

**FEMALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN BLESSER-BLESSEE RELATIONSHIPS:
TOWARD A SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE COMMUNICATION
STRATEGY**

By

NTSENTSELELO DELVAH NUKERI

DISSERTATION

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

COMMUNICATION STUDIES

in the

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Department of Communication, Media, and Information Studies

at the

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

(Turfloop Campus)

SUPERVISOR: Prof TD Oyedemi

2024

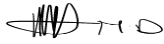
DEDICATION

Every difficult mission calls for both personal effort and support from those we love, especially those who are dear to us. I dedicate my humble effort to my sweet and loving mother and siblings, Cynthia Ngobeni, Mfungho Faithful Nukeri, and Banele Talent Nukeri, whose affection, love, encouragement, and prayers day and night enabled me to summon the courage to finish my dissertation. I do not forget the late Faneriwa Justice Nukeri, continue to rest in peace, Daddy. This work is a token of your remembrance and gratitude for giving me life.

DECLARATION

DECLARATION

I declare that **FEMALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN BLESSER-BLESSEE RELATIONSHIPS: TOWARD A SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references and that this work has not been submitted before for any other degree at any other institution.



Full names

01 October 2023

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My heartfelt thanks to the Almighty God who has been present since the beginning until the end of my work. I would not have been this stronger without You as my shepherd, protector, and life giver.

I cannot express enough thanks to my supervisor, Prof TD Oyedemi, for his continued support and encouragement. I offer my sincere appreciation for the learning opportunities provided by my supervisor who continues to mold me and encourages me to go beyond limits and to dream for the best.

My completion of this dissertation could not have been accomplished without the support of Dr Sebola M, who edited my work and the participants who volunteered to share their experiences in blesser-blessee relationships. Special thanks to you guys for being honest and giving all your support.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of female university students in blesser-blessee relationships and to develop a communication strategy that can be used to educate young girls towards a behavioural change that may contribute to combating transactional relationships. Qualitative, applied, and interpretivist research was conducted to explore the benefits and challenges of blesser-blessee relationships, and the broader experiences of female university students in blesser-blessee relationships in the Limpopo Province. Thus, 15 undergraduate and postgraduate female university students and three health practitioners who worked directly with female students participated in this study. This study used in-depth interviews to collect data.

The study drew largely from the Health Belief Model coined by Becker (1974) and the Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationships Theory coined by Scull (2019). The study highlights the hidden dynamics of blesser-blessee relationships. The findings revealed that female university students in this study do not engage in blesser-blessee relationships due to poverty, but largely because of their placement of self-identity, happiness, and beauty on the possession of expensive materials. The pursuit of materialism tends to be an influencing factor for young females to be involved in this sort of transactional relationship. Moreover, they are influenced by their family members to pursue a man who is economically stable and able to provide for the family. Blesser-blessee relationships were found embedded with dire health consequences; hence, this study developed a behavioural change communication strategy and a campaign that could be used to educate young girls against this phenomenon.

Key words: transactional relationships, materialism, *mavuso*, blessee, and blesser.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

WHO: World Health Organisation.

HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus.

AIDS: Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome.

BCC: Behavioural Change Communication.

HBM: Health Belief Model.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	i
DECLARATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....	v
CHAPTER 1	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2 THE MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY.....	4
1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM.....	6
1.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	7
1.5.1 Objectives	7
1.6 SCHOLARLY CONTEXT OF THE STUDY.....	7
(a) Literature review.....	7
(b) Theoretical framework.....	9
Health Belief Model.....	9
Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationship Theory.....	9
1.7 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	10
1.8 POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY	11
1.9 OVERVIEW AND STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY.....	11
CHAPTER 2:.....	13
2.1 Introduction.....	13
Section A	13
2.2 Manifestation of transactional sex.....	13
2.2.1 Types of transactional sex.....	15
(a) Gold-digger.....	15
(c) Side-chicks	17
(d) Slay queens.....	18
(e) Influencers	22
2.2.2 International literature on transactional sex.....	25
2.2.3 African literature on transactional sex	29
2.2.4 South African literature on Transactional sex.....	36
Section B	39
2.3 Blesser-Blessee Relationship in South Africa.....	39
2.3.1 Causes of factors that contribute to blesser-blessee relationship	42

<i>Materialism and consumerism</i>	42
<i>Financial difficulties and economic inequalities</i>	43
Economic weight and ‘black tax’	44
2.3.2 Problems that arise from a blesser-blessee relationship	47
2.3.3 Different types of the blesser-blessee relationship	52
<i>Blesser as an old rich woman</i>	52
<i>Blessee as a younger man</i>	54
2.4 Distinction between transactional sex and a blesser-blessee relationship	55
2.4 Conclusion	59
CHAPTER 3:	61
3.1 Introduction	61
3.2 Background of BCC	61
3.3 Connection between BCC and health communication	65
3.4 The uses of BCC	70
<i>African context</i>	70
<i>International context</i>	73
3.5 Connecting behavioural change communication to blesser-blessee relationship (transactional sex)	78
3.6 Conclusion	83
CHAPTER 4:	85
4.2 Health Belief Model	85
4.2.1 The historical emergence of the Health Belief Model	85
Key components of the Health Belief Model:	86
4.2.2 Research literature on Health Belief Model	88
4.2.3 Application of the model to the study	90
4.3 Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationship Theory (TISRT)	95
4.3.1 Research literature on Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationships Theory	96
4.3.2 Application of Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationships Theory in this study	97
4.4 Conclusion	98
CHAPTER 5:	100
5.1 Introduction	100
5.2 Research design	100
5.2.1 Qualitative research method	100
5.2.2 Applied research approach	101

5.2.3 Interpretivism research paradigm	102
5.3. Research design	103
5.4 Research study's setting	103
5.5 Population of the study	104
5.6 Sampling	105
5.6.1 Sampling procedure.....	106
5.6.2 Sample Characteristics	108
5.7 Data collection method	110
5.7.1 In-depth individual interview	110
5.7.2 Data collection procedure	111
5.8 Data Analysis	111
5.8.1 Steps taken in analysing data	111
Coding.....	111
Categories	112
Themes	113
5.9 Ethical considerations	113
5.9.1 Informed consent.....	113
5.9.2 Permission used to undertake the study	114
5.9.3 Anonymity and Confidentiality	114
5.9.4 Respect for participant's rights and dignity.....	114
5.9.5 Benefits and risks associated with the study	114
5.9.6 Bias.....	115
5.10 Quality Criteria	115
5.10.2 Dependability	116
5.10.3 Confirmability	116
5.10.4 Transferability.	116
5.11 Conclusion	116
CHAPTER 6:	117
6.1 Introduction	117
6.2 Participants' definition of a blesser-lessee relationship	118
6.3 Forms of blesser-lessee relationships	119
6.3.1 Sweet ring prostitution	119
6.3.2 Love triangle.....	123
6.4 Motivations for engaging in blesser-lessee relationship	125
6.4.1 Ego of gratification	126

6.4.2	<i>Aura of materialism</i>	130
6.4.3	<i>Wanting to fit in (peer pressure)</i>	135
6.4.4	<i>Framing a blesser-blessee relationship as a simple way to make money (i.e., free will of engaging in a blesser-blessee relationship)</i>	138
6.4.5	<i>Family influence</i>	141
6.4.6	<i>Poverty and its contestation</i>	144
6.5	Hidden dynamics of a blesser-blessee relationship	148
6.5.1	<i>Sex as currency to access lavish lifestyle</i>	149
6.5.2	<i>Age limit</i>	153
6.5.3	<i>Economic entitlement</i>	155
6.6	Code words	159
6.6.1	<i>I scratch your back and you scratch my back</i>	159
6.6.2	<i>Baby daddy</i>	159
6.6.3	<i>Vunghwadla</i>	159
6.6.3	<i>Drip is forever</i>	159
6.6.4	<i>Climb the ladder fast</i>	160
6.6.5	<i>Becha</i>	160
6.6.6	<i>Mavuso</i>	160
6.6.7	<i>Soft life</i>	160
6.7	Conclusion	161
CHAPTER 7:		163
7.1	Introduction	163
7.2	Blessees' emotional experience in blesser-blessee relationships	164
7.2.1	<i>Absence of happiness and self confidence</i>	164
7.2.2	<i>Denialism</i>	167
7.3	Problems that arise from a blesser-blessee relationship	171
7.3.1	<i>Disadvantaged by power dynamics</i>	171
7.3.2	<i>Blessees sugar-coat their bad experiences in blesser-blessee relationships</i>	174
7.3.3	<i>Sexual objectification</i>	177
7.3.4	<i>High chances of being derailed academically</i>	181
7.3.5	<i>Vulnerable to social and health issues</i>	183
	<i>Health effects</i>	183
	<i>Spiritual effects</i>	188
	<i>Psychological effects</i>	190
7.4	Code words	193

7.4.1 Jackpot and ATM.....	193
7.4.2 Dog eats dog world.....	194
7.4.2 Isichitho.....	194
7.5 Conclusion	195
CHAPTER 8:.....	196
SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION	196
8.1 Introduction.....	196
8.2 Summary and discussion of the study.....	196
❖ Objective 1: To explore the experiences of female university students in blesser-blessee relationships.....	197
❖ To develop a BCC strategy that can be used as a communication campaign to educate young girls about a bleaser-blessee relationship.....	202
BCC strategy	202
Steps to develop BCC	202
<i>Step 1: Define the identified problem</i>	<i>202</i>
<i>Step 2: The theory used to frame the development of BCC plan</i>	<i>203</i>
<i>Step 3: Define the target audience</i>	<i>204</i>
<i>Step 4: Objectives of the BCC plan based on research findings.....</i>	<i>204</i>
YOU FIRST!.....	205
An anti-materialism and blessee campaign.....	205
8.3 Contribution of the Research.....	207
8.4 Limitation of the Research.....	208
8.5 Recommendation	209
8.6 Conclusion	211
REFERENCES	214

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1: FACULTY RATIFICATION OF PROPOSAL..... v

APPENDIX 2: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE vi

APPENDIX 3: GATEKEEPER PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH..... vii

APPENDIX 4: PARTICIPANT'S CONSENT FORM..... viii

APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS..... x

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Levels of blesser-blessee relationships	2
Figure 2.1: Power dynamics that drive gold-digger	17
Figure 2.2: Artistic depiction of a slay queen	21
Figure 2.3: An artist image of an influencer and the power of materialism	25
Figure 4.1: Health Belief Model	88
Figure 5.1: A map depicting Limpopo Province	104
Figure 5.2: A poster recruiting participants	107
Figure 5.3: NVIVO software application used for coding research data	112
Figure 5.4: Depiction of 46 codes developed from NVIVO	112
Figure 6.1: The nature of triangle love	123
Figure 8.1: You first, anti-materialism and blessee campaign	206

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1 Distinction between transactional sex and blessing-blessee relationship	59
Table 3.1: The levels of behavioural change	64
Table 4.1: Health Belief Model key components	87
Table 5.1: Demographic profile for in-depth interviews	110
Table 5.2: Demographic profile of health practitioners	110
Table 5.3: Major findings found after analysed data	113
Table 6.1: Major findings and sub-themes	117
Table 7.1: Major findings and sub-themes	164

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

There is a phenomenon of relationships of sexual transaction between partners of different ages, with one partner being older and rich and the other, young, and dependent. This is called blesser-blessee relationships in South Africa, which often refers to a transactional relationship that occurs between an older rich man and a young woman (Adam & Mutongi, 2007). However, it is not gender specific. For instance, older rich women are also referred to as blessers, and young men in relationship with these women are referred to as blessees. Masenya (2017) reports that in a blesser-blessee relationship, it is not always men who are blessers but there are also female blessers and their relationship entails the seduction of younger men who are referred to as 'Ben 10s'. Several scholars have revealed that a transactional sex relationship, such as blesser-blessee relationships, are common in South Africa (Disrosiers, Betancourt, & Kergaot, 2020; Frieslaar, 2017). Moreover, it was found that a blesser-blessee relationship occurs in various levels depending on the agreement between sexual partners. For example, Mulaudzi (2017) in Zikona (2020) indicates that not every man qualifies to be a blesser; however, if a man provides certain material benefits for his younger female according to certain levels, he qualifies to be called a blesser. As noted by Zikona (2020), material benefits may range from buying cell phone, airtime, or going on international trips. The figure below represents the various levels that characterise blesser-blessee relationships:



Figure 1.1: Levels of blesser-blessee relationships. Source: Mulaudzi (2017) cited in Zikona (2020)

With reference to the figure above, it is evident that blesser-blessee relationships take different meanings depending on the context in which it occurs (Masvawure, 2010). For example, this phenomenon has changed the dynamics of love, especially where age and material differences are marked (Sherfer, Clowes & Vergnani, 2012). As a result, Sherfer et al. (2012) show that the percentage of women with sexual partners who are more than five years older than them increased from 18,5% to 27,6%. To support the prevalence to blesser-blessee relationships, Lubungu (2021) indicates that there has been at least an increase from 27.6% to 30% of women dating older rich men. Therefore, university campuses are constructed as spaces of sexual and lifestyle exploration. Consequently, many university students have been involved in blesser-blessee relationships (Doyisa, Maharaj & Dunn, 2023). Ntsieni (2017) similarly revealed that in rural areas, many female students engage in transactional relationships such as blesser-blessee relationships for survival. Furthermore, Ntsieni (2017) highlights the unequal status of young women who may facilitate their exposure to transactional sex with older rich men who can provide economically.

