to confirm

Tshidi’s death, Jack secretly placed a bug in Sphe’s handbag to be able to hear whether Sphe will reveal any any information about Tshidi’s death. Also, Smanga and Mazwi are always spying on Tau and Kumkani, the first time was when they realised they were using

the church for money laundering and second was when they were drugging the horses. Smanga pretended to be blind to spy on Tau.

g) Man Represented as a Gold-digger

In *Scandal*, Simo is portrayed as a gold-digger, together with his girlfriend Violetta move into a hotel with an agenda to dupe Romeo, his half-brother of R5 million Rand as highlighted by Violetta to Simo; “so Romeo’s naivety is our golden ticket to heaven, he trusts you” (season 18, episode 3624). When it becomes unsuccessful with Romeo, he moves to his mother. He is portrayed as a gold-digger who dates and later marries an older wife Grace who happens to be the mother of his half-brother just to get his hands on her money. Many people recognise that this is a marriage of financial convenience. Grace’s son (Romeo) tries his possible best to prevent the wedding from taking place and even calls him a “gold-digger”. He warns Simo to stay away from his mother. Some of the excerpts include; (season 18, episode 3645).

Simo: “i can have feelings for whomever i want”.

Romeo: “Dude please, you don’t have feelings for my mother! Okay, you lied to her so you can get into her bed, so you can get your hands on her money”.

“you are just like Caesar, a lying selfish gold-digger”.

“Stay the hell away from my mother!”.

Simo: “Or what”.

Romeo: “You’re not the first loser to go after my mom’s money. I’ve seen many and they’ve come and they’ve gone, mainly because i’ve made sure that they go”.

“...I protect my mom from vultures like yourself”. The excerpt suggests like women, men too are gold-diggers and like to depend on women for financial gains. This also shows many other men are like Simo. Also, from the above extract, one can say Romeo is his mother’s protector against gold-diggers. He is not to be messed with.

Still in *Scandal!*, Caiphus is another man that depends on a woman. He is Gloria's boyfriend and depends on her for a place to stay. He lives with Gloria, her son Kgosi and Gloria's ex-son-in-law Ndumiso. When he tells Gloria that he thinks her son Kgosi is guilty of stealing from the community, Gloria tells him to pack out and later to move back in; The excerpts below elaborate on this; (season 17, episode 3500).

Gloria: "Pack your bags and get out of my house right now, Caiphus".

Days later, Gloria apologises and tells him he can move back in which he did very happily like there was nowhere for him to go.

Caiphus: "So when should i move back in?".

Gloria: "Today".

h) Man Represented as a Model

These are men that are tall, dark, muscular and fit. In *Rhythm City*, Mzi and Suffocate are portrayed as physically fit and muscular men. Holding his biceps, his wife told him "I think social media will love your muscles" (season 13, episode 3275). In *Scandal!*, the men are physically fit, like Lerumo and Mthunzi. Most of the men in the soap opera *Generations: The Legacy* are physically attractive; they are often portrayed in the gymnasium. Mazwi and Kumkani are regularly shown in the gymnasium. They are both very muscular men. Some of the men like Mazwi, Tau and Smanga are often well dressed in suits and other corporate wears while a man like Kumkani always dresses in more casual clothes. They are often shown in the office in suits looking very smart. Still in *Generations: The Legacy*, when Cosmo dresses up in a suit for his campaign, something he never does, Lucy is impressed and makes the following remarks; "It's time to show those girls out there what they are missing" (season 29, episode 69). This suggests women are impressed and attracted to a well-dressed man.

However, not all the men are physically fit. The soap soap operas embrace a diversity of men in relation to their physical appearance. For example from *Generations: The Legacy*, Mrekza has a protruding stomach and Kabisi is an overweight man. In *Rhythm City*, Khulekani and

'Fats' are obese men.

Summary of Fatherhood Roles in Selected South African Soap Opera

Summarily, male roles identified include father, gold-digger, rich, villain, spy and manipulator, and model. The most prominent roles include villain, spy and manipulator while the least prominent roles include father and gold digger. Overall, the results indicate the men are still represented in stereotypical roles. However, there is an improvement in the representation of men in contra-stereotypical roles like father. The very unique result to this study is the gold digger role. Also, men are represented in different shapes and sizes instead of the typical muscular model appearance.

Queer.

a) Queer Represented as Object of Decoration

In *Rhythm City*, there are two representations of queer which are Jamaica, a gay guy and Zintle, a lesbian in her teens. While there are no oddities with Zintle, Jamaica is represented as a decorated flamboyant gay who makeup and sometimes does his hair like a woman. He has female mannerisms which makes it easy to identify as gay. At one time, his friend Fats described him as handsome and beautiful as described in the excerpt below;

Fats to Jamaica: "Wow, Jam Jam, you are not beautiful and handsome for nothing...you've got brains man" (season 13, episode 3316).

b) Queer represented as an unrequited lover

This refers to having strong romantic feelings towards someone who does not feel the same. Hence the love is unreciprocated and leaves them in pain. The queer characters represented in this study were all in a relationship however, they all were in a once off relationship that was very brief. In *Rhythm City*, Jamaica was briefly in a relationship with a married man, Khulekani who appears to be a heterosexual. However, this relationship does not last. Like Jamaica,

Zintle, Khulekani's daughter is also a lesbian in a once off relationship with a heterosexual. When her brief relationship ended, she attempted to commit suicide.

On the other hand, in *Scandal!*, Chumani and Tshepo are two gay guys involved in a reciprocal romantic relationship. They both work in the same office with Chumani as the CEO and Tshepo as his marketing manager. Tshepo once told him "it's just that..., hard to keep my hands off you, you know" (season 17, episode 3401). However, their relationship is a once-off secretive affair that did not last as well. After their relationship ended, Chumani is hurt and stopped going to work everyday.

Queer represented as emotionalist

In *Rhythm City*, Zintle is emotional after her breakup with Kea who said making love with her was a mistake, that she is not a lesbian. In *Scandal!*, Chumani cannot cope with his breakup from Tsepo and he is very emotional. Mary tells his mother; "He's been missing a lot of work since he and Tsepo broke up (season 17, episode 3458). Also, when his mother, Boniswa made Chumani to think that he killed his biological father and later saw Tsepo after a long while, he still could not control his emotions and told his mom when she asked if he was alright;

Chumani: "No, I feel lonely" "I have no one to talk to" "Xolile never comes to visit me". When Boniswa tells Chumani he has her, he responds sarcastically; "mother is more like an accomplice" (season 18, episode 3537).

Summary of Queerhood in South Africa Soap Operas

Queerhood had the least representation and study results identified the following roles; object such as an unrequited lover and emotionalist. Compared to the women's role, queers are presented in roles that are very similar like emotionalist. Also, their physical appearance is diversified. While some queers are hard to easily identify like Chumani and Tshepo, a queer guy like Jamaica is easily identified. These results suggest acceptance of queer diversity in soap operas. However, secrecy in the relations indicate that they are afraid of public disapproval.

Together, these results provide important insights into gender roles, their similarities as well as differences. Diversity in physical attraction is evident in this study. While the women are still being portrayed as sex objects, it directly compliments the men’s behaviour of being a womaniser. However, in other roles the men still remain the dominant gender in relationship to their female counterparts. Even though there are many career women, a majority of the men have moved past careers and engage in illegal businesses and still live financially comfortable lives compared to women. Furthermore, the results suggest that queer romantic relationships have not been fully embraced and are presented as once-off secretive affairs.

4.2.4 TRENDS OF GENDER PORTRAYAL ACROSS THE THREE SELECTED SOUTH AFRICAN SOAP OPERAS

*This refers to the trends that run across all three soap operas.

Table 9: Trends in Gender Representation in the Three Selected South African Soap Operas

Gender presence in all the three selected soap operas:

<i>Rhythm City</i>	<i>Scandal</i>	<i>Generations: The legacy</i>
Male	Male	Male
Female	Female	Female
Queer (lesbian, homosexual)	Queer (homosexual)	

From the table above, the three soap operas have a gender representation of males and females. However, while *Scandal!* and *Generations: The Legacy* have an equal presence of both genders, *Rhythm City* has more women than men. Furthermore, only *Rhythm City*

and *Scandal* have queer representation. While both have a portrayal of homosexuals, only *Rhythm City* has a lesbian represented.

Age representation in all the three selected soap operas

From the findings, a common trend among the three selected soap operas is that, the majority of the characters represented are between the ages 30-45 years for both men and women in all the three soap operas. However, all the soap operas have an age group or more where no gender representation is portrayed. For example, there is no representation of female characters beyond 66 years in *Rhythm City* and *Scandal!*. For male representation, the three soap operas have no representation of ages 16-18 and 66+ years.

Representation of labour roles in the Three Selected Soap Operas

Analysis of the three soap operas shows a representation of skilled and unskilled labour for both genders. In *Rhythm City* women in skilled jobs include Ziyanda, Lerato and Pearl while those with unskilled jobs include Sindiswa and Mampho (who used to be waitresses). On the other hand, those involved in skilled jobs include Mzi whereas unskilled workers include Sabello, a waiter. In all three selected soap operas, many of the women work outside their homes as well as men. There are males and females in *Scandal!* represented in the same job, for example for receptionist, there is Phindile and Timothy CEO's, Quinton and Layla, waiter/waitresses (Dintle and Vernon/Ndumiso/Kgosi) and cleaners (Gloria and Caiphus). In *Generations: The Legacy*, for CEO, there is Mazwi and Tshidi, business owners, there is Fikile and Mrekza, Lucy and Cosmo. However, there were very few jobs where only a particular gender is portrayed prominently. Only females were portrayed as domestic workers.

Positive and Negative Representation of Gender in Selected Soap Operas

Even though both men and women are represented in positive as well as negative roles in the three soap operas, more men than women are negatively portrayed. The bottomline is that both males and females were represented in positive and negative roles in all three

soap operas. The characters negatively portrayed for females include Zitha and Tshidi in *Generations: The Legacy* and Thembeke and Boniswa in *Scandal!* and Lerato and Kgomotso in *Rhythm City* represented like murderers and those who betrayed love ones. For the men, in *Rhythm City*, there is David, Suffocate and Khulekani, Mthunzi and Chumani for *Scandal!* (murderers) and Jack and Kumkani for *Generations: The Legacy* (murderers). For the positive female roles, in *Rhythm City* there is Blossom (mother), *Scandal* there is Yvonne (nurturer) and Gog'Flo (matriarch) for *Generations: The Legacy*. For men represented positively, there is Bra Kop for *Rhythm City*, Lerumo for *Scandal!* and Mrekza for *Generations: The Legacy*. Summarily, the men are more of villains than women.

Table 11: Dominant themes across the three selected soap operas

<i>Rhythm City</i>	<i>Scandal</i>	<i>Generations: The Legacy</i>
Motherhood	Motherhood	Motherhood
	Polygamy	
Fatherhood <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biological father • Caregiver 	Fatherhood <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster father • Estranged father 	Fatherhood <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopted father • Biological father
Family	Family	Family
Crimes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drug dealing • Fraud • Murder • Gang robbery and murder 	Crimes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Murder • Stealing • Kidnapping 	Crimes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drug dealing • Fraud • Money laundering • Gangs killing • Murder • Kidnapping
Marriage	Marriage	Marriage
Love and romance	Love/romance	Love/romance

Infidelity	Infidelity	Infidelity
Revenge and conflict	Revenge/conflict	Revenge/conflict
Superstition	Superstition	Superstition
Family	Family	Family
Violence	Violence	Violence
Gender discrimination	Gender discrimination	Gender discrimination
Inheritance	Inheritance	
	Betrayal	
Divorce	Divorce	Divorce
Secrecy and shame	Secrecy and shame	

The above table shows a common trend across all the three soap operas. The themes represented in all three soap operas include motherhood, fatherhood, crime, marriage, love/romance, infidelity, superstition, violence, revenge and conflict, gender discrimination and family.

In *Rhythm City*, Dikeledi expresses her feelings to the numerous beatings she has been taking from her boyfriend, Hammer in season 14, episode 3425; “he knew I was serious this time, that it was over between us... and his kicks and punches may have broken my body but my spirit is still strong”.

The Moroka family is so united and take care of each other. When Fikile becomes emotional about her breakup with a married man, Mazwi, Lucy warns her: “Chomie, just be grateful it ended this way, otherwise it would have been worse...if the Moroka family found out, trust me,

I know you don’t want to be on their wrong side” (season 28, episode 228).

Under crime, murder is the one crime that runs across all the three soap operas. In *Generations*:

The Legacy, after discovering Aliko's lifeless body, all doubts are put to rest as Mazwi tells Tau in season 29, episode 211; "It turns out he didn't just take off, someone murdered him". In *Rhythm City*, when Khulekani discovers that Suffocate Ndlovu is sleeping with his wife, he is devastated as he tells his guard that "Ndlovu is sleeping with my wife" (season 14, episode 3421). When Sphe found out that her husband had been cheating, she gives him an ultimatum saying

"Fikile, divorce lawyer and an ugly custody battle or me, our family and the life we've built, you can't have both" (season 28, episode 228).

In *Scandal!*, even though Thembeke and Quinton are no longer together, Thembeke warns Mthunzi "I swear if you've harmed him, I will kill you" (Season 18, episode 3581).

Grace to Simo: "It will break my heart if you are messing me around" "I am falling for you hard" (season 18, episode 3636).

Also, in *Scandal!*, Yvonne plays the role of a protective mother when Tebello's biological mother reappears to take her son back. Yvonne and Neo are not sure of how good of a mother she will be. The excerpts from season 18, episode 3636 illustrate this;

Neo to Lerumo: "That woman is not fit to be the boy's mother" "That woman is just here for our money".

Yvonne: "What if she takes Tebello and disappears". However, Seipati is also portrayed as a protective mother who abandoned her child to make sure that he is safe. She tells the social worker that "I had to sacrifice having my child until I could get away from Bohang and start a new life (season 18, episode 3636).

In *Generations: The Legacy*, Lesedi finds it hard to cope without her son after dropping him off in Rustenburg as Sphe tells Jerah;

"She has to adjust to life without her child, Jerah but she is not adjusting" (season 29, episode 121)

Looking at crimes, *Generations: The Legacy* has a longer list of crimes with murder being the most represented across all three soap operas. Also, fraud, drug dealing and

homemaker appear in two of the soap operas, *Rhythm City* and *Generations: The Legacy* while the other sub-themes under crime appear in just a single soap opera.

Still under crime, murder is the one crime that runs across all the three soap operas. In *Generations: The Legacy*, after discovering Aliko’s lifeless body, all doubts are put to rest as Mazwi tells Tau in season 29, episode 211; “It turns out he didn’t just take off, someone murdered him”. In *Rhythm City*, when Khulekani discovers that Suffocate Ndlovu is sleeping with his wife, he is devastated as he tells his guard that “Ndlovu is sleeping with my wife” (season 14, episode 3421). This eventually led Kumkani planning his revenge which led to the murder of Suffocate’s girlfriend.

Brian is a bad son who beats his father until he ends up in the hospital, Brian began feeling bad about it but Mpho encourages him that he did the right thing; (season 29, episode 121).

Mpho to Brian “Do you want to go to jail for teaching a man a lesson when he beat you up all your life? Your father doesn’t deserve your sympathy”. Also, in season 28, episode 228,

Kumkani is shown strangling a man as he begs for his life “Please don’t kill me”

Table 11: Gender roles identified in all three selected soap operas for females

<i>Rhythm City</i>	<i>Scandal</i>	<i>Generations: The Legacy</i>
Mother/nurturer/matriarch	Mother/nurturer/matriarch	Mother/nurturer/matriarch
Model	Model	Model
Menial and stereotype job	Menial and stereotype job	Menial and stereotype job
Sex object	Sex object	Sex object
Object of honour		Object of honour
Career-independent women	Career-independent women	Career-independent women

Gold-diggers and emotionally dependent	Gold-diggers and emotionally dependent	Gold-diggers and emotionally dependent
	Dumbhead	Dumbhead
Socialite		
Emotionalist		Emotionalist
Tenacious		Tenacious
Housewife and home maker		Housewife and homemaker
	Villainess	Villainess

The above table shows the roles that run across the three soap operas include mother, model, menial and stereotypical jobs, sex object, career-independent woman and gold-digger.

In *Generations: The Legacy*, Lucy is portrayed as an independent woman who does not want to depend on anyone for anything, not even her husband. When her husband hears that she is owing someone money, he tried to pay off the debt but she refused as she tells her brother “He wants to pay him but I don’t need his help!” (season 28, episode 259).

In *Generations: The Legacy*, Palesa portrayed as a sex object makes Kumkani to understand that he cannot just have sex with her as he pleases without paying. The excerpt below from season 29, episode 70 illustrates that;

Kumkani: “I called and called, what were you doing?”

Palesa: “I was with a client; I couldn’t get away”

Kumkani: “Next time when you are with a client and I phone you, you drop it and come to me” Palesa: “Excuse me?”

Kumkani: “You heard me”

Palesa: “I’m not your girlfriend. And if I’m with another client you just have to deal with it”

Kumkani: “So this is about the money?”

Palesa: “Ofcourse it’s about money” (Kumkani hands her an envelope with money) “So it’s for how long”

Kumkani: “A month, we’ll talk afterwards”

In *Generations: The Legacy*, Ayanda is a protective mother who is worried about the friendship her daughter Nontle has with Mpho who is a gang member and begs her to end it;

“I appreciate what he did to you but as a mother, I can’t let you be around people who shoot others” (season 29, episode 101)

Table 12: Gender roles identified in all three selected South African soap operas for males

<i>Rhythm City</i>	<i>Scandal!</i>	<i>Generations: The Legacy</i>
Model	Model	Model
Villain	Villain	Villain
Spy and manipulator	Spy and manipulator	Spy and manipulator
Non-emotional		
Father	Father	
	Womaniser and sexual offender	Womaniser and sexual offender
	Gold digger	
Rich man	Rich	Rich

For the males, analysis of the three soap operas shows that the roles present in all the three soap operas include; villain, rich man, model, spy and manipulator.

In *Scandal!*, Romeo is portrayed as the villain in his dialogue with his mother-in-law;

Boniswa: “There’s the real Romeo we know”

Romeo: “I’m the villain now but I’m the accomplice when you’re in desperate need for help” (season 17, episode 3436)

In *Generations: The Legacy*, Kgosi knowing how dangerous Jack can be and go against him tells Kumkani that he will give him the evidence against Jack but wants protection saying “I have the gun and I was there when Jack shot the pharmacist...can you protect me from Bra Jack? He will hunt me down and kill me” (season28, episode 228). Also, when Jack tells Zitha that he has forgiven someone that betrayed him, Zitha is surprised and says “its unlike you to be so forgiving” (season 28, episode 228).

Table 13: Gender roles identified in the selected soap operas for queers

<i>Rhythm City</i>	<i>Scandal</i>	<i>Generations: The Legacy</i>
Unrequited lover	Unrequited lover	
Emotionist	Emotionist	
Object of decoration		

The queer role is represented in two of the soap operas, *Rhythm City* and *Scandal!*. There is no queer representation in *Generations: The Legacy*. Hence, there are no trends that run across the three soap operas in queer representation.

4.3 CONCLUSION

This study sought to analyse gender representation in three selected South African soap operas. A content analysis was carried out to identify the gender representation (in terms of presence, age, occupation and behaviour), themes, roles and gender trends that were present in the three soap operas. The results show that a majority of the characters represented for both male and female were between the ages 30-45 years and 24-29 years and an underrepresentation of characters who are 66+ years. However, going down to the other age groups show that only women were portrayed in the 16-18 years age group. Furthermore, while all the soap operas had the presence of both men and women representation, *Generations: The Legacy* did not have any queer representation. Also, the men and women were represented in similar jobs, both white- and blue-collar jobs.

Some of the most popular themes include motherhood, family, marriage, love and romance, divorce, gender discrimination and shame/secretcy. Even though gender roles in the results vary within the different genders, some appear to be very similar. Gender roles for women include mother/matriarch/nurturer, sex object, career-independent woman and villainess. Similarly, the men's roles identified include fatherhood, womaniser and sexual offender, rich and villain. There are also a few trends identified in the results that run in all three soap operas like themes such as family, marriage, violence and gender-based violence, gender discrimination, revenge and divorce and roles like mother, sex object, gold digger and career-independent women.

Overall, these results indicate that compared to men, women were portrayed as younger as there was no male character between 16 and 18 years. This result could indicate a slow acceptance of queers in South African soap operas. Also, the results suggest an effort made to bridge the gender stereotype gap and combat gender discrimination which was highlighted as an issue. Even though still slow, queers are slowly gaining recognition. The next chapter discussed the findings, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research results from the previous chapter (chapter 4). A content analysis was carried out in three selected South African television soap operas, that is *Rhythm City*, *Scandal!* and *Generations: The Legacy* broadcasted on e.tv and SABC 1. Furthermore, the chapter provides a conclusion after an overall reflection of the findings of the study. Recommendations for future studies were provided based on the findings of the current findings.

5.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.2.1 GENDER REPRESENTATION IN SOAP OPERAS

The results of this study shows that both males and females were represented in all three soap operas, however queer representation was present only in two of them, that is *Rhythm City* and *Scandal!*. The current study found that in *Rhythm City*, there was a higher representation of women than men, almost double in number. This finding is the direct opposite of Daalmans et al. (2017) in Netherlands on the men-targeted channel where women were significantly underrepresented. In *Scandal!*, even though there were more women than men, the difference was not very significant. Unlike the two soap operas above, *Generations: The Legacy* had an equal representation of both men and women. This is consistent with the study by Motsaathebe (2009) in South Africa which had an equal representation of both males and females and a total absence of queer, and Daalmans et al. (2017) in the Netherlands which had an equal gender representation on the female-targeted channels.

This result is not surprising and supported by the findings of many past studies like, Anam (2019), Achando (2017), Arokiaraj (2017) and Anamika (2014) who limited gender

representation to male and female and neither acknowledged the presence or absence of queers in their studies. Even though queers were portrayed in *Rhythm City* and *Scandal!*, the focus on their sexuality was a once-off thing and these are supporting and not main characters. These findings support the idea of Dow (2001) where gays were mentioned but often portrayed as a once-off event.

These results indicate that heterosexuals are still considered superior over other sexualities since they make up majority of the cast. The lack of adequate representation of queers on television is unfair and shows that there is still a lot of hesitation regarding queer acceptance. The media has the power to create a real impact and accelerate acceptance, however, this is not done appropriately. The media in a way is influencing the public as to which sexuality is more important than the other. What people watch on television feeds into how they view the world, hence channelling these views into society controls people's perception of queers. With such perception, queer people in society will be treated lesser than others. Furthermore, few or no queer representation on television makes queer people in society to feel less accepting. Currently, South Africa is still experiencing a lot of queer discrimination and hatred. Even though the queer relationship has been legalised, there is still a lot that needs to be done to normalise the presence of queers. There are reports in the news of constant killings of gays and lesbians. This has made them to live in fear and even hide their sexuality. On the other hand, even though very few queer characters have been represented, it can still be considered something positive and a step in the right direction. Like heterosexuals, queers too need a role model to look up to and more media representation should be encouraged. Including more queers on television can have a positive impact of queers in the society and create greater acceptance.

Also, the difference in the number of queers represented compared to heterosexuals is very significant. There was one homosexual and one lesbian character represented in *Rhythm City* and two gay characters in *Scandal!*. A possible reason for such a result could be due to the fact that gays are often referred to as the 'other' with negative stereotypes and as moral degenerates (Sehlabi, 2012). Hence bringing in a lot of queer characters

might have been seen as a distraction to some audience who see them as such. Presenting them as such could be a way of acknowledging their presence and at the same time ignoring their importance.

Another important but not surprising finding is the age groups of the characters. Findings indicate a great concentration or more representation of characters aged 30-45 and 24-29 for both males and females in all the three soap operas. This is consistent with the study by Lacalle and Gomez (2016), where majority of the main characters were between 30-45 years. However, this is in contrast with Ashfaq and Shafiq (2018) where the findings show that majority of the women were relatively very young, precisely between 18-20 and 20-26 compared to the men. Furthermore, there was a total absence of men aged 66+ years and very few female characters of the same age range. This study shows a negligence in the portrayal of men and women above 66 years and younger men between 16-18 years.

Having just women represented in the age group 16-18 indicates that women were portrayed to be much younger compared to men. A possible reason for the portrayal of women far younger than men may be to maintain the male dominance on women. Also, older women representation may indicate a higher life expectancy for women. Men are risk takers due to stigma, masculinity, peer pressure and gender roles. They often engage in dangerous behaviours such as involvement in drugs and delay in accessing professional healthcare which may affect their lifespan.

Both men and women were represented in skilled and unskilled jobs, with many women now working away from home, doing paid jobs. These findings mirror those observed in previous studies like Arokiaraj (2017) and Jana (2016) in India where more women were portrayed working outside their homes. Skilled jobs by both genders include, CEO, company manager and company board members while unskilled jobs by the genders include cleaners and waiter. Even though there are some great improvements with having more working women, in line with Lacalle and Gomez (2016), there is an overrepresentation of working women and men, underrepresentation of unemployed and

retired people. This does not reflect what is going on in South Africa which has been experiencing a lot of unemployment.

In the current study, soap opera has been used to reflect gender equality with regard to occupation. South Africa is one of the countries that has embraced 'the equal right and equal opportunity for all'. This goes to show that gender equality is being embraced in the workplace and will encourage greater acceptance and equal opportunity for both genders. Hence people will not be afraid to pursue their dreams. However, an overrepresentation of the employment rate in South Africa is ridiculous and goes to confirm what Lamuedra and O'Donnell (2012:63) had to say about soap opera as an "exaggerated, far-fetched, stretching things, over the top, overboard, extreme, even ridiculous or surreal". Soap operas contain a lot of realistic aspects like incorporating societal issues into their narratives (Marx, 2018). This platform can be used to raise many other public issues and create topics for public debate like illiteracy and education.

Majority of the women as well as men were negatively portrayed in terms of behaviour. Most of the men in *Generations: The Legacy* were portrayed as gangsters, murderers, violent, womaniser, unfaithful and engaged in illegal businesses. This was also a similar case in *Scandal!* where men like Mthunzi and Amo displayed similar characteristics. In the current study, there were unfaithful married men like Mazwi in *Generations: The Legacy*. Furthermore, there were many other unfaithful men who, although they were in a relationship, had other partners. Some of the characteristics like unfaithful men is consistent with those of Gurkan and Serttas (2017) where the men were unfaithful and often kept a wife and a girlfriend.