Concerning blesser-blessee relationships in rural areas, for instance, Wanka and Rena (2019) indicate that poverty is prevalent in rural areas such as KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, and Limpopo. However, Limpopo Province faces a great terror of poverty. For instance, the study findings indicate that comparing the level of poverty in Limpopo Province with that at the national level, the poverty rate in Limpopo was found much higher (Wanka & Rena, 2019). As a result, there was an increase from 2,5% to 4,3% respectively of households that are poor in Limpopo (Wanka & Rena, 2019).

However, recently, Limpopo has 11.5% of poverty rate over 6,572,721 population (Statistical Release, 2023). Thus, there is a difference of 7,2% since 2019 to 2023. It is possible that female university students may engage in blesser-blessee relationships due to poverty. For instance, Alkire and Foster (2011) indicate that poverty remains one of the most pressing economic and social issues in South Africa and young women choose to engage in blesser-blessee relationships to access necessities such as food, shelter, and clothes. On the other hand, Leclerc-Madlala (2003) reveals that a blesser-blessee relationship is a sexual exchange phenomenon and is used by women to pursue economic wants. Consequently, they are exposed to exploitive relationships and unsafe sex practice. In accord, Luke and Kurz (2002) in Mampane (2019), linked blesser-blessee relationships with HIV/AIDS and intimate partner violence. The study's findings further indicate that young women in blesser-blessee relationships are vulnerable to gender-based violence.

Although the existing literature linked blesser-blessee relationships with poverty and dire health consequences such as HIV/AIDS or gender-based violence, the researcher found that scholars such as Doyisa (2019), Mampane (2019), Sinethemba (2017), and Vellai (2021) mainly focused on discussing the relationship among a blesser-blessee relationship such as poverty, and gender-based violence than finding ways that may contribute to combating the phenomenon. Moreover, Ntsieni (2017) recommended the development of health campaigns that can be used to empower women against transactional relationships. Thus, the researcher developed a study titled 'Female university students in blesser-blessee relationships: Toward a social and behavioural change communication strategy,' which investigated and explored the experiences of female university students in blesser-blessee relationships in Limpopo Province.

1.2 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Materialism: It refers to a tendency to consider material possession as more imperative to fulfilling the desire of leading an opulent lifestyle and self-identity. Richins (2017) indicates that people who embrace materialism believe that the acquisition of more money and expensive material possession will improve their wellbeing and social standing.

Mavuso: It is a slang term coined from South African Nguni languages such IsiZulu, Southern and Northern Sotho, and IsiXhosa, which refers to a monetary gift received

by a woman in the morning after engaging in transactional sex. Terrence (2016) reveals that the phenomenon of *mavuso* manifests in some parts of South Africa as a *stokvel* every Monday night for attracting young women in search of blessers.

Blesser: It refers to an older rich man who engages in transactional relationships with young women for sexual satisfaction. For example, a “blesser” in South Africa is kind of like a sugar daddy. He's an older man who often has multiple girlfriends he lavishes with gifts, in exchange for sex and companionship (Garsd & Crossan, 2017).

Blessee: It refers to a young woman who prefers dating older rich man to access a lavish lifestyle or material gain. Mthiyane (2022) defines a blessee as a young woman who prefers engaging in transactional sex with an older rich man with a reason of satisfying temporal wants.

Transactional Relationship: It refers to a new modern term for sex-for-money in which women and men engage in sex partnerships for monetary gifts or regular gifts such as clothes (Ntsieni, 2017).

1.2 THE MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

At the time of writing this chapter, many studies had been published focusing on the phenomenon of blesser-blessee relationships. A blesser-blessee relationship is a form of a relationship that is motivated by being beneficial (Peacock, 2012). Therefore, this means that a ‘blesser’ is regarded as a rich male partner (*sugar daddy*) who provides funds as he benefits sexually or gets companionship while on the other hand, a ‘blessee’ is viewed as a receiver of funds. A blesser-blessee relationship is a form of transactional sex between young women and casual male sex partners who are older and wealthier (Adam & Mutongi, 2007). Studies by Mampane (2019) and Thobejane, Mulaudzi and Zitha (2019:4) define the blesser-blessee relationship as a *modern-day sugar daddy* phenomenon. They enhance the definition by emphasising that this relationship is characterised by a blesser’s power, which puts him on a much higher pedestal, giving him a *god-like status of sorts*. Moreover, their research findings indicated that young women prefer sugar daddy relationships for status and material gain. Interestingly, health scholars reported a blesser-blessee relationship as ‘sex for money or exchange of goods’ and that it is broadly linked with the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (Wamoyi, Stoebanau, Bobrova, Abramsky & Watts, 2016). Thus, there are several problems that arise from blesser-

blessee relationships. Ruvimbo (2020) posits that women who engage in a blesser-blessee relationship are exposed to severe sexual problems and high chances of being abused by their sexual partners. Peacock (2012) and Moffett (2016) reinforce that a blesser-blessee relationship is linked with sexual violence.

Although scholars above indicated that blesser-blessee relationships are associated with health risks, however, to the best of researcher's knowledge, there are no studies on developing a behavioural change communication to advise young women against blesser-blessee relationships. As a result, the researcher was motivated to conduct a study that would develop a behavioural change communication to advocate against young girls involving themselves in this form of a transactional relationship. Moreover, the studies that investigated blesser-blessee relationships were largely under the field of psychology, population development, and other social sciences. Therefore, the researcher saw a need to conduct a study on blesser-blessee relationships under the academic discipline of communication within the field of health communication and use a communication plan for the development of behavioural and social change.

Another motivation of this study derived from the researcher's observation during her pursuit of an undergraduate degree from 2018 to 2019. The researcher had four friends and all of them often wore expensive clothes to attend classes. They claimed that their parents bought those expensive materials for them. This was quite economically challenging because the researcher had no one to ask money from to buy expensive clothes like them. The researcher felt ashamed around them. However, one day, one of them advised the researcher to get a blesser who can finance the lifestyle and be like them. Although the researcher did not engage in a blesser-blessee relationship, the researcher later developed an interest in investigating how popular girls around Campus get money to finance their lavish lifestyles. Consequently, the researcher was motivated to explore the experiences of blessees in a blesser-blessee relationship to know the nature of the relationship and the challenges. On the other hand, poverty is a phenomenon that is multidimensional in nature and its meaning varies from one individual to another. For example, it can be seen as a failure to attain certain capabilities or lack of income to sustain a standard of living (Jansen, Moses, Mujuta & Yu, 2015). Ntsieni (2017) reveals that the Limpopo Province experiences poverty and female university students resort to transactional sex as an escape.

Moreover, where the researcher comes from, Nkuzana Village, where parents tend to motivate their female children to at least date a man who can provide for his partner and the family. For example, many Nkuzana Village dwellers believe that dating a rich man elevates the family's image socially and economically. It is evident that there are various contributors to the prevalence of blesser-blessee relationships. Hence, the researcher explored the motivations behind engaging in blesser-blessee relationships among female university students.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The blesser-blessee phenomenon has attracted a variety of studies. For instance, Jewkes and Morrell (2012) and Sherfer and Strebel (2012) conducted studies to understand blesser-blessee relationships in the context of economic inequality. However, most studies focused on the patriarchal perspective of these relationships and discussed unemployment and poverty as the motivations behind the dilemma without suggesting solutions, which could have assisted in combating the phenomenon or inspiring behavioural change among those who engage in this relationship. For instance, the literature revealed that in most cases, university students face many challenges such as financial problems and peer pressure, which put them in transactional relationships to sustain their living (Mampane, 2019). Disrosiers et al. (2020) and Frieslaar (2019) further reported that female students see older rich men as loving and caring. However, these studies failed to provide information about the experiences of female students engaged in blesser-blessee relationships and to develop a behavioural change communication strategy that can be used to advocate social change among young women against this phenomenon.

Therefore, it was not enough to merely conduct a discursive study around this phenomenon, as understanding the experiences of educated young women in this sort of relationship is important and offering suggestions for solutions that inspire behavioural change toward blesser-blessee relationships among female students could play a crucial role in bringing about behavioural change in society. This is because blesser-blessee relationship is common in South Africa and is associated with severe health problems such as HIV and intimate partner violence (Mampane, 2019). Thus, female university students in blesser-blessee relationships are vulnerable to these social and health problems. Disrosiers et al. (2020) and Ntsieni

(2017) postulate that Limpopo Province has one of the growing dilemmas of youths engaging in blesser-blessee relationships to sustain their living at universities. Studies on the phenomenon of blesser-blessee relationships, have not adequately addressed the problems which arise with this phenomenon and did not sufficiently explore the experiences of female students engaged in blesser-blessee relationships. As such, it is imperative to develop a communication strategy around behavioural change in combating the phenomenon of blesser-blessee in Limpopo Province.

1.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The study aimed to explore the experiences of female university students in a blesser-blessee relationship whilst developing a communication strategy that can be used to educate young girls towards a behavioural change that may contribute to combating this phenomenon.

1.5.1 Objectives

- To explore the experiences of female university students in blesser-blessee relationships.
- To examine the motivations for female students in engaging in blesser-blessee relationships, while exploring the problems that arise from these relationships.
- To develop a behavioural change communication strategy that can be used as a communication campaign to educate young girls about blesser-blessee relationships.

1.6 SCHOLARLY CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

(a) Literature review

In Chapter 2, the researcher provided a broad review of literature on forms of transactional relationships (blesser-blessee relationships), motivations for engaging in blesser-blessee relationships, and problems that arise from blesser-blessee relationships. Studies have focused on transactional relationships in the context of economic inequality, and the absence of sex in a relationship. Wojcicki (2002) indicated that a blesser-blessee relationship originates from the absence of financial sufficiency. Therefore, women engage in transactional sex without stigmatisation from the community. Apparently, transactional sex takes different meanings depending on where it manifests itself (Masvawure, 2010). One can argue that a blesser-blessee relationship is a choice, which an individual can decide to engage in to sustain a

personal status. The literature showed that transactional relationships are embedded by the means of 'survival' or 'consumption'. Sprague, McMahan, Maqsood, and George (2021) noted that a blesser-blessee relationship is attributed to an 'expensive' lifestyle versus a relationship nurtured to survive economic pressure. Therefore, economic inequality is one of many causes of transactional sex. A blesser-blessee relationship is a form of transactional relationship that occurs when blessees choose survival over principles (Thobejane et al., 2019). The study's findings indicated that a blesser-blessee relationship is characterised by shame-oriented principles, which refers to people engaging in a behaviour knowing the associated risks.

Literature further indicates that a blesser-blessee relationship has health problems. For example, the university is viewed as a context which influences young women to attract "blessers" to receive material gifts and money (Ruvimbo, 2020). Ruvimbo (2020) postulated that this form of relationship results in severe chances of being infected with HIV, and that young women "blessees" claim that their "blessings" are from wealthy old men "blessers" in exchange for sex and relationship. Leclerc-Madlala (2003) and Ranganathan, MacPhail, Pittifor, Kathleen, Khoza, Twine, Watts, and Heise (2017) proffer that due to increased materialism and capitalism, people extend their expectations and aspirations, which has influenced women to create new financial source through engagement in 'blesser-blessee relationships'.

In Chapter 3, the researcher explored the literature on the uses of behavioural change communication. In the context of behavioural change communication, the researcher explored behavioural change communication as the use of communication to educate and motivate attitude change and action in response to a certain health concern. Park (2019) posits that the adoption of communication in behavioural change communication (BCC) assumed that interaction determines attitudes and attitudes in turn influence behaviour. Thus, the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2001) reinforces that to put behavioural change communication into existence, the audience needs to adopt communication into practice. Therefore, it is evident that behavioural change communication is an approach that attempts to reinforce a set of behaviours in a target audience concerning a particular dilemma.

Nancy and Dongre (2021) report that behavioural change communication plays a vital role in clinical settings and public health in the prevention of both communicable and non-communicable diseases. However, in this study, it was adopted to address blesser-blessee relationships to facilitate awareness of behavioural change among blessees. Briscoe and Abound (2012) postulate that BCC is mostly used in health programmes to provide tailored messages and a supportive environment that persuades individuals and communities to make positive behavioural changes. Thus, many studies have adopted BCC to examine HIV prevention and smoking as contributors to health issues (Glanz & Bishop, 2010). However, it is becoming increasingly critical to address blesser-blessee relationships in South Africa because of the potential health risks among young women involved in this sort of relationship.

(b) Theoretical framework

This study relied on two theories, namely, Health Belief Model coined by Becker (1974) and Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationship Theory coined by Scull (2019).

Health Belief Model

To develop a BCC plan, the researcher adopted the Health Belief Model, which intends to discuss why people do not participate in programmes that could help them diagnose diseases (WHO, 2004). The model's major assumption is that, to engage in healthy behaviours, intended audiences need to be aware of their exposure to the risk of life-threatening diseases and comprehend that the benefits of behaviour change outweigh potential barriers or other negative aspects of recommended actions. Hayden (2014) says that the Health Belief Model is used to comprehend and evaluate behaviour, not just protective behaviour but health behaviours more generally.

Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationship Theory

This theory is based on the work of Scull (2019), in which a typology of sugaring relationships is presented with seven types (or scripts). The seven scripts are sugar prostitution, compensated dating, compensated companionship, sugar dating, sugar friendship, sugar friends with sexual benefits, and pragmatic love. This theory stipulates that sugar relationships (transactional relationships) occur on the spectrum of economic and sexual dependence than forming emotional bond (Scull, 2019).

1.7 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the qualitative research methodology. It intended to explore the experiences of female university students in blesser-blessee relationships, therefore, the qualitative research methodology enabled the study to reveal subjective human experiences of a phenomenon (Brink, Walt & Rensburg, 2012). Moreover, applied research approach was used to investigate whether there are solutions to the prevalence of blesser-blessee relationships. The study developed '*You first, anti-materialism and blessee campaign*'. Moreover, applied research approach was adopted because it addresses dilemmas that are special to human beings or society with potential to later explore solutions to the dilemmas (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). The study further used the interpretivist research paradigm to understand and explore unique aspects of blesser-blessee relationships. Consequently, in the context of research design, the study used the exploratory research design because it was suitable for exploring a phenomenon that has become dominant in society, such as a blesser-blessee relationship. For example, Manase (2016) claims that in South Africa, a blesser-blessee relationship is dominant due to economic inequality between men and women.

The study was conducted in Limpopo Province, and it sampled 15 female university students in blesser-blessee relationships together with three health practitioners who worked directly with female students. The researcher used in-depth interviews to collect data. During the in-depth interviews, two undergraduate participants referred the researcher to other eight postgraduate students in blesser-blessee relationships. In total, the researcher interviewed 18 participants. Thus, the sampling was purposive and homogenous.

After collecting data, the researcher used the NVIVO 1.6.1 (1137) software application to code data. As a result, the researcher imported data provided by each participant and established 46 codes. These 46 codes were numerous; hence, the codes were clustered into categories, and later developed into five major findings with sub-themes. Credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability were achieved as part of the study's fulfilment of the quality criteria. Details of the research methodology, design, sampling, data collection and analysis were discussed in Chapter 5.

1.8 POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

With the dilemmas discussed in the research problem and the reviewed literature, it is imperative to consider blesser-blessee relationships as capable of revealing hidden health and behavioural issues experienced by young women who engage in this phenomenon. Therefore, the researcher deemed it imperative to conduct a study that adopted a BCC strategy to combat the prevalence of the blesser-blessee phenomenon in South Africa, through a selected group of participants from the Limpopo Province. Thus, this study contributes to knowledge and provides unique insight into the context, i.e., the experiences of blessees and their motivations to engage in blesser-blessee relationships. The researcher used health communication because it is effective in addressing issues of health, such as problems that arise from the blesser-blessee relationship. The participants who shared their experiences and challenges revealed information that could be helpful to young women who may be considering engaging in this sort of relationship. Whilst policy makers may not police or manage actions of adults involved in this sort of relationship, the findings from this study reinforce the need of social and health sectors of government to develop campaigns that may contribute to an awareness of the dangers of this sort of relationship among young women and teenagers.

1.9 OVERVIEW AND STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

The dissertation is divided into eight chapters. Chapter 1 provides an introduction and background of the study, definition of key concepts, the aims and objectives, preview of the literature and theoretical framework, and the scientific contribution.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature on transactional sex and the blesser-blessee phenomenon. The chapter encompasses the forms, motivation of engaging in blesser-blessee relationships, the problems that arise in blesser-blessee relationships, and the distinction between transactional sex and blesser-blessee relationships.

Chapter 3 discusses part two of the literature. Thus, the literature focuses on the use of BCC, distinction between health communication and BCC, and how it can be used to address the blesser-blessee phenomenon.

Chapter 4 explores two theories adopted in this study. The theories used are Health Belief Model and Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationship Theory. Moreover, the chapter encompasses the literature drawn on these theories.

Chapter 5 discusses the research methodology used. This includes research approach and design, study location, sample size, methods used to collect data, and ethical considerations.

Chapter 6 presents part 1 of the findings of this study. It presents female students' understanding and experiences of blesser-blessee relationships. The chapter discusses three major thematic findings with sub-themes in each major thematic finding.

Chapter 7 presents part 2 of the findings. This chapter presents challenges of blesser-blessee relationships. Consequently, this chapter discusses two major findings with related subthemes.

Chapter 8 discusses the summary, recommendations, and conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER 2:
TRANSACTIONAL SEX: BLESSER-BLESSEE PHENOMENON
(LITERATURE REVIEW)

2.1 Introduction

Transactional sex is the exchange of goods or money in economic-dependent relationships (Moodley & Ebrahim, 2019). This means that sex is intertwined with exchanging monetary gifts. Ntsieni (2017) proffers that transactional sex is a new modern term for *sex-for-money* in which women and men engage in sex partnerships for monetary gifts or regular gifts such as clothes. However, a blesser-blessee relationship refers to an emotional commitment between an elderly wealthy man and a young woman (Singata, 2020).

Thobejane et al. (2019) similarly report that a blesser-blessee relationship is a re-emerging phenomenon of sugar daddies. These two concepts are the focus of this chapter. The researcher divided this chapter into section A and section B. In section A, the researcher will discuss the manifestation of transactional sex, types of transactional sex, international literature on transactional sex, and African literature on transactional sex. Then, in section B, the chapter will discuss the blesser-blessee relationship in South Africa, causes or factors that contribute to blesser-blessee relationships, problems that arise from a blesser-blessee relationship, various types of a blesser-blessee relationship, and the distinction between transactional sex and a blesser-blessee relationship.

Section A

2.2 Manifestation of transactional sex

Part of the historical emergence of transactional sex was sparked by researchers like Charterji, Murray, London and Anglewicz (2005), Dunkle, Wingood and Diclement (2010), Kaufman, Grilo, Williams, Mare, Fentaye, Gebrestadik and Yedeneka (2020), as well as Maganja, Maman, Groves and Mbwambo (2009) who discovered a brand-new type of transactional relationships that were showed to be distinct from sex work or prostitution. Wojcicki (2002) defines transactional sex as 'swinging'. Swinging refers to having casual intercourse with others for several reasons, such as getting drunk at social gatherings or in a bar. However, Leclerc-Madlala (2003) and Ranganathan et

al. (2017) are the first to define transactional sex in neoliberal inequities, contradicting Wojcicki's (2002) definition. They reveal that women engage in sexual intercourse to fulfil their expectations regarding money. Thus, these scholars emphasise that neoliberal inequality weakens out of the positive earnings spectrum, which forces women to engage in transactional sex to have financial security. This definition is close to those of Dunkle et al. (2010), Fielding-Miller, Dunkle, Cooper, Windle, and Hadley (2016), as they concur that this phenomenon is related to the concept of '*sex pays bills*.' However, Orenstein (2016:1) reveals that:

Many women classified these relationships along a spectrum of sexual-economic obligations rather than a single type of relationship that can be easily assessed with a binary measure. Many women throughout the world do not explicitly identify their relationships as financially motivated, even if they report initiating or remaining in a relationship longer than otherwise if they were not financially dependent. Because of this, transactional sex is likely better measured using a scale of concrete behaviour (i.e., items received and item value) rather than as a subjective binary measure that asks women to identify financial motives as a primary reason for engaging in a sexual relationship.

Understanding transactional sex is made clear by the exposition of the definition. Transactional sex is when a person consents to having sex with another person (Fielding-Miller & Dunkle, 2017) out of need; for example, due to hunger, lack of money, or fear that a man may leave if a lady does not provide sexual satisfaction. However, Masvawure (2010) indicates that the definition of transactional sex takes place in different meanings depending on where it manifests. This means that one cannot rely on one definition; however, one must understand the context of the occurrence. For instance, Groess-Green (2014) indicates that transactional sex is not prostitution; it refers to non-commercial sexual relationships motivated by an implicit assumption that sex will be exchanged after receiving money. Wamoyi, Daniel, Wight, Mary, Mshana and David (2010) indicate that a male partner must provide gifts to show that he values his partner. This definition echoes Groess-Green's (2014) definition, which concurs that families and friends may chide women whose partner does not provide her with a gift, which suggests that he does not consider her as a legitimate partner. Therefore, since the definition of transactional sex varies among researchers, it is important to discuss the types of transactional sex to clarify the nature of the concept.

2.2.1 Types of transactional sex

(a) *Gold-digger*

Recently, the term gold-digger generated meanings such as referring to a person who pursues a relationship with a wealthy person as primarily motivated by a desire for money and social status, or a person who uses his or her charm to get what he or she wants. In other words, gold-digging is a form of transactional sex (Masvawure, 2010). Gold-digger is a historical slang term that peaked in Rex-Beach's book (1911), '*The Ne'er Do-Well*', and in the memoir '*My Battles with Vice*' written by Brooks (2009). As a result, the concept gold-digger has its roots among chorus girls and sex workers in the early 20th century (Brooks, 2009). For example, a woman who has 'irrationally stripped a guy of everything he had worked for' is said to be a gold-digger (Deech, 2009; Sharrar, 1989). Deech's (2009) and Sharrar's (1989) findings resulted in initiatives to develop transactional sex as a culture and as a legal intervention. Thompson (2016) examined the etymology of the phrase '*gold-digger*,' which has been used in a variety of cultural and legal contexts, including the media and parliamentary discussions, and found that the term *gold-digger* refers to women who associate with rich males because they prey on men's riches.