There were a series of physical abuse on women and kidnapping of women like Boniswa and

Mthunzi's mother from *Scandal!* and a series of rape cases in *Generations: The Legacy*. Both men and women were involved in hard crimes like murder; this includes men like Khulekani, David and Suffocate from *Rhythm City*, Mthunzi from *Scandal!* and Kumkani, Mpho and Jack Mabaso from *Generations: The Legacy*. These findings further support the idea of Achando (2017) where some of the men in this study were presented as violent

towards women and what Ncube (2017) described as 'militarised' men who are violent and aggressive. A few women like Lerato from *Rhythm City* and Boniswa, Thembeke from *Scandal!* and Zitha from *Generations: The Legacy* were portrayed equally violent and manipulative. For these women, their character traits are in line with the women in Motsathebe (2009) who were described as manipulative, arrogant and selfish; however, the results of women as murderers have not been described in previous studies. Even though some of the women in the current study were negatively portrayed, majority of them were involved in non-violent crimes. The women who were negatively portrayed possess similar characteristics and character traits like those found in Ibrahim et al. (2017), being beautiful, successful and evil, while the good women from Ashfaq and Shafiq (2018) were described as submissive, piety, pure and domestic of which ma'am Blossom (from *Rhythm City*) in this study is a typical example. Some of the women in the current study were into drugs, prostitution and cheating. Also, a few of the women apart from Ma'am Blossom from *Rhythm City* were represented in a more neutral way. They were not negatively portrayed but their characters were dormant with nothing positive or negative to represent, like Grace, Mrs Ngema, Dintle and Layla from *Scandal!*.

Soap opera continues to portray the successful and evil woman on the one hand and the domestic, pure and good woman on the other hand separately. This implies that successful women cannot make good wives. This in other words is telling women to choose between their career or their family lives that will eventually affect the family and society in general. This limits women from reaching their full potential. Even though women and men are portrayed as murderers, women are often the victims, and men as perpetrators. This reflects South African society where female murder victims are often reported in the news. This study produced results that corroborate the findings of Anam (2019) where educating female children was discouraged by portraying a career woman who is unable to strike a balance between her professional and family life.

5.2.2 DOMINANT THEMES REPRESENTED IN SOAP OPERAS

The main themes identified in the selected soap operas are motherhood, fatherhood, family, marriage, love and romance, superstition, violence, conflict, betrayal, gender discrimination, inheritance, crime, infidelity, divorce, relationship secrecy and shame and revenge. In the current study, there were different types of mothers being portrayed, some as biological parent, single mother, teenage mother, adopted/foster and caregivers. While some of the females conform to performing their roles as mothers, some resisted this role and tried to live their lives as if the kids do not exist. An example of this is Yvonne's mother who because of her lack of warmth and care for her daughter caused her to run away from home at the age of 16 and only returned 20 years later. This shows resistance of the traditional role of the woman as women still want to do other things other than just being mothers. Apart from Yvonne's mother, Mme Betty, there were other women who even though they were mothers never had their children known and seen here and there like Yvonne from *Scandal!* and Sphe from *Generations: The Legacy*. These findings are in agreement with Jain and Pareek (2018), Badaoui (2016) and Lacalle and Gomez (2016) where the motherhood themes was very predominant.

Yvonne's mother falls between the mother and whore dichotomy as she was busy prostituting herself and did not have time for her daughter. However, she was finally obliged to raise a young boy of about 11 years old who was abandoned at her day-care. Also, she is punished for being a bad mom; she eventually regrets all her actions for not being a good mother and dies after apologising to her daughter. The role of the mother is elevated here, and shown as a very important role in that although Yvonne's mother resisted the role, a new plot was created to show her submission to this role. She finally fulfilled that feminine role in her life with Tebello, whom she took better care of. Hence, it can be said that, the role of the mother was elevated. The woman is often shown as the mother, especially single mothers but hardly the man as a single father and even if the man abandons the family or his role as the father/bread winner, he is hardly punished for it. This in a way shows a disassociation of the man to nurturing of children and the home which is considered a woman's place. There is no mention of Yvonne's father who should

also deserve punishment for abandoning his fatherhood role. These findings corroborate the idea of Neophytou (2012) who identified the mother/matriarch role. Specific roles from this study include single mother, matriarch and nurturer.

There is a gender stereotype in the way parenthood is being portrayed in soap opera. These findings highlight the struggles single mothers go through. The father's absence in a child's life has become a norm that has been normalise and it is shown to have very little impact on the child's life. The woman is continuously placed in the family role. This indicates that there is gender discrimination when it comes to parenting. The motherhood role is very important in a woman's life more than any other role; however, the fatherhood role is relatively not. This is consistent with South Africa where there are a lot of single mothers. Children in single parent homes are likely to live in poverty since there is only one source of income unlike a child living with married parents. This often puts women in the disadvantage because they are the ones often left with the children, putting both of them under psychological and financial strain. This has inspired a lot of reality shows in South Africa like "*no excuses: pay papgeld*" where absent fathers are being forced to be in the child's life and pay child support. The growth of single mothers in the society has affected family life.

To further reinforce the importance of being a mother, women have taken it upon themselves to fulfil that role at all costs and a woman who is not able to be one biologically will need to do something to remove the shame of not being able to bear children. Reneilwe from *Rhythm City* is portrayed as a woman that will do anything to become one who after her miscarriage tries to buy a baby from a pregnant teenage girl. All this in a way goes to shame women that have neglected their traditional roles as mothers and nurturers, including those that cannot bear children. It tells us that even if you cannot have a biological child, a woman has to find a way to fulfil that aspect in her life by raising children whether they are biologically hers or not. A lot of adoption/caregiving roles are portrayed in the soap operas. In *Generations: The Legacy*, this includes Tshidi, an adopted mother to Mpho, Gog' Flo, an adopted mother to Lesedi and a grandmother to Cosmo and Lucy who is the only mother figure in their lives. Lesedi also gave her child

up for adoption. Still in *Generations: The Legacy*, Palesa's mom committed an insurance fraud to ensure a bright future for her children tells us about a mother's role/responsibility and sacrifices she has to make in her child's life as a good mother. A mother is supposed to be selfless and puts her kids first. In *Rhythm City*, Blossom is also portrayed as a mother to children that are not biologically hers. In *Scandal!*, there is Yvonne who is a foster mother to Tebello. Again, these were used to highlight the fulfilment of the most important role in a woman's life; motherhood. Society often puts women under a lot of pressure to have children. On the other hand, the role of motherhood was devalued in the way Boniswa from

Scandal! was represented. Boniswa represents the 'evil mother', she lied to her son about his paternity, and drugs him until he became mentally unstable. Similar to Yvonne's mother, she too gets punished for being a bad mother as her son carries out a revenge on her, doing to her exactly what she did to him, putting her in isolation and drugging her. There are similarities between the behaviour of Boniswa and a mother's behaviour in Anam (2019).

This indicates that women's desperation to be mothers mirror what actually happens in the society. Women put themselves under a lot of pressure if they are unable to bear children.

Reneilwe from *Rhythm City* after stealing a child, gets caught and ends up in jail. This shows that soap opera discourages the illegal ways of having children and using women like Tshidi and Gog, Flo from *Generations: The Legacy* directs women towards the right legal route. Also, unlike fathers who are always absent, Palesa's mother from *Generations: The Legacy* who commits insurance fraud shows that mothers will do anything for their children to be happy even when they are dead. On the other hand, not all women are happy to take on the role of mothers and sacrifice for their children, like Boniswa from *Scandal!* who is portrayed as a bad mother is not a typical representation of a mother.

However, there is a single character, Phindile from *Scandal!* who resisted this role of motherhood, taking contraceptives to prevent pregnancy.

Even though her husband ended up marrying a second wife whom he had children with, she did not regret her decisions and only told her husband years later that she used contraceptives. This shows that not all women want to be mothers and people need to accept their decisions despite societal pressures.

In *Rhythm City*, Zintle is a victim of substance abuse and her father is a drug dealer. In other words, Zintle's drug dependent lifestyle is a product of her father's involvement in drug business, a strong retribution for her father's evil deed. It mirrors occurrences in the society, and serves as a strong deterrent to those involved in the drug business and those who may want to get into it in the future. All the three soap operas are characterised by murder. In *Generations: The legacy*, there is fraud committed through marriage where Cosmos marries Mei (a lady from China) so that she can obtain a permanent stay in South Africa even though they were not romantically involved. Also, another attempted marriage fraud by Reneilwe to marry a European guy still for the same reason occurs. Also, consistent with Marx (2008), the current study has crime as one of its themes, and this includes drugs dealing, murder, money laundering and fraud. This exposes crimes in South Africa. Frequently, crimes like resident permit fraud are being aired on the news, hence soap opera often mirrors reality even though some realities might be exaggerated (Knoetze 2015; Lamuedra & O'Donnell, 2013).

As noted in the literature review for this study, soap opera is often characterised by love and romance and the current study is no exception. A predominant theme found in the soap operas in this study is marriage. In the current study, all the three soap operas had a lot of married couples, and in some, like *Scandal!* and *Generations: The Legacy* there were newly married couples like Grace and Simo, Xolile and Romeo and Tshidi and Kabisi. A woman like Grace Medupe who is a rich and successful business woman sees marriage as a fulfilment of her being a woman. She resisted to see the signs of the marriage as a scam and even conflicts with her son who tried to advise her against marrying the man (Simo) she wanted to marry. She is in an age-gap marriage with someone much younger than her. To further emphasise her desperation to get married and to show the importance of marriage in a woman's life, she married her son's half-

brother. She is even embarrassed by this and will not want anyone to know. Being aware of the negativity her marriage will set off and still going further with the marriage confirms what Badaoui (2016:4) said in his study that “in the shadow of a man is better than a wall shadow”. This shows the important position that marriage plays in a woman’s life in society. However, even though the importance of marriage is emphasised in a woman’s life, some women do not see it as such but marry with focus on their personal agenda. Women like Tshidi (*Generations: The Legacy*) and Violetta (*Scandal!*) are typical examples. Tshidi married to get protection from the Moroka family against her dangerous gangster ex-husband, Kumkani in *Generations: The Legacy* and Violetta from *Scandal!* married Mamba because of his wealth. This suggests the need of man in a woman’s life for protection and financial. The portrayal of relationship and marriage is also highlighted in Zitha’s storyline. She is a very successively business owner but rarely shown in an office environment. The plots about her relationships are given greater priority. However, Cosmo committed marriage fraud and married Mei even though they were not romantically involved but as a way of helping her obtain a permanent resident permit to be able to stay in the country. Similarly, Reneilwe also attempted to do the same and reluctantly stopped after public suspicion. This is consistent with the findings of Ndayi and du Plooy (2019) where the marriage theme was also predominant.

Most of the marriages like Simo and Grace’s from *Scandal!* ended badly. They had a very brief marriage. Similarly, Violetta from *Scandal!* married Mamba for his wealth which resulted in cheating. This shows that marriage out of desperation or for reasons other than love often ends in unhappiness. Furthermore, the marriage fraud committed by Cosmo and Mei from *Generations: The Legacy* and attempted marriage fraud by Reneilwe from *Rhthym City* exposes what is currently happening in South Africa. Some foreign nationals marry South African citizens in order to obtain a permanent stay in the country. This is a constant issue reported by the department of Home Affairs. Sometimes, people that do not know each other and are not in any romantic relationship commit such fraud. This is illegal and can lead to arrest and jail time.

Also, there were people who were actually in romantic relationship like Lerumo and Yvonne in

Scandal!, Kumkani and Fikile in *Generations: The Legacy* and Sindiswa and Sabelo in *Rhythm City*. This is consistent with studies like Anam (2019); Jain and Pareek, (2018); Ashfaq and Shafiq, (2018); Ibrahim, Yunus, Shah, Ilias and Mokhtar, (2017); Neophytou, (2012); Marx, (2008) which were also characterised by a lot of romantic relationships.

This indicates that in most of these relationships, the couples are happy. This could be because there were no hidden agendas and their love and intentions were pure. Some of the couples were rich and some poor, however, they still fell in love. This tells us that love cannot be forced nor does it depend on material possessions and people can fall in love with any person regardless of being rich or poor.

Furthermore, the current study found a lot of evidence of violence towards men and women by men as the perpetrators. This includes physical abuse, insults, physical assault, swearing and sexual harassment. In *Rhythm City*, Dikeledi is a victim of physical assault by her boyfriend on several occasions that often leaves her with cuts all over and even ending up in the hospital. In *Scandal!*, Seipati is a victim of gender-based violence who was also assaulted by her exboyfriend. In *Generations: The Legacy*, there are several cases of violence like physical assault, rape and attempted rape with the men as perpetrators. For instance, Kumkani assaulted Joshua Warren and Jack also physically assaulted Abeo. In accordance with the present study, previous studies like Khan and Zaheen (2011) and Anam (2019) have demonstrated the presence of violence where a majority of the victims were women.

This indicates that abusive relationships often develop into something even more dangerous or fatal. Dikeledi from *Rhythm City* ended up losing her son and Seipati from *Scandal!* had to abandon her son with someone else to keep him safe. Women need to be strong enough to move out of unhealthy abusive relationships when they start seeing the signs. They do not need to wait until things get out of hand. This reflects the South African society where the daily news always reports a lot of murders of both men and women. There are often reports of dead bodies found in many parts of the country with

majority of the victims being women. Staying in abusive relationships could lead to murder. Recently, the President Cyril Ramaphosa called out names of many female victims that were murdered while addressing the nation. The number of domestic violence cases against women in South Africa rose to its peak from when the first lockdown was announced. This has fuelled the national campaign against violence especially on women and children. Portraying domestic violence on television is a way of inviting the public to empathise with victims and respond to calls for help.

Furthermore, there is also a strong evidence of family ties in this study. Like typical South Africa or African families, families are intertwined with one another through either friendship, marriage or a child. In this study, family is shown as a very important aspect of life and they look up to one another. This is especially typical with the Morokas' (*Generations: The Legacy*). For example, when Jerah got Lesedi pregnant, she was reprimanded and the family offered to adopt the baby and raise him better 'like a Moroka'. Tshidi in *Generations: The Legacy* confides her secrets and plans with her mother, whether good or bad, and she proved faithful in keeping her secret. This is consistent with Anam (2019:10) where a daughter's mom was her 'secret keeper'. These types of family bond indicates that a true and close knitted family is a strong source of both inner and outward strength, encouragement, resilience, and succor for its members, they show the importance of family, family ties, values and honour. This is similar to previous studies such as Ndayi and Du Plooy (2019); Neophytou, (2012) and Marx, (2000), (2008), which are characterised by family life,

This study was characterised by revenge especially from the men. In *Rhythm City*, Suffocate revenged on David for killing his brother, also, Khulekani revenged on David for killing his son. In *Scandal!* after a bitter divorce, Mthunzi is out for a revenge on his in-laws and in *Generations: the Legacy*, there is always conflict between the gangsters like Kumkani and Jack Mabaso. A possible explanation could be a way to exercise inter-male dominance. This fight for power goes on throughout in all the soap operas. This indicates the dangers of careless pursuit for power, the absence of peace in the life of the wicked,

and that the law of retribution often takes its course in life. Revenge, as a theme, was not found in previous studies.

Divorce was prominent in the three soap operas. Many divorce couples were portrayed. For example, divorced couples like Puleng and Suffocate from *Rhythm City*, Mthunzi and Xolile, Thembeke and Quinton, Gloria and her husband and Phindile and her husband from *Scandal!* and Tshidi and Kumkani and Fikile and Ben from *Generations: The Legacy*. A few of the characters like Phindile and Fikile who used to be housewives decided to follow their dreams after their divorce. To them, it made them see the world differently and regarded it as being free. Even after pleas from her husband to be reunited, Phindile is determined not to go back to him. In all these cases, none of the divorced characters was reunited with their partners. This reflects the serious family situation in the modern society, and that even though marriage is often portrayed as one of the most important things in a woman's life, the women do not often see it as such and want more for themselves. This finding is similar to Ibrahim et al. (2017) where a woman after being abandoned by her husband pursued her university education and moved on to become a successful lawyer.

Both men and women were unfaithful to their partners in this study. In the current study, characters that cheated include, Boniswa and Sheila from *Scandal!*, Khulekani and Nandi from *Rhythm City* and Kumkani, Tshidi and Mazwi from *Generations: The Legacy*. There are no previous studies found where women cheated on their partners. However, the same cannot be said of the men. According to Gurkan and Serttas (2017), the men were cheating even though they had wives.

Instances of superstition were evident in the shows. For example, in *Scandal!*, Gloria advised Ndumisi to kill a goat because people keep having heart attacks at his business place. Also, there are sangomas (traditional healers) in *Rhythm City* and *Generations: The Legacy*. Characters are shown consulting a sangoma to know the future. In *Generations: The Legacy*, Kumkani performed some traditional rights to help his death son cross over to his ancestors. These indicate the old belief system of the society, and

it is consistent with Anam (2019), where superstition is taken seriously; a dark-skinned girl is forced into marriage with a sick man so that he can get healing.

Furthermore, the theme of fatherhood is represented through the use of biological, foster, bad, good, and adopted fathers. Even though these are few, there was a representation of good as well as bad fathers. Most of the foster and adopted fathers ended up having good relationships with the children they were taken care of, like Lerumo from *Scandal!* and Bra Kop from *Rhythm City*. Some of the irresponsible fathers even though were biological fathers ended up losing relationships with their kids, for example Hammer from *Rhythm City* ended up killing his son and Romeo from *Scandal!* talked badly about his father and did not want anything to do with him. He even called him a “sperm donor” and did not want to have any relationship with him.

Through soap operas, adoption and fostering is encouraged. Just because people are not related biologically does not mean a relationship cannot be possible. Showing children being treated better by their foster family than their biological family stimulates the practice of such relationship in society. Achando (2017), made reference to the irresponsible father who was beaten by his wife for neglecting his role as a father and head of his family.

Discrimination, particularly, gender discrimination continues to be a stubborn problem in the society as portrayed in this study. Male children are still treated specially and regarded as the better gender than the female children. This is evident in this study. The theme of gender discrimination was highlighted in this study in relation to inheritance and leadership. In *Rhythm*

City, Ma'am Blossom was hated by her brothers for being made the sole heir of a family land since she was a woman and in *Generations: The Legacy*, Lesedi who had a son out of wedlock got the attention of the Morokas' because it was a male child. The treatment of gender discrimination in the above two soap operas is conflicting, while *Rhythm City* promotes Gender equality, *Generations: The Legacy* promotes gender discrimination.

Also, gender discrimination in the workplace is highlighted in *Scandal!* when Mthunzi (a man) tells Thembeke that Boniswa is ambitious but overlooked by men. Similarly, in *Generations: The Legacy*, Tshidi also complained to her mother about her issues in the workplace and that she is only trying to survive in a male-dominated world. The finding of gender discrimination in this study is consistent with Sachdeva (2018) where a female child was discriminated against when her father refused to let her climb mount Everest.

Gender discrimination is something that is very common in the African society and South Africa in particular with women being the most discriminated against. Gender discrimination is an ageold issue that is still rampant in the society. Despite many years of democracy and government effort to end gender inequality in South Africa, it is still very common. Gender discrimination is found in civil societies, among individuals and in corporate organisations. In *Rhythm City*, gender equality is encouraged when Blossom is declared an heir despite her brothers' disapproval. However, in *Generations: The Legacy*, the male child is preferred to the female child. This could cause depression of women during child bearing who may wonder whether they will give birth to the preferred male gender. Also, people of marginalised genders could also become miserable. This result was supported by Sachdeva (2018) where female feticide was practiced. Also, discrimination in the workplace may cause depression and a barrier to women's advancement at work and this reduces their economic security.

Gender discrimination has a tendency of extending to gender abuse especially against women, including sexual harassment, rape and violence. This discrimination often stems from the toxic masculinity concept which makes men to feel superior and dominate what they may consider as undervalued or who can be dominated. It is important for society to be aware of the impact of gender discrimination, hence, the government should invest on educating the public on the effects . Also, it is important for the government to not only put in place laws of employment that allow a certain percentage of women to be employed in an organisation and advance in their career but to ensure that these laws are actually implemented.

Many viewers will be happy that this topic on gender discrimination has been touched on, however, there is a conflicting stand on what soap opera is trying to portray. Viewers will be happy when a woman like ma'am Blossom from *Rhythm City* was made heir. However, the fact that her brothers were so angry about it shows entitlement of the male gender. This creates family conflict which makes one to ask if its really worth it. She gains the title of family heir and loses family in the process. Thus, it negates the effort to portray gender equality.

If the brothers of Ma'am Blossom had shown support and acceptance of the decision that a girlchild was made the heir and owner of the family land, it would have encouraged other men who may possibly be faced with such circumstances in the future. However, the way it was presented shows that it is still a taboo in the society. *This Generations: The Legacy* shows that gender discrimination is encouraged where girls or women are still not allowed to be heirs or inherit properties. However, on the otherhand, highlighting the issue is a step in the right direction. Also, the fact that Ma'am Blossom was finally declared the heir and owner of the family land shows changing roles of women.

5.2.3 Gender-based roles in soap operas

Based on the current study, the researcher found that a few women were represented as mothers/nurturer/caregiver. Various types of mothers were portrayed of which the most prominent were single mothers. Some of these single mothers include Puleng, a divorcee and Dikeledi, a single teenage mom from *Rhythm City*, Boniswa, Gloria and Seipati from *Scandal!*. The study portrays the struggle of a single mom, like Dikeledi who was kicked out by her father when he found out that she was pregnant, Seipati also faced a lot of hard times and had to abandon her son for months at a creche while running away from an abusive boyfriend. Gloria is a single mother that is portrayed as the "good mother" because she is selfless and put her child first, trying her best to provide for him from working as a cleaner. Lesedi from *Generations: The Legacy* is also portrayed as a young single struggling mother that found it hard to cope with her child and had to give him up for adoption. Still in *Generations: The Legacy*, Palesa's dying mom commits an insurance

fraud of one million rand to make sure that her child is taken care of when she dies. Furthermore, almost all of these women struggled a lot financially which impacted on their kids negatively. For example, Dikeledi tried to sell her baby, and in an attempt to keep the baby had to stay in an abusive relationship that led to the death of her baby by her abusive boyfriend. Gloria's son resorted to stealing and ended up in jail, Seipati abandoned her child with a stranger which affected the child's mental state as he had to move to stay with another person after his caregiver died. This finding is in agreement with Ibrahim et al. (2017), where a single mother who is sick with cancer had to endure to take care of her three orphaned children from her cleaning job and selling recycled items. In South Africa, the number of single parents keeps growing with the women as the primary caregivers. Conventions like schools, media and religious establishments still consider an ideal family to be a father, mother and child/children. Some of the consequences on children in single parent homes includes limited emotional, social and financial resources. Children often end up dropping out of school due to financial struggles as the parent does not have that privilege of enjoying in a dual income home. Some end up with a teenage pregnancy and due to poverty, some turn to committing crimes and doing drugs. Also, in this study, a single man, Ben from *Generations: The Legacy* was portrayed as a single father who won custody of his children after his divorce; however, he is never shown with the children. This dissociates a man's role from being a caregiver and makes it look like it is a woman's job. Based on the findings, one can conclude that soap opera has continued to portray the woman in a stereotyped manner. However, more males presented as single parents would have been included to change the societal conception of a woman being the primary caregivers. Also, these soap operas just mirror what is happening in the South African society, there are lots of single parents out there who are struggling alone to raise their kids. Studies in agreement with the current study that highlight the role of the mother/nurturer include Jain and Pareek (2018), Achando (2017), Ibrahim et al. (2017), Lacalle and Gomez (2016) and Khan and Zaheen (2011).

There are a few 'bad' mothers portrayed like Boniswa from *Scandal!*, unlike Gloria, who do not care about her children. She keeps Chumani's paternity hidden his whole life. The

child only discovered in his 20s. To prevent the biological father from having a relationship with the child, she killed him and accused the child of killing his own father. To prevent the secret from being revealed, she drugged her son several times that he ended up in a mental hospital. This corroborates the findings of Anam (2019) who showed a mother who conspired against her daughter-in-law and Ibrahim et al. (2017) where a mother plots to destroy her own daughter's wedding. This shows that not all women are ready to take up the role as self-less mothers who put their kids first. This may cause mental stress on a child who holds her mother with such high esteem and trusts her, believing that she is the only person that can never hurt them. In the future, these children?? may find it hard to trust people or make friends. Also, this could strain their relationship with the parent, for example, Chumani revenged on his mother by locking up his mother in a cage and drugging her.

A prominent role highlighted in the current study was the career woman. Majority of the women from all the three soap operas were portrayed as career/independent women who were working like CEOs, doctors, lawyers, board members, police officers, radio presenters, directors, business owners and managers. This includes women like Boniswa, Layla and Grace from *Scandal!* and Tshidi, Lerato, Zitha, Ayanda, Fikile and Sphe from *Generations: The Legacy*. Despite the glorified portrayal of more women in the work place and as independent career women, the study also indicates that these women are unfulfilled in their personal or family lives. Most of them were either single, with no children or had a dysfunctional family life. This is true for Kgomotso from *Rhythm City* who is an accomplished police officer, a job typical for men. She is portrayed as a female police officer who has adopted some male traits like being stern, emotionless and lacking compassion. More so, in her quest for love, she meets a tragic end when she is killed in a bomb set by her boyfriend's enemy. Also, a married woman Sphesihle who is a doctor feels unfulfilled and lacks romance in her life which makes her resort to cheating on her husband. In *Scandal!*, Layla the CEO of NFH is portrayed as a hardworking single lonely woman who is unfulfilled in her love life. She has an on and off gain relationship with her boyfriend Wesley. In *Rhythm City*, Ziyanda and Lerato are two successful women both

CEOs also portrayed as lonely women without husbands or children. Grace is the director and owner of the Newtonian hotel but lacks a partner almost all throughout the show and when she finally gets a man, he is there to dupe her. Most of these women live in nice houses, however, the main focus of their role is work. This is similar to the current study which portrays a successful woman like Boniswa in *Scandal!* as a widow who is heartless and lacks the motherly feelings for her son. She hides her son's paternity and made him believe he killed his own father and later drugged him for weeks after which makes him end up in a rehabilitation centre. She is a representation of a bad mother. In *Generations: The Legacy*, there is Fikile, another successful woman who is not fulfilled in her personal life. She owns a successful jewellery line and is a divorced woman with no custody of her children. She is in constant battle with her exhusband to see her children. This goes to show how important a child is portrayed in a woman's life for her to be fulfilled. In accordance with the current results, previous studies like Ashfaq and Shafiq (2018) and Anam (2019) have demonstrated the career woman to be successful, independent and unhappy, sometimes known as the 'imperfect woman'. The current study has failed to portray career women who can balance their professional and family lives, making women feel as if they cannot achieve both and have to choose between the two. Soap opera has continued to portray successful independent women in a negative light, a way of punishing them for neglecting their traditional roles. This is not true as there are many successful career women in South Africa who also have a happy family life. Here, soap opera has been used to reinforce or reintroduce an old practice instead of portraying what is happening in modern South Africa. This can negatively impact women's lives who plan to pursue a career and enjoy a family life. Many women may think that they cannot have it all and need to sacrifice one for the other.