However, according to a different school of thought, gold-digging is a contractual connection that arises because of economic disparity between men and women (Smart, 1984). Donovan (2020) provides an example of a gold-digger relationship and agrees that a gold-digging relationship arises because women prefer to pursue romantic connections for financial gain. Therefore, a gold-digger relationship might be seen as an exchange of money between sex partners. The concept gold-digger has also been represented in popular culture. For example, Coleman, Butler, Long and Fisher (2016) used consensual qualitative research and a focus-group approach to involve young Black adults in a critical debate of the prevalent sexual script present in hip-hop music and Black-oriented television shows like "Gold-Digger". The study aimed to explore the concept gold-digger in Black women's sexuality and sexual script. The study's findings indicate that a gold-digger relationship was represented by *Da Baddest Chick* rap artist, Trina. Moreover, the song consists of sexually exploiting lyrics that contain an overarching theme highlighting the benefits of using sex for monetary gain. This song helped the researcher to understand the concept gold-digger

as the manifestation of transactional sex. Numerous studies have resulted from this concept. However, further research into the context in which this term is used is essential to better comprehend the idea of gold-digging as a type of transactional sex. This supports Donovan's (2020) and McMahon's (2021) assertions that linguistic, gender, class, and racial distinctions play a significant role in the emergence of the phrase "gold-digger". Consider McMahon's (2021:14) hypotheses holds that:

American Gold Digger serves many purposes, one being an illustration of the power of language. The choice of words matters as they convey imagery and a heuristic to those unfamiliar with the underlying concepts. This fact was not surprising; I have argued how the terms "marriage penalty" and "death tax" have permitted groups to frame legal and political debates and shape outcomes. However, the key to the term "gold digger" is not only its longevity but its responsiveness to changing social circumstances. The term has been adapted to changing sources of anxiety. Using the concepts of moral panics and tort tales, the author describes how people were able to use the term gold digger to exaggerate what were infrequent occurrences, such as large alimony or palimony awards, to reinforce opposition to a perceived threat to the male-dominated, upper-class, and white way of life. The power to play on fear through the exaggeration of legal outcomes shaped future legal outcomes. It is this power to shape the law that likely distinguishes the term gold digger from the derogatory, but less powerful, trophy wife.

The assumption deftly employs a detailed description of gold-digger as a type of transactional sex in language to show how the phrase can be used in various contexts but always increases a wife's rights to her husband's property. Inevitably, Sandlin (2011) confirms that the gold-digger stereotype is applied to disadvantaged women. As consequence, conflicting and unclear agendas have plagued this situation. This is because some scholars use the term gold-digger to criticise the behaviour of sex-for-money. However, some scholars use the term gold-digger to elaborate on the nature of transactional sex. Khue (2013) indicates that due to various levels of receiving money in a relationship, the term gold-digger will be continuous. For example, a former sex worker and a mail-order bride, Jasmine, in America was referred to as a gold-digger because after her husband died, she inherited his possessions, and a year after, she entertained several marriage proposals. The figure below shows an

illustration that represents power dynamics that drive gold-digging as a manifestation of transactional sex.



Figure 2.1: Power dynamics that drive gold-digger phenomenon. Source: <https://www.news24.com> 06 June 2021.

The young chorus girls in the Avery Hopwood play “The Gold-Diggers” were pursuing money. The phrase gold-digger has been used to describe women who date wealthy men since time immemorial. On the other side, the concept of a gold-digger is an assumption about how males are expected to express thanks after having sex with their partners, according to an article titled “He always says thank you after sex” written by Godson (2019). Given the nature of the gold-digger phenomenon, it is evident that one man has a possibility of dating many women because he will be providing for every woman who wants to benefit from companionship (i.e., women who prefer dating rich men). Thus, this phenomenon leads a man to sexually transact with many women, which is referred to as the side-chick phenomenon.

(c) Side-chicks

The term side-chick refers to a female who dates a man who is simultaneously maintaining a more serious relationship with his wife (Phamotse, 2017). In Britain, Waya, Mercer, Gilbert, Garnett, Sutcliffe, Weather-Burn and Hughes (2017) reveal that young women are a concurrency, which means that they are having multiple sexual partners overlapping in time. Thus, the term side-chick is understood as an open, situational, and experimental sex relationship. Therefore, this partnership involves having a main partner and additionally, men and women having sex with a side-chick. Moreover, Waya et al. (2017) indicate that this partnership emerges because the

relationship is founded on sexual transaction pleasure. Consequently, sex is ordered through social handles such as WhatsApp. In this instance, an individual can go to the extent of sending nude (naked) pictures for monetary compensation. This practice is referred to as 'titty Tuesday' (this means that every Tuesday the young woman sends pictures depicting her breasts to whoever is willing to pay for those pictures). For Stone-MacDonald (2002), side-chick is a term given to a female who is not in an actual relationship or dating but, an individual who is open and free to have sex with a man who intends to engage in sexual intercourse.

Mthiyane (2022) contends that the side-chick phenomenon refers to a form of transactional sex where people can have sex to satisfy temporal wants. Stone-MacDonald (2002) similarly reports that in this phenomenon, there are no expectations, just the kind of sex that leads to transactions of goods. This means that there are no strings attached but individuals can have sex. Hence, scholars such as Masvawure (2010) and Scull (2019) refer to this phenomenon as a one-night stand or friends with benefits. However, a study carried out in Taiwan by Hsiu-Hua (2005) refers to a side-chick phenomenon as a mistress. As a result, given the nature of the transactional sex phenomenon, women engage in transactional sex with married men to gain access to a luxury lifestyle. Thus, the side-chick phenomenon leads to the linkage of slay queens to a form of transactional sex.

(d) Slay queens

The term 'slay queen' refers to a female who has outdone her competitors. This extends to dressing well and looking good or beautiful (Sinethemba, 2017). Omondi and Pamela (2020) ascribe various meanings to the term 'slay queen' depending on the context in which the term is used. Nonetheless, this section is grounded on Omondi and Pamela's (2020) assumption, 'you will know that she is a slay queen when she forces her hips on you'. In other words, this means that a lady who is referred to as a slay queen uses her looks to evoke a rich man for transactional sex. Groess-Green (2014) maintains that slay queens use their 'titillating power' and attract rich men and engage in transactional sex.

Hawkins, Prince and Mussa (2009) observed young women in Maputo and Mozambique idealised a lifestyle that is driven by pursuits of trendy clothing, riding expensive cars, and wearing opulent Peruvian or Brazilian hair extensions. This is

when they first coined the term *slay queen* in a context of transactional sex. A qualitative exploratory research study was undertaken in a small comprehensive university in South Africa by Ravhuhali, Netshirembe, Nendauni, Lavhelani and Mboweni (2020). Bachelor of Art students majoring in Development Studies made up the study's population. Interacting with second-year and third-year students, they employed a triangulation sampling technique. The goal of the study was to investigate how ubiquitous the materialism sense is and how it influences young people's behaviour. The study's findings indicate that many female students engage in transactional sex to maintain social acceptance. Thus, this study adds knowledge to exploring the motivations for engaging in transactional sex. For example, one of the participants reported that *'I do things that I hate for money and buy things that I love with money'*.

Phamotse (2017) alludes that *slay queens* base their sense of themselves, well-being, and social standing on material possessions. Thus, a *slay queen* has an image and a lifestyle that is contrary to her socio-economic reality, and this luxurious lifestyle is always displayed on social media (Sinethemba, 2017). For that reason, a *slay queen* maintains that in a poverty-stricken village, fashion might be positively identified with the middle class, and as such, it is used to prove the identity of being an important person (Bhana & Pattman, 2011). Sinethemba (2017) argues that despite the vulnerability of poor backgrounds, young women in this context have lifestyle goals and there is a desire to consume underlying young women's lifestyle choices. Thus, it extends to engaging in transactional sex because they are predominantly driven by survival needs.

The viewpoint is comparable to one expressed by Masvawure (2010) in a study titled "I just want to be flashy on Campus." He claims that Zimbabwean students' ambition to stay trendy underlies their purchase of stylish goods. For young South Africans growing up after apartheid, material consumption of clothing, accessories, and beauty goods has become crucial to defining their identities and to sustain this lifestyle, some turn into monetary beneficial relationships with men who can finance their lavish and trendy lifestyles (Howell & Vincent, 2014; Leclerc-Madlala, 2003). Burroughs and Rindfleisch (2011), on the other hand, criticise the *slay queen* phenomenon as a type

of transactional sex, contending that it poses moral dilemmas for individuals who partake in it.

Consequently, slay queens are self-introverted, and this includes their sexual partners. The researcher's goal depended on this reasoning. For instance, at the time of writing this chapter, the TikTok trend called '*vabbing*' made uproars and influenced many young women to engage in '*vabbing phenomenon*'. *Vabbing* refers to using a female's vaginal secretion as a perfume or lotion to make an individual more attractive, especially in front of wealthy men. It is evident that women who partake in the slay queen phenomenon focus much on being beneficial in transactional sex than establishing a traditional relationship. This echoes Masvawure (2010) who claims that this phenomenon is a disgrace and challenges the morals of young women. The foregoing argument aligns with the purpose of this study. In the case of the beauty phenomenon, Tarana (2020) postulates that bodies are being utilised in the imperial and transactional context of economic liberty. Many different arguments were generated by this phenomenon. For instance, Xulu-Gama (2017) contends that women's primary means of subsistence is transactional sex. A comparable premise is the excerpt below:

The conspicuous consumption trend is captured by the increase of the slay queen relationship becoming predominant among young women. Transactional sex refers to relatively rich men who spend money buying expensive gifts and taking young women with them on local and international holidays with the most common destination being Dubai. A slay queen refers to young women who use their beauty to draw rich, usually older men's attention, thereby dressing in enticing ways, often hanging around in places where they search for these men called blessers, entering relationships with them. These usually older intimate partners entered intimate relationships without the women intending to marry them. These young women have other relationships with men their age. They use transactional sex relationships to further economic and social status goals. For slay queens, the transactional relationship is an easy way to access fancy lifestyles (Moodley & Ebrahim, 2019:2).

According to the presumption, slay queens can get stylish clothing and cosmetics financed through transactional sex. Sinethemba (2017) agrees that this is popular since young ladies attach great significance to fashionable apparel. This scholar found out that in South Africa, the term slay-queen refers to women who finance their lavish

lifestyle through transactional sex. International scholars, however, do not use the phrase “slay queen” in this context. Linker (2010), for instance, indicates that a young woman who is married to a rich man is referred to as a *trophy wife*, as a result, international scholars are unfamiliar with the term “slay queen”. According to the study, this is a reference to a woman who is seen as a status symbol by her partner, particularly political leaders. The lady in issue has little personal value outside of her physical appeal, incurs significant costs to maintain her appearance, frequently lacks intelligence, and accomplishes nothing else of significance. Jimenez (2015) adds that in extreme circumstances, a person who dates a wealthy older man, particularly one who is in poor health, may be referred to as a slay queen. The figure below depicts a slay queen, which helps in understanding the forms of transactional sex.

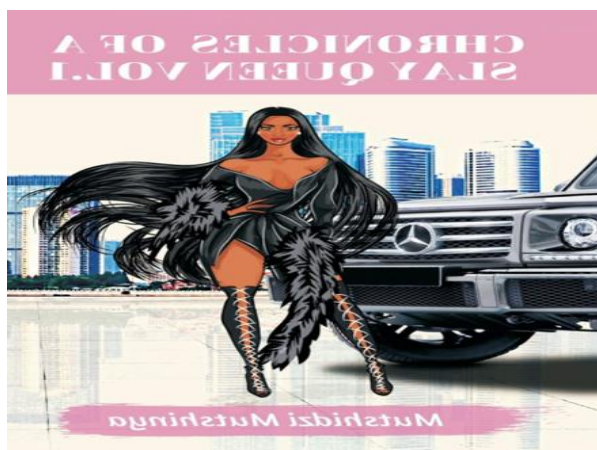


Figure 2.2: Artistic depiction of a slay queen. Source: Mutshinya (2019).