Even though a majority of the women in the current study were portrayed as independent and strong, there were others that were dependent on men for financial and emotional support.

Even those they were successful in their career and did not depend on men for financial support, still they depended on men for physical protection and emotional support. This includes women like Tshidi who sought physical protection from Jack Mabaso who tried to kill her and Zitha who always depended on Jack for physical protection and emotional support. This study produced results that corroborate the findings of a great deal of previous studies like Anam (2019), Ashfaq and Shafiq (2018) and Achando (2017). Hence, the man is still placed as an essential part in a woman's life who will need the man regardless. If it is not for financial support, it is for physical or emotional support. No matter how tough most of these women are being portrayed, they are still shown to be the weaker gender which cannot do without a man's protection. The researcher can therefore conclude that soap opera has continued to put a man as an integral part of a woman's life that she cannot do without. Such representation has made single women in society to feel insecure and ashamed. Hence, women are made to believe that they must have a man to feel complete. This has caused women for the sake of being with a man, to remain in abusive relationships which may end up in murder.

Many women were being portrayed as sex objects which is not surprising. The findings show that a majority of the women especially in *Scandal!* and *Generations: The Legacy* are very manipulative and use their bodies to gain favours, keep secrets or make money. Women were portrayed as prostitutes and victims of sexual assault. For example, from *Generations: The Legacy*, Thembeke and Palesa are prostitutes, Zitha and Tshidi, two successful women often offer sex as a way of manipulating men to keep their secrets or do things for them they will not normally do. For example, Tshidi offers sex to Smanga to keep their relationship history a secret from his uncle who is her new fiancé. Mapula from *Rhythm City* dates a married man for money. Thembeke from *Scandal!* had sex with Mthunzi so she could get information. Also, a lot of the characters are linked to one or more romantic partners, for example, Zitha slept with 'The pharmacist', and Jack's business partner while she was dating Jack. Some of the men also used the women as sex objects like Jack who sent his Girlfriend, Zitha to sleep with someone in order to win

a contract and minister Nkaba who made his daughter to sleep with Jack in exchange for some business favours. Furthermore, there are several cases of rape and attempted rape. These results agree with the findings or previous studies by Lacalle and Gomez (2016) and Khan and Zaheen (2011). Soap opera has continued to objectify women as sex objects that may take a toll on their self-esteem and sense of security. Presenting women as sex objects have remained an old stereotype that still needs to be addressed. Such portrayal perpetuates sexual violence against women. The media is encouraging such objectification in the way it is portraying women as they are even offering themselves for sex in exchange for other things, making the woman to feel that this is all she has to offer. It was surprising to even see successful independent and educated women offering sex as a way of solving their problems. Here, one can conclude that objectifying women is a way of negatively compensating for women empowerment and independence, just to bring the woman down. This is so discouraging for women who are constantly made to feel that they should 'live in a man's world' and begin to self-objectify themselves and may begin to have anxiety about their physical appearance.

In the current study, most of the women are tough, independent and will not take any unfair treatment. However, a few characters like Fikile and Dikeledi try to shoulder on and tolerate the men in their lives despite being physically and emotionally abused. This was the case with Ayanda from *Generations: The Legacy* who was sexually assaulted by Joshua Warren. She was one the only woman that reported sexual assault. However, with the rest of the women Joshua Warren raped, they were made to sign a non-disclosure agreement, hence had no right or freedom to air their grievances. Also, Dikeledi from *Rhythm City* endured physical and verbal abuse from her boyfriend and was hospitalised on several occasion. Fikile from *Generations: The Legacy* was verbally abused by her boyfriend several times but she still stayed with him until the boyfriend ended the relationship in a humiliating manner. These finding concurs with some earlier observations like Kojoyan and Gevorgyan (2014) who showed that violence was used as an integral part of masculinity. Also, Khan and Zaheen (2011) thought soap opera was used to promote radical feminism where women who were victims of physical and sexual

violence took legal action to punish the perpetrators. Again, this shows women as subordinates to the men. The study shows that the men still continue to exhibit male dominance and superiority over women and the fact that some of the women did not report these crimes shows an encouragement of such behaviour by the media. This may affect victims physically, mentally and increase health costs. Some people may even die from it. This is a problem that is seriously affecting South Africa. The media constantly reports cases of physical abuse against women by their male partners and rape by strangers. Soap operas need to encourage boys to desist from such practices by demonstrating some serious consequences like jail time for perpetrators.

Also, the current study found the representation of villains through several characters like Lerato from *Rhythm City*, Boniswa and Thembeke in *Scandal!*, Tshidi and Zitha in *Generations: The Legacy* who are portrayed as villainesses. The women lack morals, are manipulative, vengeful and unscrupulous. These women are rich, independent, successful and educated. Some of them are murderers like Thembeke, Boniswa and Zitha. The findings are supported by previous studies like Lacalle and Gomez (2016) and Neophytou (2012). Most of these women never face any serious consequences for their actions and were never reported or punished. Soap opera often portrays two main types of women, the 'perfectly good' and 'perfectly evil' woman. In presenting the evil woman, content producers and writers need to make sure that such women get punished for their actions to discourage such behaviours.

Unsurprisingly, apart from being portrayed as professionals, women were portrayed in menial and traditional stereotype jobs like cleaners, housewife, domestic workers, prostitute, receptionist, secretary and waitresses. Contrary to expectations, men were also portrayed doing similar unskilled jobs like the women. Men were portrayed in contra-stereotypical roles like receptionist, waiter and cleaner. This findings of the studies like Achando (2017) and Dalmaans et al. (2017) do not support previous studies when it comes to representation of men. The possible reason may be an effort to end gender discrimination in the workplace and present a somewhat equal gender representation to

end gender stereotypes. Such representations should be encouraged to promote gender equality.

Furthermore, physical attraction/ decoration was a prominent representation in women. Women like Fikile in *Generations: The Legacy*, Nandi in *Rhythm City* and Yvonne in *Scandal!* dressed very fashionably. They wore heavy makeup, wigs, and jewellery. Also, there were some other characters like Palesa and Mapula that used to dress simply but when they started dating, they decided to change their way of dressing to present themselves as objects for male gaze. They start wearing skimpy dresses and heavy makeup. To further support this point, when Kumkani starts cheating on Fikile, she goes for shopping to elevated her look. This will obviously make viewers think that is the most important thing. This representation goes to show that the woman is only good as a fashion object for male gaze. A woman like Nandi who is a housewife always looks so gorgeous. However, no single woman fits the description and stereotype from previous studies like Ashfaq and Shafiq (2018) of a beautiful woman which they refer to as slim, young, tall, natural educated, submissive, piety and fair in complexion. On the contrary, the current study made reference to all types of women in shape, complexion, height, education and age. A diversity of beauty was embraced. Most of them are very attractive and physically decorated with lots of makeup and designer clothes to attract the men. For example, Fikile shops for new clothes when she learns Kumkani is cheating on her so she can impress him. Also, Palesa changes her way of dressing when she starts working like a prostitute. Like Palesa, Mapula is unrecognisable when she starts dating a married man. The study uses material things like clothes to play an important role in a woman's life, emphasising the fact that women are expected by men to present themselves in a certain way. Puleng from *Rhythm City* was disgraced for dressing in clothes which the man thought made her look 'older'. There is no instance where a man is portrayed as making all these efforts to please a woman. The woman's life continues to be controlled by a man in a lot of aspects and her physical appearance is given priority on how she must look for a man. Also, one can conclude that soap opera is encouraging women to spend on things like clothes and makeup. This maybe a problem for women who cannot

afford and believe this is the only way to keep their men attracted to them. This may make them forgo important things like adequately providing for the children and entering into debts and lifestyles they cannot keep up with.

Women and children are often being used as objects of honour. In this study, Ma'am Blossom and Zintle from *Rhythm City* are used as objects of honour. When ma'am Blossom gets high from eating drugged cookies, she goes and dances at kilowatt with the other women. Her husband is very ashamed of such a behaviour and makes the following remarks; "a married woman with two young girls at home who look up to her as an example.....wearing skimpy clothes and gyrating her hips on the dance floor for all to see" (season 14, episode 3409). The women also see themselves as an object of honour, wearing the crowns for their husbands. After finding out that the cookies they ate were drugged, they approach Cuba and say "your drugs turned us into disrespectful women. Dancing in a bar as though we have no husbands" (season 14, episode 3409). Also, in *Rhythm City* when Zintle tells her father that she was a lesbian, he was mad and sees it as an embarrassment on him and the family. He refuses to accept that she is gay and wants it to be kept a secret. These findings are in agreement with Anam (2019) where the women were seen as object of honour by the men who made decisions for them. These women even faced physical assault for dishonouring the family. Again, men continue to exhibit their dominance over women. These women also see themselves as a source of their husbands' pride and believe that the way they behaved reflected on their spouses. This shows that the woman's own desires are not taken seriously and to maintain this position of honour, the woman will need to lose her identity and individuality. Furthermore, when that line is crossed, object of honour often results into violence against women like honour killings or assault. Men always try to be in control over women's sexual and behavioural conduct. This exhibits men's continuous dominance over women. Soap opera has failed to challenge such traditional male dominance over women. Instead, it reinforcing these behaviours.

b) Men

Some of the men are also presented as physically attractive. Majority of the men like Kumkani and Mazwi from *Generations: The Legacy* were constantly in the gymnasium exercising to improve their looks. In *Rhythm City*, men like Suffocate and Mzi looked muscular and fit as well. However, a few potbelly men like Kabisi and Mrekza from *Generations: The Legacy* and Khulekani from *Rhythm City* were also portrayed. This result differs from Gurkan and Serttas (2017) where the men were portrayed as physically attractive, fit, muscular and sporty. Soap opera has embraced diversify and challenged the stereotype in the physical presentation of the men. This may help to boost men's confidence who will not put themselves under pressure to obtain a particular look.

Both male as well as females are promiscuous. This is not surprising as previous studies referred to the man as such, which is linked to having more than one partner and the women being used as sex objects. Men like Kumkani in *Generations: The Legacy* and Khulekani and Suffocate in *Rhythm City* had more than one partner. The man as a sexual aggressor is also portrayed through several cases of rape and attempted rape of which the women are the victims. The men see the women as sex objects and try to use them as such. For example, in *Generations: The Legacy*, Smanga wants sex in exchange for his silence about his romantic relationship history with Tshidi from his uncle who was about to marry Tshidi. Also, Mavusane attempts to rape a 16 year old and Joshua Warren succeeds to rape several women of which only one of them, Ayanda reported him while the others refused to. In *Scandal!*, Amo touches women inappropriately and was given a warning letter. This finding is supported by Ncube

(2019) where he identified the 'militarised' masculinity in one of his characters who was portrayed as a serial womanizer. This finding is in agreement with Khan and Zaheen (2011) who showed that some of the victims never reported their oppressors while a few did. This shows that male aggression is somewhat celebrated. This reflects the South African society where sexual assault is very common. This is detrimental to the victims' psychological state and causes a lot of emotional trauma and paranoia. While highlighting the issue is good, most of the perpetrators are not reported and go free without being

punished. Having sexual relationships with more than one partner can lead to sexually transmitted diseases, maternal deaths and complications and social condemnation. South Africa is a country with one of the highest number of cases with HIV which has taken a toll on the government's health department financially. Also, it is unethical to cheat on your partner. Many HIV patients get complications during child birth and die living orphans behind.

Even though a few men were portrayed in top leadership positions, a majority of the them had other successful side businesses and lived a more financially comfortable life compared to the women. They were portrayed as rich and were their own bosses. Also, most of the men were portrayed more like gangsters who do both legal and illegal business like Kumkani, Jack Mabaso, Aliko and Tau in *Generations: The Legacy* and *Rhythm City* there are such characters like Suffocate, David Genaro and Khulekani. While the women are running multi-million-rand organisations, majority of the men are their own bosses and use their legal businesses to hide behind their illegal dealings. In *Generations: The Legacy*, there are men in leadership positions in Ezweni like Mazwi, Tau and Smanga, in *Scandal!*, there is Lerumo who is a police officer and Pele is another police officer in *Generations: The Legacy*. Apart from these few, a majority of the men like David and Suffocate from *Rhythm City*, Quinton from *Scandal!* and Jack and Kumkani from *Generations: The Legacy* are their own bosses. This goes to show that the men are taking a step further to remove themselves from control and maintain a dominant position over the female. While the women's position has been elevated with more working women being portrayed, the men are maintaining their dominant position a step further away from the women. For example, in *Rhythm City*, Suffocate owned a Snack bar that also has a living complex, Kilowatt and is part owner of another successful snack bar, David owns a recording company and is co-owner of Zero 99. In *Generations: The Legacy*, a majority of the board members in Ezweni are men and the business is owned by the Morokas, a family made up of only men, Jack Mabaso is a board member at Ezweni and owns many other successful illegal businesses. Also, Kumkani is a board member of Ezweni as well and owns an apartment rental complex, he is also involved in illegal businesses, Cosmo

owns a fast-food joint and Mrekza owns a snack bar. These men are their own bosses and the fact that the men involved in illegal businesses are never caught or punished shows their superiority over the female gender. The findings are in agreement with the study by Ndayi and du Plooy (2019) which states that patriarchy is still promoted where men own more successful businesses and are very financially comfortable, while women were portrayed in subordinate roles.

Furthermore, a few men were portrayed as very strong, tough and non-emotional. For example, when Kumkani that heard his wife cheated on him, he maintained his composure even though he was so angry. His wife was confused and surprised, not knowing what her husband was thinking, she begged him to show some emotions. There are similarities expressed between the attitude of Khulekani and that of the men described by Achando (2019).

A Majority of the main male characters across the three soap operas in the current study were portrayed as villains. They are involved in crimes like murder, physical and domestic violence and always plotting to do evil. This includes characters who are constantly in conflict like Kumkani and Jack Mabaso in *Generations: The Legacy*, Suffocate, Khulekani and David Genaro in *Rhythm City* and Mthunzi in *Scandal!*. There are a lot of conflicts between these characters, that end up in murder. In *Rhythm City*, David kills Khulekani's son, Khulekani in an attempt to kill Suffocate ends up killing his girlfriend and Suffocate and Khulekani joined forces and killed David. They are villains and commit evil without thinking about the consequences.

For example, besides all of the men mentioned above being murderers, Khulekani deals in drugs that have destroyed many kids' lives in the community, however, he is not willing to stop. They assault females as well as males. In *Generations: The Legacy*, Kumkani and Tau kidnap and assault Joshua Warren and Jack Mabaso assaults and kills Abeo and Aliko. The men continue to fight for power. They have little regard for human life and are feared in the community and find pleasure in it. They use aggression as a solution to most of their problems. In *Generations: The Legacy*, when Jack Mabaso threatened to kill Tshidi who was pregnant and ran away with her child. Hammer from *Rhythm City* is also

very aggressive, he beats his girlfriend often and destroys people's properties out of anger. He destroyed Mzi's furniture and attempted to burn down Bra Kops house when his girlfriend ran off to stay with them. She got so scared and remained in hiding for a while. When she finally returned, she seduced and married Kabisi, head of a renowned family in order to get protection. This is consistent with Anam (2019) where women's rights were being violated, however, no murder cases were mentioned in previous studies apart from mere threats. The findings further corroborate the idea of Ncube (2019) who identified the 'militarised' masculinity as one of the four types of masculinities. These are men that are violent, aggressive, physically and verbally abusive over men and women. This portrays patriarchy and inter-male dominance. Patriarchy affects different areas of society like work, family life, culture and relationships that may translate to gender inequalities, mental health, domestic violence and sexual assault.

There were just two characters that depend on women. These are Simo and Caiphus. One for finance and the other for a place to stay respectively. Simo is portrayed as a cassanova who married Grace, a much older woman for her money. Caiphus on the hand depends on his girlfriend Gloria for a place to stay. She kicks him out when she is angry at him and bring him back in when she wants. This is new as there were no previous studies with such a finding.

This shows economic emancipation for women who are now financially independent.

On the other hand, few men were portrayed as father figures who took care of the children. Even though they are few, this is a great improvement as there are no previous studies where this role has been represented positively. For example, usually a woman retains custody of the children after divorce but with Fikile, she gets the reverse, a contra-stereotypical role. It should be noted that the father role does not necessarily just mean being the biological father of a child but being a good father like being there to offer advice, and playing similar functions typically done by the mother. Mzi and Bra Kop are the only father figures that actually display a genuine interest in children. Mzi is portrayed as a father figure even though his relationship with the child is not biological. The unequal representation of women as mother and men as fathers goes to show that it is not a man's

duty to raise children. A single character Ben, wins custody of his children after a divorce, however, he is never shown together with the children playing the father role in their lives, hence supporting the idea that men were not made to be 'fathers'. Also, for a man to win custody of the children is not typically, this goes to encourage men who find themselves in similar situations to believe they too can be as capable in raising kids like the mothers. Moreover, in the three soap operas, there are a lot of single mothers like Gloria, Yvonne's mother, Dintle, Layla and Seipati in *Scandal!*. In *Rhythm City* there is Dikeledi and Puleng and in *Generations: The Legacy* there is Ayanda. On the other hand, apart from Ben who is never shown with children, there are no single fathers. Also, the representation of a lot of single women goes to expose the irresponsibility of men to fulfil the father role in their children's lives and families. Men have abandoned their father roles and need to step up. This is contrary to Achando (2017) where a woman even goes as far as beating her husband for not fulfilling his role as head of the family. Having father figures represented in soap operas is a step in the right direction even though they are still few. This is an encouragement for men to be better fathers.

C) Queers

In *Rhythm City*, there are two queer relationships, one is a lesbian and the other is gay. However, romance in the queer relationship is portrayed as a once-off thing and one of the partners in these relationships is not known to be of that sexuality. These relationships are kept a secret and sometimes not reciprocated. Also, Khulekani is not happy that his child, Zintle is a lesbian.

Some of the queer characters portrayed in the current study are confused about their sexuality. For example, Kea who was in a once-off romantic relationship with Zintle, was filled with regrets after their sexual encounter and said she is not a lesbian. Similarly, Khulekani who is married to Nandi, a female, has a sexual relationship with Jamaica, a gay man. It can be said that, he too is confused about his sexuality as he does not identify

as gay. This finding is supported by Sehlabi (2012) who reported that gays are promiscuous, confused about their sexuality and move from woman to man.

In *Scandal!*, Chumani and Tshepo keep their relationship as a secret from friends, however, unlike in *Rhythm City*, their love is reciprocated. Again, the relationship is very brief. In *Rhythm City*, one of the queer characters, Jamaica who is gay looks so flamboyant and wears lots of makeup. Jamaica also portrays feminine mannerisms in the way he talks, poses and walks.

Through this, their sexuality can be easily identified. This is similar to how Howe (2008) describes the gay men who are hardly portrayed as normal. However, this contradicts Vanlee et al. (2020) where gay men were portrayed with no oddity. However, in *Scandal!*, Chumani and Tshepo were represented with no oddity. It is important to normalise gay characters with no oddity so that they do not feel different or be discriminated against. A normal representation of gays will make them easily accepted by the society. Even though being gay is legalised in South Africa, it is still illegal in a lot of other African countries like Cameroon. In South Africa, gay people are still faced with lots of prejudice and become victims of violence and murder. Soap opera needs to increase gay representation and their issues and provide solutions to it to help integrate them into society.

5.2.4 Trends portrayal across the three selected soap operas

A common trend found in all three soap operas includes the presence of males and females, where a majority of the main characters represented for both genders were between 30-45, represented in both skilled and unskilled jobs and positively and negatively.

Thematic representation found in all three soap operas include motherhood, fatherhood, family, violence, marriage, love and romance, superstition, crime, infidelity, divorce and gender discrimination. This finding is supported by Kojoyan and Gevorgyan (2014), Anam

(2019) and Khan and Zaheen (2011), where themes such as violence, domestic and gender-based violence is predominant.

Furthermore, popular roles across the three soap operas for women include career-independent woman, mother, dependent on gold digger, villainess, sex object, menial and stereotypical jobs and model. For men, roles include rich, villain and model. Since queers were found in only two of the soap operas, there were no roles that ran across all three soap operas. The only role consistent with those of previous studies found in all of the soap operas was career-independent women in Shankaran and Illampirithi (2018), Ibrahim et al. (2017) and Arokiaraj (2017).

5.3 THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS AND THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

5.3.1 The Feminist Theory in Relation to the Findings

The relationship Jack has with Zitha and Tshidi on the one hand and the relationship between

Ben and Fikile on the other hand exhibits male dominance. Tshidi and Zitha think they need a man for physical protection while Ben makes sure his children with his ex-wife Fikile never get to see her. These views are in line with the feminist theory which focuses on gender expectations of masculinity and femininity behaviours and personality types that are exemplified by males and females in society as a result of societal norms. Critics of this theory say it embodies male dominance and enforces social patriarchal structure and authority (Schipper, 2016). However, to see a man have custody of his children contends this theory as this is not a societal norm. This should be an applaudable step to see men take more responsibilities of their children, hence soap opera is taking steps to change gender roles.

The women in the soap operas are involved with jobs like lawyer, doctor, police officer, waitress and receptionist. These roles are considered female stereotype roles which involves a lot of interaction and people skills, a role closely related to nurturing. This is in

accordance with the femininity theory which states that women are expected to have people skills and work with others and play subordinate to the males (Sahoo, 2015). However, not all the women are portrayed in subordinate positions in the workplace. They were also bosses with men as subordinates. For example, there is Grace who is a hotel owner and has a male partner, however, she is portrayed as the head. Also, Layla and Tshidi are CEO's while Zitha is owner of some big organisations. Also, there were also males who played roles that involved people skills like Mpho from *Generations: The Legacy* and from *Rhythm City*, Sabelo, a waiter, Mzi, a lawyer and Kgomotso a police officer. Again, this goes to show the effort soap operas are making to change gender roles and promote equality. This will promote such roles in society and both males and females will be able to comfortably follow the career path they choose.

Looking at the characteristics of the men compared to the women, the men are portrayed as tougher persons. Most of them are involved in illegal businesses and have no mercy on perpetrators. These findings are supported by Kamalakkanan and Manason (2017) who state that men are tough, assertive, focus on achieving material success while women are modest and tender. Findings identified that men like Kumkani, Suffocate, Jack Mabaso, Neo and Tau who are portrayed as gangsters who inflict pain on perpetrators, both men and women and even commit murder. This is however not true with the women, some of whom were portrayed as strong. This includes women like Boniswa, Lerato and Thembeke who are murderers. Also, they are very manipulative and not submissive. This will eliminate gender discrimination as most of the times, the men are victimised and accused of crimes they did not commit, thinking a woman cannot do them, hence eliminating gender stereotype.

The findings of the current study portray just a single woman, Blossom from *Rhythm City* as a housewife. She has a happy life but however her activities are not limited to being a housewife/homemaker, she owns a small tuckshop in her home window which she is busy with. Also looking at the lives of the career women on the other hand, their lives are being criticised in the way they are presented. They feel empty, unfulfilled and unhappy with very little revealed about their family and private lives and if something is revealed, it is

always not very fulfilling. These findings are in agreement with the feminist theory which states that the feminine mystique is about the notion that women are content with being just housewife/mother, and that any other roles like women pursuing a career fulfils an individual need and criticises the masculinity of women (Napikoski, 2019). The way the career women are portrayed could be a way of punishing them for pursuing careers instead of focusing on their traditional gender roles as mothers and housewives. Hence, it is difficult to say for sure if they would have been happier being just housewives. This is very true for this study where Blossom is being expected to act in a certain way. Her husband sees her as an object of honour and is embarrassed when she is high and starts dancing in the bar. Furthermore, this is also true in the way the women use their seductive powers to get men. A woman like Thembeke goes to Mthunzi to purposely seduce him, she made sure she dresses very sexy and succeeded. Fikile does shopping to change her look to win back her cheating boyfriend. Mapula changes her way of dressing to dressing very flashy to keep her married boyfriend. This is in agreement with Friedan (1963) in her contribution of the femininity theory using the feminine mystique which states that women are told how to dress, look, act, raise kids and catch a man. After divorcing her husband and losing custody of her kids, Fikile finds it hard to cope and starts using sex to feel loved and wanted; she starts sleeping with numerous men with whom she does not want a committed relationship. Similarly, most of the women that cheated on their partners did not do it to feel happy about themselves but as a manipulative process to gain information and keep secrets. In a quest to be happy, women see sex as their only achievement and begin to engage in extramarital affairs (Dash & Sthitaprayna, 2017). Also, contrary to Friedan (1991) who states that men were given accounting roles while the women are assigned as secretaries, stewardess and call girls who were forced to retire between 30-35 years to go get married, the current study contends such statements, because a majority of the women within this age group and beyond were at the peak of their career. Also, it is not true about the different gender roles as men as well as women occupied top positions as well as administrative positions. However, most of the men were portrayed as richer and involved in illegal businesses. They are involved in business like drug dealing, money laundering and fraud. Soap opera has continued to portray

women as sex objects who even though may be successful in their careers feel incomplete without a man. This is sending a negative message to society as women may continue to use their bodies recklessly to fill whole.

5.3.2 Hegemonic Masculinity Theory in Relation to the Findings of the Study

The men in the current study were portrayed as violent and aggressive to other men as well as females. No man was portrayed as the sole bread winner of his family in the findings; however, majority of the men were richer, tougher, more like thugs and very violent. They use their status to dominate women and other men. This is in agreement with the hegemonic masculinity theory which talks about the dominance of men by men and the ideal hierarchical image of the man as brutal, violent, bread winner, rich and tough (Donaldson, 1993). This is consistent with Sculos (2017) which states that hegemonic masculinity is the use of physical violence especially over women to maintain their dominant position, see women as sex object and desiring a youthful appearance. This act indicates suppression and reinforces the male dominance and the woman as a subordinate. A lot of the men made threats to the women, but Hammer is the only man that actually carried out his threat to physically assault Dikeledi. He is portrayed as a violent man that repeatedly beats up his girlfriend, leaving her with bruises and in a comma. He also murders their son. Dikeledi is also portrayed to have thick skin and endures several illtreatment from her boyfriend. Despite numerous beatings and escaping from their home, she always went back to her boyfriend hoping that he would change which never happened. Even though his behaviour is bad and is expected to change, he is not willing and instead decides to use physical force to maintain the relationship. Apart from the women portraying themselves as sex objects, the men also see them as such. An example is Jack who sends his girlfriend to offer sex to a board member to win votes and Minister Nkaba who also asks his daughter to sleep with Jack Mabaso. Furthermore, Mavusana and Joshua Warren are represented as rapists. Mavusana attempts to rape a 16 years old girl and Joshua Warren rapes Ayanda and several other women. Again, these men use sex to ensure their dominance over the other gender. This is in agreement

with Sculos (2017) on the assumptions of hegemonic masculinity which states that men feel entitled for female sexual attention. The practice of men giving women, girlfriends and even children out to sexually please men is not something new and it is an act that is shameful, punished and needs to be discouraged. This has clearly not been the case with the current study as there are no repercussions for the men's acts.