This demonstrates that while the necessity to survive is crucial, young people’s desire to dress extravagantly relates them to a higher social status. This echoes the study’s goal, which was to analyse why female university students engage in transactional sex. Galbin (2014), who presents novel views, postulates that a transactional sexual relationship is a social construct based on shared experiences in society. The scholar used an epistemological viewpoint theory, which links a belief and an opinion using social knowledge. The study’s findings reveal that the belief in ‘slay queen’ plays a vital role in the context of transactional sex. As a result, young women enjoy sharing lovely photos of themselves on social media accounts and using hashtags to promote their content. The transactional sex phenomenon is therefore ongoing. Scholars such as Chabalala (2016) and Moagi (2017) define slay queens as young and adolescent ladies who only date wealthy older guys. They finish by stating that these young ladies

spend most of their time on social media boasting about content obtained from sexual partners. Since some influencers derived their status from transactional sex, the researcher will now discuss them.

(e) Influencers

Not all influencers engage in transactional sex; however, some influencers flaunt their lavish lifestyles in a way that young women resort to transactional sex to make money to live the lavish lifestyles of influencers. The media, which may be seen as a reflection of society, are crucial in shaping how people view the feminine way of life. For instance, young women in South Africa are consequently inundated with photographs of influencers on social media sites like Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. A phenomenon known as influencers can be linked to Goffman's (1959) analysis of how people express themselves in daily life. Thus, Goffman's (1959) theory emphasises self-presentation, which shows that people are acting on stage when they are with other people; however, when they are alone, they stop acting (backstage). As a result, on social media platforms such as Facebook or Instagram, many people act as if they are rich through the posts they share with the public; hence, those who fail to share good posts engage in transactional sex so that they can maintain presenting themselves as rich through media platforms. Additionally, Gray (2014) revisits Goffman's (1959) theory and shows that adolescent girls' behaviour is significantly influenced by how they display themselves. This section contributes to understanding the motivations of female university students in engaging in transactional sex, which include the desire fit into the influencer phenomenon. As an illustration, "we evaluate ourselves using the opinions of others" (Steinberg, 2007:1). Additionally, this covers how one presents themselves in social situations (Goffman, 1959). A study conducted by Ravhuhali et al. (2020) indicates that young women have grown to be a significant demographic group that influences and makes purchases of self and home-care products. This is because a significant amount of time and effort is spent on social media, which only alludes to tangible wealth (Roberts, Jones & Sanders, 2013). Young female university students are consequently driven to pursue fame because of this.

Influencers frequently brag about their lavish lifestyles on social media by considering the aforementioned. Despite living in the worst conditions, they can afford this opulent lifestyle through transactional sex, as evidenced by the alcohol they consume and the

wealthy men they hang around with (Sinethemba, 2017). Young women aspire to a lifestyle that demonstrates wealth and a more comfortable socio-economic reality than the scarcity that frequently reflected typical living patterns (Berger & Luckman, 2010; Bongazana, 2014; Madyibi, 2017; Motseki & Oyedemi, 2017; Snodgrass, 2016; Zhan & He, 2011), among others. This is true despite the unfavourable circumstances. As a result, these improved living patterns are being shaped by the media.

The background of the context of transactional sex in which women are seen as influencers can be traced to Newell (1996) and Yeku (2017), who indicated that there is a considerable corpus of research on the sexualised ways that female bodies are objectified, *thingified*, and consumed in popular media culture. A reference is made by Mpofu (2021) that, even though we live in a time where digital media may be utilised to challenge some of these notions, the treatment of women in the present era persists. The scholar goes on to say that women are employed as props in popular cultural contexts and end up being commoditised because of their active participation. Take the “Dubai Porta Potty” advertising, for instance.

As a result, many female students intend to behave as influencers. Moagi (2017:8) inevitably agrees that young “women use the money received to increase their image and to buy things for themselves.” The term ‘influencer is inspired by the ideology that when you are a tertiary student, you need to look beautiful because you are an idol of where you come from. Kekana (2017) postulates that the concept was initially used as praise given to a good-looking individual. However, Fasselt (2018:1) states that the term “influencer is related to an opportunist.” For example, Masango (2016:1) shows that ‘influencers’ “do not date men who fail to offer financial security.” That being the case, transactional sex or sex-for-money helps these young women to maintain the fantasy of living a soft life.

Considering the rationale above, this study concurred that young girls from disadvantaged circumstances are identified as influencers, in addition to young girls from wealthy families. Furthermore, these girls take part in transactional sex to keep up their media cache. Similarly, Ravhuhali et al. (2020) claim that materialism has an impact on young women’s behaviour in South Africa. Young women that pursue such materialism end up sleeping with older wealthy men to amass wealth and money. Consequently, influencing ambitions was a social movement in which underprivileged

women entered transactional relationships in exchange for financial gain (Sinethemba, 2017).

Thus, in South Africa, there are limited studies showing the relationship between transactional sex and influencers. The emphasis of this section is on how influencers use their posts to promote womanlike beauty and transactional sex. The non-participatory digital ethnography conducted by Motseki and Oyedemi (2017) includes non-participant observations of postings made by four black South African female celebrities, including texts, photos, and comments. The purpose of this study was to explore how personalities use media channels to express their views on femininity and the female body.

Aruguete, Register and Katreovich (2014) and Chae (2014) indicate that young girls idolise media superstars and celebrities. The opposite is also true, according to Patton (2006), who claims that social media influencers deliberately promote themselves in ways that highlight their material possessions and idealised versions of attractive bodies to attract friends and followers. These influencers frequently display the cosmetic changes they have endured as a result. How young people create daily vlogs is explicitly mentioned. Some academics argue that various media platforms, including Instagram, Twitter, Television, and Facebook, disseminate pictures of what successful women should look like, complete with opulent lifestyles and idealised forms. Thus, this gives young women a vision of a better life to strive towards. For instance, shopping in Dubai, driving the priciest vehicles and dining at upscale establishments (Berger & Luckman, 2010; Bongazana, 2014; Snodgrass, 2016; & Zhau & He, 2011), are some of the examples that most young women aspire to have. For Motseki and Oyedemi (2017), television personalities can express their conceptions of riches and beauty in ways that shape the woman-like ideal through the media. To fit in, those who cannot afford it often have affairs with wealthy men (Phamotse, 2017).

The term influencer is a mediated ideology that shows how women should dress and behave (Phamotse, 2017). The figure below illustrates that youths are today influenced by appearance, which dares to challenge their personality.



Figure 2.3: An artistic image of an influencer and the power of materialism and riches among young women. Source: Mpofu (2021)

2.2.2 International literature on transactional sex

Despite causing controversy in several locations, transactional sex is nevertheless mired in contradiction and ambiguity on a global scale. International researchers refer to transactional sex as “paid to date” or “aided dating” as a result. A study conducted in New York by Kinsella (2014) characterises the phenomenon of transactional sex as a cult of delinquent schoolgirls, with the outpouring of girl material reflected by the complex and tricky male response to additional sexual spheres thought to have been lost to gender equality and female emancipation. Thoughts associated with the “cult of delinquent schoolgirls” are condemned by historians. As an illustration, McLuhan (1964:48) refers to this phenomenon as *“compensated intercourse because it involves going on dates and likely involves sex in exchange for money or products.”* For these young women to get money, they approach older rich men to date.

Using dating arrangements based on an exchange of closeness and recompense for money or other types of support, Gunnarsson (2022) conducted a study in Sweden that is consistent with this phenomenon. Additionally, these relationships frequently include sexual activity, and although this is debatable, there are suggestions that these relationships are akin to prostitution. As a result, it questions established distinctions between “normal” partnerships and sexual activity. This paper drew on semi-structured interviews and a survey questionnaire with Swedish males and females with experience of heterosexual compensated sexual dating. For that reason, the study’s

findings reveal neoliberal transformations of social relationships bolstering an instrumentalising attitude to relationships, including sex and intimacy. Thus, this phenomenon is characterised by external factors (material compensation) and there are no responsibilities and vulnerabilities that come with uncompensated relationships. This phenomenon compasses the term 'no strings' attached. A clear example is seen in how the participants in Sinethemba's (2017) study reported that they 'milk the cow' to make a living.

On the other hand, Lee and Shek (2013) argue that this phenomenon of compensated dating originated in Japan, and it is expressed as *énjo-kosai* in Japanese. This term refers to the practice of older men giving money and luxury gifts to attractive young women for sexual favours. However, this has produced a variety of terms such as subsidising dating, assisted relationships, freelance teenage prostitution, and causal teenage prostitution. Consequently, these phrases simply describe a woman who dates to collect a payment, most often cash compensation. However, Wakabayashi (2003) sees paid dating as a transaction in which people, especially girls, freely sell their sex in exchange for presents. Most notably, the ubiquity of *énjo-kosai* in Japan served as the foundation for this work. For instance, it later inspired research into this phenomenon in other East Asian nations like Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong (Cheung, Lee & Li, 2016).

A study conducted by Lee and Shek (2013) claims that paid dating in the United States is comparable to child prostitution. However, as a general argument for the nature of transactional sex, their proposal falls short. For instance, Cheung et al. (2016) criticise Lee and Shek's (2013) argument, stating that the distinction between compensated dating and juvenile prostitution is that girls involved in the former choose their sexual partners while those involved in the latter do little research on the boys they have encounters with. Brawn and Roe-Sepowitz (2008) and Wakabayashi (2003) both agree that girls who participate in compensated dating frequently seek opportunities to receive quick rewards and to experience sexual enjoyment. Be that as it may, depending on the situation, these arguments differ greatly.

Despite the evidence from the empirical literature suggesting that transactional sex is paid dating in places like Taiwan, Japan, Sweden, and Hong Kong, some researchers, including McLellan (2013), have labelled it as "schoolgirl prostitution." The scholar

contends that despite being the oldest profession in the world and having roots in Sumerian culture, prostitution has been modernised by the media. For instance, clothing and underwear have a high market value in Japan, and the more time girls spend wearing those goods, the more money they will earn from their sexual partners. However, McLellan (2013) notes that when examining teenage prostitution, the literature reports the possibility of both participants engaging in sexual activity in exchange for one of the costumes.

Nonetheless, instead of acknowledging this phenomenon as compensated dating, juvenile prostitution, or teenage prostitution, Christopher, Swader and Vorobeveva (2015) define transactional sex as a “commodification of intimacy.” This concept is motivated by how people are interested in sex, which in every day intimate relationships has become more infused with market logic, however, in contrast to commercial sex (prostitution). Thus, providing a full review of transactional sex across the world would be a separate and extensive work. Therefore, the researcher intended to discuss the manifestation of transactional sex to give a background sense of the breadth and gaps of this phenomenon in the research practice.

The study conducted by Srushti (2021) indirectly differs from other scholars who presented their arguments concerning transactional sex. The study indicates that the ‘hook-up culture’ is a technological entrepreneurship of sugar arrangements. Moreover, these hook-up *relationships* occur because parties that engage in this phenomenon describe the techniques to distance themselves mentally and emotionally from being associated with the sex work industry. Transactional sex is different from sex worker (prostitution). Hence, Scull (2019) postulates that sugaring sex forms a distinctive relational package, crafting sugaring as neither severely ‘intimate nor transactional’ but involves the symbiosis of both money and sexual intimacy. As a result, materialistic desire among young women creates a context that encourages transactional sex.

On the other hand, Swader, Strelkova, Sutormina, Syomina, Vysotskaya and Fedorova (2013) carried out a study in Russia, which stipulates the phenomenon of transactional sex as ‘gift-for-sex’ barter. Thus, the study indicates that this phenomenon (gift-for-sex barter) is a niche practice potentially representing the commodification of everyday dating practices. As such, love is under a constant

conversation process through the medium of the contractual gift, into the fictitious commodity form (Swader et al., 2013). This argument originates from Marxist ideology. Marx (2010), for instance, describes commodification as the act of making anything interchangeable on the market. Mutshinya (2019) adds that the term transactional sex is a concept coiled from barter, as women have sex for material gain or riches, leading to the phenomenon known as sexual barter, which can be used to understand the historical bound and normatively laden of transactional sex.

Additionally, Matsue, Daw and Garret (2014) indicate that women practiced 'barter' through transactional sex in return to access resources and fish from fishermen in Lwanika Village, Uganda. This emerged because in 1960, the British colonial government introduced non-native Nile perch into Lake Victoria to commercialise the fishery (Pringle, 2005). Although transactional relationships include the exchange of commodities or money, they offer more than just useful support. These partnerships frequently involve the supply of care, such as food or lodging, emotional support, or be entwined with courting (Hunter, 2002; Poulin, 2007). They also frequently involve a semi-regular partner. The majority of "*jaboya*" (translated as customers in English) partnerships are like this. In a setting of intricate social interdependencies and customs of patron-client relationships, partnerships including sexual activity have been referred to be "one of many ties of unequal trade" (Swidler & Watkins, 2006).

Transactional sex occurs because the international economy is crucial. Therefore, this reveals that since the reintroduction of capitalism internationally after the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) thus, the economic reforms are the motivation of 'gift-for-sex' amongst women (Swader et al., 2013). Furthermore, Motyl (2013) agrees that women get paid by their sexual partners in exchange for having sex without company. However, this is just covert prostitution. Transactional sex is not prostitution (Swader et al., 2013). This is known as "aided dating" as a result. Additionally, there is a line between a gift and a payment form that separates prostitution from transactional sex. Therefore, in transactional sex, it is unclear what is being exchanged; in contrast, in prostitution, money is always involved.

Robert, Charles, Willy and Arnoud (2012), a divisive societal argument in the Netherlands has recently been sparked by the issue of transactional sex among Dutch individuals. However, accurate information on this phenomenon is scarce. They

suggest that explicit exchanges of sex for money do occur. De Zaldoundo and Bernard (1995) in Robert et al. (2012) agree that there is little literature because this phenomenon is immoral. To inform young girls about the effects of this occurrence, the researcher wanted to create a communication plan for behavioural change. Other locations, nevertheless, do not operate in this manner. Godson (2019), for instance, says the practice of transactional sex is most common among young people, and they disapprove of equating it with prostitution because it takes many different forms.

A qualitative study conducted by Mutshinya (2019) concurs that even the homeless sell sex for items they deem essential for survival, such as clothing, food, and shelter. As a result, this occurrence has been known as “sex for survival” ever since. Following a survey and discussion of the relevant international literature, the researcher derived the conclusion that transactional sex is a multidisciplinary phenomenon that takes different forms depending on the environment in which it occurs. However, information on the nature of transactional sex is scarce. The researcher then concentrated on African literature on transactional sex.

2.2.3 African literature on transactional sex

Over the last decades, African countries have experienced an unprecedented growth of transactional sex manifesting among women. To qualify this argument, Moodley and Ebrahim (2019) claims that in South Africa, a new option that reconfigures transactional relationships is now available, and it brings together the nexus of technology, sexuality, and economics within a consumerist environment and it can be referred to as transactional sex where discursive realities of intergenerational relationships intersect. Thus, the prevalence of this phenomenon produced a variety of African perspectives.

Transactional sex has gained attention in the region, and experts have suggested that this is because of a convergence of economic and ecological processes that have been taking place over the past three decades rather than “tradition, culture, or customs,” (Carol & Zachary, 2013). Furthermore, they highlighted how women in Zambia engage in transactional sex and use the term *lumambo*, which refers to a previous economic code of conduct for extramarital sex among women, to give their conduct legitimacy and a pretext for access to resources. Furthermore, the distribution

of employment in the formal and informal sectors is also found to be important in explaining earnings inequality, as a wage dispersion within each of these sectors.

Fielding-Millier et al. (2016) and Ruark, Dlamini and Mazibuko (2014) indicate that offering monetary aid is a common way for men to show their love for women. Therefore, if a young woman's partner does not give her gifts, her family and friends might reprimand her since it suggests that he does not value her or thinks she is a good companion (Wamoyi et al., 2016). However, this is not the case for others, Anurandha, Kangava and Boogaard (2020) suggest that transactional sex can be dealt with if the government can seek to abolish implicit prejudices against women but use tax policies to enhance the status of women in the economic sphere by incentivising labour force participation, land assets ownership and the growth of the women-owned business.

Since the literature on transactional sex is founded on a variety of dubious presumptions, the researcher focused on the ambiguity of economic dependency. Basow and Campanile's (1990) reveal that students who supported feminism were less likely to think that women who engage in transactional sex do so because it is necessary for their financial situation. Sadly, this source is outdated, and the claim has no support from any recent evidence. Despite this, Bene and Merten (2008) mention that transactional sex is occasionally depicted as being the direct result of people with financial needs. This gives one credence to comment, as recent studies focus on the economic perspective of transactional sex. Similarly, Stoebenau et al. (2019) postulate that transactional sex in sub-Saharan Africa covers a wide and complex range of relationship forms and sexual practices. However, it can be best understood as the informal exchange of sex for money or material support. The large literature on transactional sex views economic inequality between men and women as a causal factor for transactional sex.

According to this backdrop, Freedman, Rakotoarindrasta and Randriansolorivo (2020) conducted a study that explored the social and economic determinants of transactional sex in Madagascar, to explain the normalisation of this type of relationship amongst young females or women and the increasing involvement of old men. They used qualitative semi-structured interviews and in-depth interviews with young people aged 15-24 years to study economies of transactional sex. The study's findings show that

women engage in transactional sex because they regularly receive money and gifts. Moreover, the study stresses that economic deprivation and necessity are the primary reason for young women to engage in transactional sex.

It is hypothesised that wealth inequalities are part of the structural factors that give rise to high rates of sexual risks behaviours such as transactional sex, that are found among Black African men and women in South Africa (Hunter, 2007). Some scholars claim that the history of inequality in South Africa has created a pattern where transactional sex proliferates (Seekings & Nicoli, 2002). The study shows evidence of how the analyses of the post-apartheid, socio-economic context suggest that the wealth disparities promoted during the apartheid era have widened along with a significant increase in inequality. Hunter (2002) and Jewkes et al. (2012) allude that transactional sex has been defined in a recent scholarship on Africa, as non-commercial sex work is conceptually distinct from commercial sex work. Nonetheless, Wamoyi et al. (2010) revisit the economic motivation of transactional sex, and state that young women's poverty and economic vulnerability, or basic material need are the main determinants of transactional sex practice.

There is a strong debate on the distinction between transactional sex and sex work. Ethnographers traveling the African continent in the 18th century overlooked two factors: firstly, that monetary exchange in a sexual relationship can be both "a practical economic arrangement and a symbol of love" (Jewkes, Morrell, Sikweyiya & Penn-Kekana, 2012:1) and secondly, that a transactional sexual relationship or partnership is heterogeneous and generally exists on a continuum, largely defined by time, with relationships lasting a lifetime at the one extreme or a few minutes of passion, at the other (Jewkes et al., 2020:2). Another school of thought sees transactional sex as a means for young women to fulfil their consumption appetites and peruse images of modernity and success (consumption sex) in the context of globalisation (Lerlerc-Madlala, 2003). After reviewing the literature on the relationship between economic inequalities, the researcher concluded that women engage in this type of relationship to take care of their selves and the stereotype of dependency negatively affects them.

In this section, the researcher focused on discussing aspects of transactional sex in Africa that have been neglected in literature to date. Mphatso, Vearey, Thomas, Kabiru and Kazembe (2015) carried out a qualitative study in Malawi and concurred that

housing and food deprivation influenced decisions to engage in transactional sex for both young men and women. Most importantly, poor healthcare access and a desire for fashionable goods influenced the decisions of young women that led to transactional sex. The above-mentioned echoes Izugbara, Ikamari and Ochako's (2013) argument because they similarly report that in sub-Saharan Africa, the decision to engage in transactional sex is an outcome of poverty. However, most of the literature focused on the relationship among transactional sex, economic inequality, and HIV/AIDS. There is a gap in literature due to little published information on BCC and transactional sex among female university students.

To effectively reduce the known risks of HIV infection through transactional sex, a logical objective was to explore the experiences of female university students involved in transactional sex. To address this objective, increasing attention in sub-Saharan Africa has been devoted to discussing transactional sex with HIV/AIDS instead of addressing ways to combat this phenomenon. For example, Ntsieni (2017) documented perceptions about transactional sex while highlighting that the existing literature has yielded limited information for a more effective communication plan in educating young girls about this phenomenon. However, some scholars focused on the relationship between transactional sex and poverty. Some scholars beg to differ. A reference is made to Masvawure, Standfort, Vasu, Collier, and Tim (2015) that transactional sex has not been explored much among women who have sex with men in Africa without the influence of poverty. Consequently, there is little literature about attitudes toward the practice, the circumstances that give rise to the phenomenon, and how transactional sex relationships are managed. Additionally, Masvawure et al.'s (2015) study findings report that most men had engaged in transactional sex as the providers of money and material goods to women. However, this argument failed to concur with the objectives of this study, yet it was important in clarifying the manifestation of transactional sex. Baral, Fay and Trapence (2011) similarly report that in Botswana and Lesotho, men had either paid or received goods for sex.

Most importantly, the description of transactional sex in Africa varies. Some studies focus on materialism, poverty, culture, and sexual identity while other studies focus on the nature of transactional sex in the context of African culture. Cultural perspective refers to the generic concept which explains the characterisation of a set of qualities in each population (Oduro, 2012). Mutshinya (2019) shows a cultural view of

transactional sex as a concept of 'barter', which is known for exchanging goods. Therefore, the study discussed that women participate in 'sexual barter' to take care of and provide support for themselves. However, this study does not consider how women are shaped to practice transactional sex. This supports the assertion made by Freedman et al. (2020), who report that transactional sex is a phenomenon centred on the family rather than an individual's choice. Additionally, Braithwaite and Holt-Lunstad (2017) support the idea of the family (traditional manner), in which families would select partners for their daughters and would push them to get married and start families at a young age. Considering the foregoing, transactional sex relationships are not a novel occurrence in Africa, but the methods in which they are described, named, and debated have changed and are not without controversy (Zembe, Townsend, Thorson & Ekstrom, 2013).

Ankomah (1992) and Tabet (2012) studied the significance of transactional sex in Black African communities. The studies were conducted qualitatively and found that transactional sex is driven by cultural notions. These authors explain that there is no self-respecting woman who would remain in a friendship or sexual courtship with a man without material recompense. Zembe et al. (2013) indicate that the practice of exchanging gifts or money in sexual interactions has been considered standard sexual behaviour in most Black African societies. Unfortunately, the study demonstrates racial inequality. This concurs with Hunter (2002) and Jochelson (2001) who revealed that the period of colonisation and apartheid had an impact on the configuration of sexual relationships in South Africa through the migrant labour systems and laws that restricted the movement of Black women to urban areas, forcing men to live apart from their spouse for a very long time. Therefore, the separation of men from their spouses (rural sexual partners) created new demands for transactional sex in rural areas, weakened fidelity in marriage, and advanced the behavioural factors that are the cause of transactional sex. On top of this argument, Hoss and Blokland (2018) posit that transactional sex occurs due to the lack of sex in marriages. This means that when a woman marries a man, and they stay far from each other for a very long time, it makes them seek out sexual partners to compensate for their monetary wants. Newell (1996) and Yeku (2017) seek to differ as they uncover that there is a rich global body of research on sexualised ways of objectifying, *thingifying*, representing, and consuming female or women's bodies in a popular cultural context. This explains the

media culture, clear evidence is seen when music is commercialised, and sexualised through the female body business (Auebrey & Frisby, 2011).

There is also proof that traditional behaviours are connected to transactional sex across the world. Men are expected to support women financially according to traditional conventions in many different cultures around the world. In Africa, this expectation is institutionalised through the practice of *lobola* (Wilson, Wright, Safrit & Rudy, 2010). In addition, the researcher thinks that gender tax is practiced in various cultures, which motivates transactional sex. This includes the bridal cost, where women are bought for sexual interactions. Some people engage in transactional intercourse to get trendy consumer goods (Masvawure, 2010; Stoebenau et al., 2013). For the benefit of their extended families and to maintain lifelong ties, many women frequently engage in transactional sex (Groess-Green, 2014).