David, Suffocate and Khulekani in *Rhythm City* and Jack Mabaso and Kumkani in *Generations: The Legacy* were always hungry for power and to be the most respected on the streets. According to the hegemonic masculinity theory, men use force to show their dominance over women and women's subordination as well as practise inter-male dominance (Connell, 2005). The current study shows that men even struggle for a dominant position amongst themselves.

Men like Khulekani and Suffocate from *Rhythm City* and Jack and Kumkani from *Generations: The Legacy* are always in conflict with each other. Also, apart from the men seeing women as sex objects, the women also view themselves as such. For example, Lesedi insinuates that a man wanted her body when he approached her and to her surprise the man refused the claim stating he does not know why women always think men just want to sleep with them. Similarly, Zitha and Tshidi from *Generations: The Legacy* often offer sex for favours. Fikile goes around sleeping with men to satisfy her sexual appetite. Thembeke uses sex as a weapon to seduce Mthunzi so that she can obtain some vital information to help her execute her plans. This is in agreement with the feminist theory which states that masculinity has led to a lot of oppression of women and other social ills while femininity on the other hand is a personality type through socialisation that is being forced on girls and women by men to serve their interests (Schippers, 2016). Women should be portrayed in more respectable roles and women in society should not be made to feel that sex can solve all their problems. Also, men are constantly being placed in stereotype roles as womanisers, which makes the women want to use it to manipulate them. A common phenomenon in the South African society is the recruitment of women by men as sex workers for their own financial gains. Some even rent out large apartments to host these women for years. This is deteriorating the society

and promoting prostitution. This makes women to feel even less of themselves and are groomed to feel that sex is the most they can offer men and the society at large. Implications for such behaviour may include the spread sexually transmitted infections.

5.4 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1 Conclusion

The current study attempted to analyse gender representation in three selected South African soap operas. Undoubtedly, gender roles have changed considerably. Both men and women are being represented in contra-stereotypical roles. They both do jobs that were traditionally assigned for the other gender. This symbolises gender equality. However, even though more women are portrayed as successful career women, there is still a lack of balance between their professional and private lives. They are still being portrayed as single, childless and without a family. This makes the audience who are influenced by these soap operas to think that they need to choose between their family and professional life and cannot have all. This does not improve on the overall positive image of the woman. Also, while more and more women are represented in the workplace, the men are slowly shifting away from offices into a life of crimes.

This as well looks bad on the men's image and negatively impacts on viewers who look at them as role models. These men are hard criminals who never get caught to face the consequences of their actions. Also, more men are portrayed objectifying women. This should be discouraged and more positive content be included in the depiction of men.

The manner in which beauty is portrayed is plausible. The current study findings differ from previous studies where a majority of the women are portrayed as slim, fair in complexion and physically decorative whereas men are presented as fit and muscular, which are standards most people do not meet. In the current study, there are numerous women who wear their natural hair, are fair and dark in complexion. They are presented in various shapes and sizes as well as model like figures, but with no single character

having all of these features. Also, the men come in all shapes and colours, fair, tall, short, dark, muscular and potbellied. This gives confidence to the everyday man or woman who may be losing their self-esteem as the characters are relatable and look like an everyday man or woman.

Furthermore, gays as well as lesbians are still not fully incorporated in soap operas. The current study shows that they have moved past the non-representation stage and are now being represented. However, their mere presence in soap operas is not enough but how they are being portrayed is what matters. Content creators should move from stereotypical portrayal of queers to make them blend in society and abstain from representing them in the problematic paradigm.

Furthermore, the study found a new role involving men who are gold diggers, using romance to manipulate the women. This means that many more women are being financially emancipated. It is appreciable to see themes like gender discrimination and inheritance especially for women being incorporated, however, more of such storylines need to be portrayed as it is still a serious problem in South Africa. There is a large portrayal of crimes which will pose a societal problem if the criminals are often successful and never get caught.

More so, one thing that has not changed is women being portrayed as sex objects and men as sexual beings. The men use force through rape and also their money to use the women for their sexual satisfaction. Even though the men are portrayed as tough, the women are also shown in roles that give them power to manipulate these powerful men with their seductive nature. Men are shown to have a sexual weakness while women use it to their advantage to bring them down. Such portrayal may further strengthen these behaviours in real life which will be detrimental to society.

5.4.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings;

- Watching gender stereotype content contributes to learning and maintaining gender stereotypes, hence it is important for viewers to be more aware of the effects of stereotyping so that they can become conscious viewers.
- Even in cases where content reflects what is being practiced in society, it is important if content producers create content that goes contrary. Also, stereotype storylines can be portrayed where at the end, the viewer is able to learn its effects from the final consequences.
- For gender stereotypes to be eradicated, content producers need to write content where men and women are portrayed as equals.
- Soap opera content needs to be informative, inspiring and represent a future that promotes gender equality through diversity.
- Furthermore, queer representation has to be more incorporated into soap operas where queer characters need to be represented in main roles.

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APPENDIX A: PILOT CODEBOOK

SECTION 1

Introduction

The codebook is to evaluate gender portrayal in selected South African soap operas. This study aims to investigate male and female representation in selected South African soap operas. The variables in the codebook have been described explicitly and need to be strictly followed. The concepts and categories have been described and the different variables have numerical codes; hence the identified category needs to match the coding number. All variables and categories have been described.

The instructions in the codebook must be strictly followed to ensure concise data.

SECTION 2

Instructions

The coder needs to code all characters from an episode that helps in the development of the plot; hence a character may be relevant in one episode and irrelevant in another. A

different codebook will be used for every character, the coder will watch the episode several times on YouTube or Viu to get familiar with the storyline before coding the variables identified in that particular character in that episode. Before proceeding to coding the variable, it is important for the coder to read and understand the concepts and the role categories very well that have been described in the next section.

In summary, the coder needs to follow this order;

- Read and understand the codebook very well to get familiarise with the study.
- Read the storyline of that episode on the television channel and watch it on YouTube. Watch the first time without coding to understand the storyline, watch the second time while coding simultaneously. The coder may need to pause in between to get time to code or even rewind in case they missed something. In a case where the coder needs to use 'other', a concise description needs to be provided. The coder may need to code several characters at once using different codebooks. Also, there are three forms, A for heterosexual female, B for heterosexual male and C for queers.
- After coding the important details, the coder needs to write down the season and episode number, the character's name and fill in the demographics like gender and age.
- Next, the coder needs to briefly describe the episode in the space provided.

SECTION 3

The next section provides an explanation of the different concepts.

Gender. This refers to male or female who acted in the episode and played a major role in the development of the plot. The character must be a human and 18+.

Age. This refers to the suggested age of the gender that is being coded. This depends solely on the coder's judgement using yardsticks like physical appearance, child/children, married, friends or if the age is mentioned.

Sexual orientation. This refers to the characters sexual preference. This information can be gotten if the person is currently involved in a relationship, previous relationships or who they date. For the purpose of this study, there will be heterosexual and queer. Queer here will include LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender). In a case where a heterosexual character gets involved in a fling with a same sex person, the character should still be coded as heterosexual. Also, where a gay person gets involved with someone of the opposite sex, the coder should use their own judgement and code them still as gay.

Role categories. This refers to the physical appearance, behavioural pattern and the setting of the character being investigated. Details of role categories will be provided in section 4 below.

SECTION 4

To be able to determine the role category of the characters accurately, certain criteria need to be used.

Gender: This refers to the gender of the character being analysed. This can be identified by appearance (dressing, makeup, hairstyle etc), activities and mannerisms.

Props. Props often assist in identifying the role category. This could include uniforms (nurse attire, cleaner/maid, police uniform etc), cooking utensils, cleaning materials, laptop etc when the character is performing related duties.

Setting. The setting also assists to identify the role the character is portrayed in. This could include a home, office/work, restaurant/bar setting etc.

Next the role categories will be described in detail to ensure each role is clearly distinct from the other. Note should be taken that there may be instances where one character is

portrayed in more than one role, for example, a woman can be portrayed as a mother and a career woman. The coder needs to code the role that is most prominent.

FEMALE

1. Mother/Nurturer/Matriarch: This character appears in a setting with her children. She could be seen talking to the children, combing their hair or nursing a child. The setting includes the home, hospital, playroom, child's bedroom, etc. She is depicted as a mother even to kids that are not biologically hers or a nurturer to a sick family member.

2. Sex object: The character is decorated in a more sexual way. Her behaviour is alluring. She could be a centre of attention for people's gaze; she could be seen looking herself in the mirror in a sexual way. Her outfits could be sexually provocative, for example, very tight cloths and scantily clad. The character could be suggestively dressed in no cloths or underwear. The main focus of the camera could be on her body. Her body language and facial expression could be sexually appealing. The setting could be anywhere as the main focus is on the character's body. The character may be cheating on her partner, using her body to gain favours and to make money, for example, a prostitute.

3. Housewife and homemaker. This character's appearance is often informal and can be seen doing house chores like cooking, cleaning and ironing. The character is focused on performing household task. The setting is the house environment and props include cooking ingredients, kitchen appliances, cleaning apparels and an iron and ironing board. She is often presented as a wife of someone and the husband can be present. Also, she can be single or in a relationship.

4. Model. Here, the woman is portrayed as glamorous, fair complexion, wearing very attractive clothes and jewelleryes that look very expensive. She wears a lot of makeup and wigs. The setting is neutral. The woman is usually slim with a model-like figure and very beautiful.

5. Gold digger. Here, the woman is portrayed as poor even if she lives in a mansion; she depends solely on men for money and in a relationship because of money. The woman can be shown asking for money or getting the man's credit card for shopping.

6. Independent-woman. The woman here is portrayed in an office setting and formally dressed. Props include an office desk and a computer. She is very focused on her work and even if she has a family, the plot is not well developed.

7. Dumbhead. The woman is portrayed as lacking common knowledge. She is considered inferior by a male figure, maybe her husband/boyfriend, father or brother. She could either be educated or uneducated, sounds stupid sometimes and ridiculed.

8. Tenacious in a relationship. In such role portrayal, the woman is shown to have gone through a lot but endures everything and depicted to have a thick skin. Traumas include rape, forced marriage, hate, bullying and rejection from family and extended family like in-laws. The setting is neutral.

9. Menial and stereotypical jobs. These include women who have paid jobs like the career woman. However, these women are portrayed in menial jobs like domestic servants, janitors, people who sell recycled materials, etc. This also includes stereotyped jobs for women like nurses, secretaries, therapists, teachers, and psychologists etc, jobs that are often associated to women. The settings for such jobs are neutral.

10. Villainess: These are women who are portrayed as wicked and always conspiring to hurt others. They are sadists whose main objective is to see people cry. They treat people badly and always talk bad about people.

11. Object of dignity

These are women who are required to act a certain way to protect the image of their family or partners. They are regarded as the face of the family and anything they do reflects positively or negatively on the family.

12 Decision makers

These are women that take part in making decision for their families, they either make the decisions or are consulted when a decision needs to be made.

Male

13 Bread winner

The man here is the main breadwinner of the family. He can be seen having talks of paying or giving money for fees for the kids, giving money for food, cloths, rents, basically paying all the bills. They are usually rich. The man can be seen saying or his behaviour suggesting that he is the man of the house. This means his decisions are what stand and the woman has no say.

What he says, stands.

14 Womaniser

This character is portrayed as very promiscuous and seems to want all the women even he is in a relationship. He wants to be in multiple relationships and may sometimes even sleep with underage girls. He is sometimes portrayed as a rape perpetrator. The man could be also a husband engaged in extra marital affairs that may end up in divorce or having kids out of wedlock. The details of the affair could be shown or sometimes just mentioned. Setting is neutral.

15 Model

Here the character is shown to be very handsome and usually slim and fit, sometimes with muscles. All the women want him. He dresses well, young and is very attractive.

16 Aggressor

These are men that are violent towards men and women and beat or use weapons on others to get their way.

17 Decision-maker

He considers himself superior and believes as a man, he has the sole say in decisionmaking and what he says goes.

18. Queer (LGBT)

These are people who identify as lesbian (women attracted to women), gay (men attracted to men), bisexual (either woman or man attracted to both genders sexually) or transgender (when a person’s identity does not correspond with the sex they were born with). Some of them can be easily identified by their physical appearance (men that wear makeup, women walking like men, dress like the opposite gender) or normal looking in a relationship with someone of the same sex.

19. Model. This is when a queer character is easily identified by the way the dress, physical decorations and body movements.

20. Sex object. Here the character may be identified as being promiscuous.

21. Abuser. This is where the character is violent towards others.

Coder ID.....