However, Hunter (2002) and Wojcicki (2002) argue that the exchange of money or material goods is commonly used as an indicator of a partner's commitment in much of Africa. Again, they revisit the ideology of *lobola*, which can be argued to be in part to test the groom's ability to provide materially for his future wife and family, as much as they also facilitate the transfer of uxorial and genetical rights between the two parties (Masvawure, 2010). Transactional sex is part of a broader system of interdependence that characterises African societies and in which women need patrons to provide for them while men need clients who provide an outlet for the display of power, prestige, and social dominance.

Transactional sex is influenced greatly by cultural and traditional conditions. When traditional practice becomes commercialised, there are negative impacts on gender equality and affect the full realisation of women's rights. Through *lobola*, women's bodies are commoditised, and they become the site of a complex interaction of patriarchy (Manase, 2016). Kambarami (2006) reports that the culture of paying *lobola* is one of the cornerstones of patriarchy and transactional sex. However, Mulaudzi (2017) argues that the practice has a history of being misinterpreted by Western scholars who have criticised it as an economic transaction that implies purchasing the bride. The scholar postulates that the phenomenon of *lobola* is highly sexualised as certain concepts use the transfer of sexual rights. For instance, when a man marries

a girl who is 'perceived' to be a virgin, he pays for a cow, which is termed '*mombe yechimanda*' in English, this symbolises marrying someone ready to be a wife.

This indicates that transactional sex attempts to unite men and women while compensating women. Thus, some scholars see *lobola* as a sign to thank the wife's family. At a larger African level, it is critical to remember that paying *lobola* or other gains is universal and embedded in normative heterosexual relationships, especially in a traditional global context. As a result, the concept that *lobola* is associated with love primarily in African contexts may reflect a racist discourse about African sexuality, which has been called out by academics. However, this study's objective was not to do that. Feminist criticisms of the patriarchal community have long held that marriage and traditional heterosexual partnerships reflect a sort of transactional sex (De Beauvoir, 1982).

For Masvawure (2010), transactional sex takes different meanings depending on where it manifests. However, around Africa, universities are constructed as contexts of the emergence of transactional sex. Several studies at African universities have further illustrated the salience of transactional sex for status and material gain (Adam & Mutongi, 2007). This echoes an article titled '*I just want to be flashy on Campus*' conducted by Masvawure (2010) in Zimbabwe. The paper challenged two common perceptions regarding transactional sex relationships, particularly in Africa. Thus, these relationships are primarily resorted to as survival strategies by poor young women, and sex and money are always exchanged. Additionally, in Zimbabwe, transactional sex links to the normative almost exclusively to economic survival (Luke & Kurz, 2002) and in doing so, often portrays women as gold-diggers.

However, Hunter (2002) and Wojcicki (2002) writing on sex-for-money relationships, argue, for example, that the exchange of material goods is commonly used as an indicator of a partner's commitment in much of Africa. Thus, the transfer of material goods from a man to a woman is therefore crucial rather than inimical to many intimate relationships. In addition, a study of transactional sex among female fish dealers in Malawi found that these connections are a component of larger networks of interdependence that are characteristic of African communities and in which women depend on customers to support them sexually. Henceforth, the researcher concentrated on South African writing about transactional sex.

2.2.4 South African literature on Transactional sex

The phenomenon of transactional sex gained its first media representation in South Africa when Phamotse (2017) was interviewed about her book named “Bare: #The Blesser’s Game.” As a result of a mediated ideology, Black women are presented as naive, lost, and alluring gold-diggers who slept with several men for money in the drama “Ekasi our stories” (Sinethemba, 2017). Thus, this phenomenon has recently attracted the attention of media outlets including Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram (Collier & Raney, 2017). Holmes (2003), however, said that it is commonly acknowledged that normal heterosexual behaviour serves as the primary means by which transactional sex is transmitted in South Africa. Tregenna and Tsela (2012), on the other hand, agree with Ho (2003) and claim that South Africa is one of the countries that experience a high rate of poverty as well as having one of the worst unemployment rates. These scholars concur that transactional sex in South Africa is common although it carries different meanings. Hence, authors such as Moodley and Ebrahim (2019) and Tregenna and Tsela (2012) indicate that transactional sex refers to women who engage in sexual activity for monetary gain because they are financially dependent to their sexual partners.

Considering the above-mentioned, Disrosiers et al. (2020) and Frieslaar (2019) carried out studies in South Africa, which indicate that rural populations face many challenges that put young women in transactional sex relationships to sustain their living. On the other hand, Zoe, Jonas, Appollis, Maruping, Lieve, Kuo and Matthews (2021) conducted a quantitative study to explore transactional sex and relationships among young women using survey data from 4399 young adolescent girls and young women. Thus, 10% of participants reported that they have engaged in transactional sex while the other 14% reported having stayed in a relationship for money as a material gain. Thus, the study’s findings indicate that these women carry an ideology of “*What is in it for me?*” as a motivation to engage in or terminate the relationship. South African women are very calculative when they engage in transactional sex. However, Seekings and Nicoli (2002) argue the distinction between transactional sex and romantic relationships is challenging, as the boundaries are very blurred.

Evidence reveals that today’s society frequently chooses survival over values because doing so requires access to financial resources regularly (Thobejane et al., 2019).

Considering the foregoing, transactional sex drives are thus positioned within complex sexual economies and go beyond fundamental survival or sustenance demands in situations of poverty (Ranganathan et al., 2017). Qualitative research also reveals that engrained social norms mandating that material or financial items received from a partner must be reciprocated with sex are framed to cover both the survival and acquisition of fundamental needs as well as for an increase in social status (Wamoyi et al., 2010). However, numerous studies looking at transactional sex in South Africa concentrate on gendered power and neglect to analyse how transactional sex manifests and how female university students participate in this phenomenon.

In South Africa, there is an estranged behaviour that carries out the concept of 'the things that people do for money are unbelievable'. An example is found in an article written by Sinethemba (2017) titled '*Livelihoods, lifestyle choices and the construction of young women's realities in Ngangeliswe Township, Mthatha*,' which contends that engaging in transactional sexual relationships is frequently justified by sayings like *secure the bag, milk the cow, love does not pay bills, and it is better to cry in a mansion than to laugh in a shack*. Additionally, the motivational elements of these phrases serve as economic incentives for young women to engage in transactional sex. Considering this, it is crucial to understand that transactional sex never only entails simple trades in which women give men sex and men give women money (Masvawure, 2010:5).

Qualitative research by Howell and Vincent (2014), Lerlerc-Madlala (2003), and Zembe et al. (2013) make it evident that slay queens and gold-diggers provide women with an opportunity to acquire luxurious clothing, accessories, and high-end goods. Young women generally separate their primary partners from their transactional sex partners when engaging in transactional sex (Mensah, 2020). This demonstrates that young women in South Africa's townships struggle to find alternatives to transactional sex because they are constrained by their material circumstances and lack opportunities.

A research study by Singata (2020) found that, contrary to the adage, transactional sex is typically pursued to support the woman's livelihood. The thesis presented above describes an opinion that transactional sex is motivated by the desire to lead an opulent lifestyle. Therefore, these individuals (partners) do not share a romantic relationship and are only together to exchange sexual favours. However, one of the

most widespread beliefs, Selikow and Mbulaheni (2013:88), is that transactional sex shows an indirect prostitution that occurs between a man and a woman. However, Singata (2020) suggests that transactional sex is ignited by women from poor backgrounds who want to live a luxurious life by using what they have (i.e., the body) to get what they want. This echoes Frieslaar (2019:1), who emphasised that “many people need to find a way to make money so they can pay their bills.” Therefore, young women are expected to fulfil “the sexual fantasies of their sponsors, frequently at tremendous personal costs” (Frieslaar, 2019:1).

Considering this discussion, and since this study was concerned with female university students in transactional sex, it was important to provide further insight into the understanding and reported dynamics of transactional sex at South African universities. Sherfer et al. (2012) conducted a study titled ‘Narratives of transactional sex on a university campus.’ Considering the dynamics of allegedly prevalent transactional sex on campus, the study presented data from a qualitative study with a group of students at a South African university in the Western Cape Province. Sherfer et al. (2012) state that many of these connections have their roots in unequal power dynamics that go beyond local-foreigner and urban-rural disparities. They also indicate that differences in wealth, age, and status that intersect with gender in various or complex ways also play a role. The hazardous and coercive sexual behaviours of young people may therefore be aggravated by these. Consequently, men and women regularly have transactional sexual relationships on campuses, according to the study’s findings. Thus, this study was important as it supported the aim of the researcher.

Frieslaar (2019) concurs that young women who engage in transactional sex are negatively stereotyped as vulnerable to abuse, as those providing sex are invariably victims (Oxlund, 2009). However, a recent study by Bhana and Pattman (2011) with a group of disadvantaged young women in a KwaZulu-Natal slum revealed how participants’ conceptions of love were connected to aspirations for material success without the consideration of intimate violence. However, Stoebanau et al. (2016) assert that it can be challenging for women to leave a violent relationship because of their dependency on their spouses for financial support, which could be discussed in greater detail in relation to a blesser-blessee relationship.

Section B

2.3 Blesser-Blessee Relationship in South Africa

The origin of blesser-blessee relationship is unknown, according to Fasselt (2018), but there are theories stemming from a male worldview that encourages men to spend money on young women who are viewed as innocent and entertaining objects. However, Smith (2021) argues, a blesser-blessee relationship is a transactional relationship because it involves an economic-dependency approach to a romantic relationship where each person in this relationship has clear responsibilities and rewards. Moreover, these responsibilities define what everyone is expected to contribute as well as the rewards each will receive. Therefore, a study conducted by Adam and Mutongi (2007) describes a blesser as a rich older partner who provides things like money, expensive gifts, and luxurious trips to a young partner (a blesser is the one who blesses the blessee). On the other hand, Solontsi (2016) postulates that a blessee is a young partner who is financially cared for by his or her blesser in exchange for companionship. Consequently, this reveals that in a blesser-blessee relationship, there are financial aspects involved. For example, Singata (2020) emphasises that a blesser-blessee relationship is economically motivated because a blessee is blessed with luxurious gifts while a blesser is rewarded with sex in return. In other words, being blessed in this phenomenon refers to enjoying the bliss of expensive gifts from a rich older partner (Ntsieni, 2017). However, a blesser-blessee relationship is not gender specific. Thus, women can be blessers or either blessee as well as men can be blessers or blessees.

According to Phamotse (2017), the concept of blessee developed when many young women posted pictures of themselves shopping overseas and wearing extravagant clothes. Furthermore, Phamotse (2017) indicates that this association is a contemporary sugar daddy relationship, in which a wealthy man lavishly presents his young girlfriend. Bosch (2011) reinforces that the relationship between a blesser and a blessee is based on gifts and involves persons of different ages.

It is forcefully asserted that the prevalence of dating older men in South Africa might be attributed to the availability of wealth to entice young women. Hoss and Bokland (2018) also cite the study conducted by Lerclec-Madlala (2003) and reveal that young women negotiate partnerships because older wealthier men use their 'titillating power'

and money to court them and offer them financial stability or an opulent lifestyle. This study emphasises that although these older men are married, they use the money to decide on “side-chicks” to amuse them while on trips for business or pleasure. On the other side, Frieslaar (2019) conducted a pastoral study that connects the biblical definition of the term “blesser” to the idea that it emphasises divine favour from a wealthy man. As a point of reference, Frieslaar (2019) agrees that a blesser concept is embedded with power and that a blesser is given a status like that of a god.

Notwithstanding, Geldenhuys (2016) argues that the concept of blesser has nothing to do with religion, it has to do with what people are prepared to do for money. As a result, it is a re-package of the old-age sugar daddy term. For Du Plessis (2015), the concept of “sugar daddy” or “sugar mommy” may be defined as an association with something sweet or pleasurable. This is the life that the beneficiaries have because of this relationship. However, Willard (2013) indicates that this phrase is now used to refer to a male who offers money in exchange for intimacy or companionship. Additionally, this phrase is still used in South Africa. Most intriguingly, Phamotse (2017) claims that the term “sugar daddy” arose in South African universities where local wealthy men wait to pick up their young partners on Fridays for a luxurious weekend retreat.