Name of soap opera: a) *Rhythm City* (b) *Scandal!* (c) *Generations: The Legacy*

Year..... Season.....Episode number.....

Gender: Female (1) Male (2)

Sexual orientation:

Heterosexual female (1) **Continue with form A**

Heterosexual male (2) **Continue with form B**

Queer (3): **Continue with form C**

FORM A

Age	Role category
1=16-18	1=Mother, nurturer and Matriarch
2= 19-23	2=Sex object
3=24-29	3=Housewife and homemaker
4=30-45	4= Model
5=46-55	5= Gold-digger
6=56-65	6=Career-independent woman
7=66+	7=Dumbhead
	8= Tenacious in relationship
	9=Villainess
	10=Object of dignity
	11= Decision maker
	12=Other (specify).....

***Note: The forms of all characters analysed from the same episode must be clipped together and a single detailed description of that episode provided;**

DETAIL DESCRIPTION OF EPISODE:

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Form B Codebook form for males

Coder ID.....

Name of soap opera: a) *Rhythm City* (b) *Scandal!* (c) *Generations: The Legacy*

Year.....

Season.....Episode.....

Age	Role category
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1=16-18	13=Breadwinner
2=19-23	14 Womaniser
3=24-29	15=Model
4=30-45	16=Aggressor
5=46-55	17=Decision maker
6=56-65	18=other (specify).....
7=66+	

***Note: The forms of all characters analysed from the same episode must be clipped together and a single detailed description of that episode provided;**

DETAIL DESCRIPTION OF EPISODE:

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FORM C

Codebook form for queer.

Coder ID.....

Name of soap opera: a) *Rhythm City* (b) *Scandal!* (c) *Generations: The Legacy*

Year..... Season.....Episode.....

Age	Role category
1=16-18	19= Model
2=19-23	20 Sex object
3=24-29	21=Abuser
4=30-45	22=other (specify).....
5=46-55	
6=56-65	
7=66+	

***Note: The forms of all characters analysed from the same episode must be clipped together and a single detailed description of that episode provided;**

DETAIL DESCRIPTION OF EPISODE:

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APPENDIX B: FINAL CODEBOOK

SECTION 1

Introduction

The codebook is to evaluate gender portrayal in selected South African soap operas. This study aims to investigate male, female and queer representation in selected South African soap operas. The variables in the codebook have been described explicitly and need to be strictly followed. The concepts and categories have been described and the different variables have numerical codes; hence the identified category needs to match the coding number.

The instructions in the codebook must be strictly followed to ensure concise data.

SECTION 2

Instructions

The coder needs to code all characters from an episode that helps in the development of the plot; hence a character may be relevant in one episode and irrelevant in another. A different codebook will be used for every character, the coder will watch the episode several times to get familiar with the storyline before coding the variables identified in that particular character in that episode. Before proceeding to coding the variable, it is important for the coder to read and understand the concepts and the role categories very well that have been described in the next section.

In summary, the coder needs to follow this order;

- Read and understand the codebook very well to get familiarise with the study.
- Read the storyline of that episode on the television channel and watch it on YouTube or VIU. Watch the first time without coding to understand the storyline, watch the second time while coding simultaneously. The coder may need to pause in between to get time to code or even rewind in case they missed something. In a case where the coder needs to use 'other', a concise description needs to be provided. The coder may need to code several characters at once using different

codebooks. Also, there are three forms for the code book, A for heterosexual female, B for heterosexual male and C for queers.

- After coding the important details, the coder needs to write down the season and episode number, the character's name and fill in the demographics like gender and age.
- Next, the coder needs to briefly describe the episode in the space provided so that themes may be identified.

The next section (section 3) provides an explanation of the different concepts.

SECTION 3: Relevant concepts

Gender. This refers to male, female or queer who acted in the episode and played a major role in the development of the plot. The character must be a human and 16+.

Age. This refers to the suggested age of the character that is being coded. This depends solely on the coder's judgement.

Sexual orientation. This refers to the characters sexual preference. This information can be gotten if the person is currently involved in a relationship, previous relationships or who they hoping to get into a romantic relationship with. For the purpose of this study, there will be heterosexual and queer. Queer here will include LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender). In a case where a heterosexual character gets involved in a fling with a same sex person, the character should still be coded as heterosexual. Also, where a gay person gets involved with someone of the opposite sex, the coder should still code them as gay.

SECTION 4

Role categories. This refers to the physical appearance, behavioural pattern and the setting of the character being investigated. Details of role categories will be provided below.

Role category

To be able to determine the role category of the characters accurately, certain criteria need to be used.

Gender: This refers to the gender of the character being analysed. This can be identified by appearance (dressing, makeup, hairstyle etc), activities and mannerisms.

Props. Props often assist in identifying the role category. This could include uniforms (nurse attire, cleaner/maid, police uniform etc), cooking utensils, cleaning materials, laptop etc when the character is performing related duties.

Setting. The setting also assists to identify the role the character is portrayed in. This could include a home, office/work, restaurant/bar setting etc.

Next the role categories will be described in detail to ensure each role is clearly distinct from the other. Note should be taken that there may be instances where one character is portrayed in more than one role, for example, a woman can be portrayed as a mother and a career woman. The coder needs to code the role that is most prominent.

FEMALE

1 Mother, Nurturer and Matriarch: This character appears in a setting with her children. She could be seen talking to the children, combing their hair or nursing a child. The setting includes the home, hospital, playroom, child's bedroom, etc. She is depicted as a mother even to kids that are not biologically hers or a nurturer to a sick family member.

2 Housewife and homemaker: This character's appearance is often informal and can be seen doing house chores like cooking, cleaning and ironing. The character is focused on performing household task. The setting is the house environment and props include cooking ingredients, kitchen appliances, cleaning apparels and an iron and ironing board. She is often presented as a wife of someone and the husband can be present. Also, she can be single or in a relationship.

3 Model: Here, the woman is portrayed as glamorous, fair complexion, wearing very attractive clothes and jewelleryes that look very expensive. She wears a lot of makeup and wigs. The setting is neutral. The woman is usually slim with a model-like figure and very beautiful.

4. Tenacious in a relationship. In such role portrayal, the woman is shown to have gone through a lot of hardship and abuse, but endures everything. She is depicted to have a thick skin. Traumas include rape, forced marriage, hate, bullying and rejection from family and extended family like in-laws. The setting is neutral.

5 Socialite: These are women who are always well-dressed and look wealthy, their job is unknown but they are almost always financially okay.

6 Menial and stereotypical job worker. These include women who have paid jobs like the career woman. However, these women are portrayed in mean jobs like domestic servants, cleaners, people who sell recycled materials, etc. This also includes stereotyped jobs for women like nurses, secretaries, therapists, teachers, psychologists etc. These are jobs that are often associated to women. The settings for such jobs are neutral.

7 Sex object: The character is decorated in a more sexual way. Her behaviour is alluring. She could be a centre of attention for people's gaze; she could be seen looking herself in the mirror in a sexual way. Her outfits could be sexually provocative, for

example, very tight cloths and scantily clad. The character could be suggestively dressed in no cloths or underwear. The main focus of the camera could be on her body. Her body language and facial expression could be sexually appealing. The setting could be anywhere as the main focus is on the character's body. The character may be cheating on her partner, using her body to gain favours and to make money, for example, a prostitute.

8 Object of honour: These are women who are required to act a certain way to protect the image of their family or partners. They are regarded as the face of the family and anything they do reflects positively or negatively on the family.

9 Emotionist: These are women that are very emotional and cannot seem to handle stress on their own, they express their fears easily through maybe crying, being tensed or leaning on others for help and support while going through their emotional breakdown. Some depend on men for emotional support.

10 Career-independent woman. The woman here is portrayed in an office setting and formally dressed. Props include an office desk and a computer. She is very focused on her work and even if she has a family, the plot is not well developed.

11 Gold digger and emotionally dependent. Here, the woman is portrayed as poor even if she lives in a mansion; she depends on men for money. The woman can be shown asking for money or getting the man's credit card for shopping.

12 Dumbhead. The woman is portrayed as lacking common knowledge. She is considered inferior by a male figure, maybe her husband/boyfriend, father or brother or even females. She could either be educated or uneducated, sounds stupid sometimes and ridiculed.

13 Villainess: These are women who are portrayed as wicked and always conspiring to hurt others. They are sadists whose main objective is to see people cry. They treat people badly and always talk bad about people.

Male

14 Father: Here, the man is portrayed in the father role. He can be seen with the kids, teaching them, nurturing them, talking or playing with them. Setting includes the home, hospital, etc.

15 Apathetic man. These men show no emotions and always manage to keep their composure no matter the circumstance.

16 Rich man. They men are rich and bosses. They have a substantial amount of wealth which they get from their jobs or businesses. Money is never an issue and they often talk about large sums of money and spending money. They live in nice houses.

17 Villain. These are men that are violent towards men and women and beat or use weapons on others to get their way. They do not care who they hurt and show no emotion.

18 Womaniser and sex offender. This character is portrayed as very promiscuous and seems to want all the women even he is in a relationship. He wants to be in multiple relationships and may sometimes even sleep with underage girls. He is sometimes portrayed as a rape perpetrator. The man could be also a husband engaged in extra marital affairs that may end up in divorce or having kids out of wedlock. The details of the affair could be shown or sometimes just mentioned. Setting is neutral.

19 Spy and manipulator. These men use all types of tricks to get information or set people up. This can be done by either using a spy, eavesdropping or planting bugs to listen to conversations.

20 Gold digger. These are men who depend on women for financial support especially. They are with the women and depend on them for money or a place to stay. They are out to exploit the women in the guise of a romantic relationship.

21 Model. Here the character is shown to be very handsome and usually slim and fit, sometimes with muscles. All the women want him. He dresses well, young and is very attractive.

Queer (LGBT)

These are people who identify as lesbian (women attracted to women), gay (men attracted to men), bisexual (either woman or man attracted to both genders sexually) or transgender (when a person's identity does not correspond with the sex they were born with). They can be easily identified by their physical appearance (men that wear makeup, women walking like men, dress like the opposite gender) or in a relationship with someone of the same sex.

22 Object of decoration. This is when a queer character is easily identified by the way the dress, physical decorations and body movements.

23 Unrequited lover. Here the character may be identified as being in a romantic relationship that is not serious. He may feel deep affection for his partner who does not feel the same way.

24 Emotionist. The character is very emotional.

Coder ID.....

Name of soap opera: a) *Rhythm City* (b) *Scandal!* (c) *Generations: The Legacy*

Year..... Season.....Episode.....

Gender: Female (1) Male (2)

Sexual orientation: Heterosexual female (1) **Continue with form A**

Heterosexual male (2) **Continue with form B**

Queer (3): **Continue with form C**

FORM A: CODEBOOK FOR FEMALES

Age	Role category
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1=16-18	1=Mother, nurturer and Matriarch
2=19-23	2=Housewife and homemaker
3=24-29	3=Model
4=30-45	4= Tenacious in relationship
5=46-55	5=Socialite
6=56-65	6=Menial and stereotypical job worker
7=66+	7=Sex object
	8=Object of honour
	9=Emotionist
	10=Career-independent woman
	11=Gold digger and emotionally dependent on men
	12=Dumbhead
	13=Villainess

***Note: The forms of all characters analysed from the same episode must be clipped together and a single detailed description of that episode provided;**

DETAIL DESCRIPTION OF EPISODE:

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Coder ID.....
 Name of soap opera: a) *Rhythm City* (b) *Scandal!* (c) *Generations: The Legacy*
 Year..... Season..... Episode number.....

FORM B: CODEBOOK FOR MALES

Age	Role category
1=16-18	14=Father
2=19-23	15=Apathetic man
3=24-29	16=Rich man
4=30-45	17=Villain
5=46-55	18=Womaniser and sex offender
6=56-65	19=Spy and manipulator
7=66+	20= Gold digger
	21=Model

***Note: The forms of all characters analysed from the same episode must be clipped together and a single detailed description of that episode provided;**

DETAIL DESCRIPTION OF EPISODE:

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Codebook form for queer.

Coder ID.....

Name of soap opera: a) *Rhythm City* (b) *Scandal!* (c) *Generations: The Legacy*
Year..... Season..... Episode.....

FORM C: CODEBOOK FOR QUEER

Age	Role category
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1=16-18	22=Object of decoration
2=19-23	23=Unrequited lover
3=24-29	24=Emotionist
4=30-45	
5=46-55	
6=56-65	
7=66+	

***Note: The forms of all characters analysed from the same episode must be clipped together and a single detailed description of that episode provided;**

DETAIL DESCRIPTION OF EPISODES:

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APPENDIX C: EPISODES AND SEASONS ANALYSED

	<i>Rhythm City</i>	<i>Scandal!</i>	<i>Generations: The Legacy</i>
Oct-Nov 2019	<u>Season 13 and 14</u> 3196 3209 3217 3241 3252	<u>Season 17 and 18</u> 3401 3421 3436 3454 3458	<u>Season 28</u> 228 230 259 <u>Season 29</u> 13 23
Jan-March 2020	3275 3275 3281 3313 3316	3469 3486 3496 3500 3512	34 69 70 73 76
April-June 2020	3328 3341 3348 3351 3379	3535 3537 3567 3581 3593	101 106 121 125 136
July-Sept 2020	3398 3409 3421 3425 3445	3615 3624 3636 3640 3645	163 177 178 187 211