However, the definition of sugar daddy has previously been unpacked, but Shefer et al. (2012) in their study, which reported that South African female university students are having sexual relationships with older men so that they can pay for photocopies or fees, and even gain the level of social status among their peers. Therefore, instead of debating about the similarities and differences between ‘sugar daddy and blesser,’ it was important to explore the experiences of these female university students. This was important to this study because the researcher intended to explore the experiences of the blessees. Motyl (2010:9) defines this relationship as an age-disparate relationship involving a man, as a sexual partner, who is ten years older than the lady he dates. Consequently, gender plays a significant role in this relationship to qualify to be labelled as a blesser-blessee relationship.

Zikona (2020:29) disagrees with the notion of *God-like power* accorded to a blesser and that the term sugar daddy is the same as the term blesser. Scholars possess different knowledge. However, Silberschmidt and Rasch (2021) discovered that the

terms “blessee” or “blesser” originates from South African cultural standards that encourage young women to date men who are twice their age. A reference to this can be made from the culture of Nguni-speaking people (ethnic groups living in South Africa); for example, older wealthy men, influential men, and kings organise a reed dance where young women are presented to parade for marriage as a token to date a wealthy man who can provide expensive material (Bennet, Mills & Munnick, 2010). However, Gbaguidi and Koumagnon (2018) claim that the blesser-blessee relationship is connected to polygamy. In nature, the practice of polygamy refers to a relationship where a man or woman has multiple partners. Additionally, today, polygamy almost exclusively takes the form of old people dating or marrying young people. Therefore, the argument sheds some light on connecting the blesser-blessee relationship with polygamy. However, Brooks (2009) argues that polygamy refers to a hotly contested practice and is open to widespread misunderstanding. Although these arguments are evident, this study neglected to explore the influences of culture.

According to Mampane (2019) and Thobejane et al. (2019), a blesser-blessee relationship is a modern-day ‘sugar daddy’. Yet, even when saying a new way for ‘sugar daddy’, they enhance the description by emphasising that the blesser’s power puts him on a much higher pedestal, giving him status. Consequently, this echoes the role of power dynamics between a blesser and a blessee. Peacock (2012) however, alludes that an increasing body of research largely from South Africa indicates that the blesser-blessee relationship is a relationship between a young woman (about 21 years old) and an older man (about 45 years old) regarding being beneficial. As a result, it shows that this relationship is economically motivated and tangled with women’s relative lack of socio-economic resources. On the other hand, previous literature points out that many authors such as Ackerman, Brown, D’Eramo, and Izard (2002), Abrahams (2005), Dunkle et al. (2004), and Pitpitan, Kalichman, Garcia, Cain and Simbayi (2015) similarly report that the blesser-blessee relationship is an immoral relationship that challenges the personality of young women who date older men. However, to Varjavandi (2017), the concept of blessee in simple terms refers to an individual who is dependent. Frieslaar (2019) concurs that older men are perceived as good at caring for or ‘blessing’ young women by providing for their financial needs.

Since many South African townships have high rates of poverty, many young women have turned to blesser-blessee relationships. For instance, Sinethemba's (2017:1) study focused on "the observation of the livelihoods and lifestyles of young women in Ngangelizwe, Eastern Cape of South Africa," an area affected by poverty. Thus, the study indicates that due to unprivileged backgrounds, young women secure their socioeconomic needs through blesser-blessee relationships. Mavhandu-Mudzusi (2019) conducted a study in Tshwane, the capital city of South Africa and noted that South Africa is a developing country; therefore, women are facing economic challenges. As a result, girls engage in blesser-blessee relationships to escape poor living conditions. The researcher then concentrated on elucidating the elements that contribute to a blesser-blessee relationship.

2.3.1 Causes of factors that contribute to blesser-blessee relationship

It is vital to discuss the factors that influence a blesser-blessee relationship after initially concentrating on the blessee's experiences. Many aspects go into the blesser-blessee phenomenon, but each one is different depending on the situation and the motivation of the individuals involved.

Materialism and consumerism

Some researchers blamed the blesser-blessee relationship, particularly in South Africa, on the economic disparity that exists between men and women (Njeri & Negussie, 2013). However, young women today face materialism that dares to test their being (Ravhuhali et al., 2020). This shows that materialism is also a major cause that contributes toward young women engaging in a blesser-blessee relationship. Moreover, the study's findings reveal that materialism is prevalent among university students, and it has a huge impact on their behaviour. Consequently, the pursuit of materialism makes these young women place more importance on products over the experience of a blesser-blessee relationship (Van-Boven & Gilovich, 2003).

Sinethemba (2017) agrees that materialism such as the label on clothing, has an impact on young girls' behaviour in South Africa. To acquire expensive items such as clothes, young females who are obsessed with consumerism date older men. However, several studies have discovered that the emancipation of women is an important component in the growth of blesser-blessee relationships (Makhubele & Masilo, 2017). For Huchard, King, Seur and Suy (2011), female liberation contributes

to a practice known as “polyandry,” which is what leads to the frequency of the blesser-blessee phenomenon today. The scholars go on to say that because women are picky, they frequently have sex partners who can bless them after sexual intercourse. Additionally, Makhubele and Masilo (2017) conducted a study that aimed to provide a review of factors that predispose learners to indulge in sexual activities. The findings revealed that learners indulge in unprotected sex at an early age, which puts them at risk of falling pregnant and contracting sexual diseases. Moreover, the findings further establish that the involvement of sugar daddies or blessers with teenage girls has appeared to be the most common factor, among learners. Although this study highlighted the factors which predispose learners to indulge in blesser-blessee relationship, it failed to provide insight into the background of the causes of teenage girls engaging in blesser-blessee relationships.

Financial difficulties and economic inequalities

Sinethemba (2017) reports that local inequality in South Africa is one of the many causal factors for young women to engage in age-disparity relationships. The research shows that they must make painful sacrifices to survive. Falahati and Paim (2021) reinforce that having financial difficulties as a university student is one of the main factors that contribute to blesser-blessee relationships. This argument was crucial to this study because it illustrated the risk that university students take to pay tuition fees. This also supported the study’s second objective, which was to examine the motivations for female students in engaging in blesser-blessee relationships, while exploring the problems that arise from blesser-blessee relationships. The study also shows that in recent decades, remarks about economics and finance have included gender issues. Burke (2010), for instance, notes that while men gain more from resources, women have less access to them. As a result, a blesser-blessee relationship primarily affects women.

Frieslaar (2019) indicates that younger women need financial assistance to complete their studies. Moreover, the scholar indicates that besides the Covid-19 pandemic, a blesser-blessee relationship is the second major issue affecting black townships. However, the most interesting argument about these factors is seen in Fasselt (2018). The study shows that the idea of ‘chick lit’ that promotes self-actualisation encourages young women to engage in blesser-blessee relationships (neoliberal transactional

relationships). This supports Ntshangase's (2018) thesis, which holds that men may reconstruct women's life through sex and love. This demonstrates how economically women are dependent on men. For example, the phrase '*uthando lungumanqoba*', which means 'love is victory' in English, indicates that dating a wealthy older man is a benefit for young ladies since they will be able to meet their wants.

Similar findings were made by Hawkins et al. (2009: 173) in their study of young women in Maputo and Mozambique. They noted that young women idealise a lifestyle that is driven by pursuits of fashionable clothing, consuming alcohol in upscale bars, and owning the most recent cell phones like the iPhone. They can fulfil these needs by dating older wealthy men. Other academics, however, do not feel this way. Family indolence, where families encourage young women to marry wealthy older men who can provide for them, is shown by Bongazana (2014) to be the cause of blesser-blessee relationships. If a young woman dates a poor man, the family chides her and influences her to look for another partner. Consequently, in African norms, a man must take care of his partner and the family (Mampane, 2019).

Economic weight and 'black tax'

There are numerous escalating economic difficulties in South Africa. Thus, there is an economic weight among the young black generation that encourages blesser-blessee relationships, especially among female university students (Mhlongo, 2019). Consequently, the concept of 'black tax' must be taken seriously in blesser-blessee relationships. 'Black tax' is referred to as a family tax, where an individual is obligated to support kinship because of financial inequality (Falco & Bulte, 2011). Moreover, the support can be beyond monetary support, such as providing clothes, shelter, food, and goods. Machisa, Chirwa, Mahlangu, Nunze, Sikweyiya, Dartnall, Pillay and Jewkes (2022) similarly report that the term 'black tax' is understood as support provided by a middle-class member of a family to the extended family network, which entails money. However, Mwandambira (2015) refers to 'black tax' as the street name for hurdles caused by structural discrimination that black people must overcome to access quality standards of living and jobs. 'Black tax' carries different meanings depending on the research focus.

Since this section focused on an individual's motivation for engaging in a blesser-blessee relationship, the 'black tax' framework is the most relevant and suitable for

this context. As a result, to understand the conditions and circumstances that prevail for blessees who engage in blesser-blessee relationships impacted by the black tax, it is necessary to explore the nature of 'black tax.' One of the key reasons for financial difficulties in South Africa's middle-class population is 'black tax' (Nyathi, 2019:98). Therefore, focusing on 'black tax' as the underlying factor in a blesser-blessee relationships highlights the fact that young women choose to have relationships with older men on whom they rely financially rather than engage in prostitution (Kurlycheck, 2021:2). In turn, this prevents African communities from realising that the blesser-blessee relationship is brought on by the pressure of 'black tax.' A reference is made to Darko's (2007) personal experience, who states that:

My sister and I lost our mother when we were very young. Our father married again, but our stepmother was hell. Yet, our father was so much in love with her that it blinded him not to see what was going on. She used to starve us. At sixteen, my elder sister became involved with her first sugar daddy. He broke her virginity. He was so excited about that and swore to take care of both of us till his death [...].

From this quoted experience, it turns out that the underage female character in the book engaged in a blesser-blessee relationship to take care of the younger sister. As such, 'black tax' plays a vital role in motivating young women to engage in blesser-blessee relationships. In revisiting this argument, scholars such as Machisa et al. (2022), Magubane (2016) and Russell (2017) show that the effects of 'black tax' on young women often compels them to engage in unusual behaviours to pay 'black tax.' It is conceivable that various causes contribute to a blesser-blessee relationship.

Mhlongo (2019:8) indicates that the 'black tax' affects every black person and not only a particular class because people are taxed and surviving on revolving credit. This book further indicates that 'black tax' is an 'undeniable part of black culture and the African way of living according to the ideology of *Ubuntu*' (taking care of or looking after family members). That being the case, if one fails to get a job as a woman, the solution to making money easy is to date an older rich man (Mampane, 2019). Additionally, most black people, especially women become breadwinners at an early age. Mhlongo (2019) concurs that some even at the age of 18 are expected to be 'deputy parents.' Over and above that, the ideology that conceptualises that when a person starts earning is seen as the '*messiah*' who will rescue the family from poverty

influences many female university students to engage in transactional relationships. Mhlongo (2019) echoes Mangoma and Wilson-Prangley's (2019) views that, in African communities, the young ones should provide economically for their families. Thus, an expectation is initialised through engaging in a blesser-lessee relationship when one is unemployed as a female.

In a related manner, Finkelhor and Browne (1985) note that in earlier generations, when children had sex for the first time or dated older adults to survive, they were likely to continue this sexual engagement. Considering this background, it was critical to examine numerous causes or contributing variables that influence blesser-lessee relationships. For instance, young women are forced to act in this way due to the challenges posed by the need among female university students to support their families.

In view of how family tax or 'black tax' contributes to a blesser-lessee relationship, Xulu-Gama (2017) postulates that in many households within peri-urban spaces, young women rely on sugaring relationships to provide for the needs of all household members. Thus, in an article titled 'When you open your legs, you eat: the discourse of transactional sex among female youth in Nigeria,' Mensah (2020) states that the lessee concept is a pervasive sexual culture that is deployed to access modern lifestyles and social power. The study's findings highlight that many girls from privileged backgrounds engage in a blesser-lessee relationship; therefore, the concept of lessee signifies receiving financial stability to combat poverty.

A critical reading of 'Not without Flowers' written by Darko (2007) reveals various growing social issues in African postcolonial countries. Such issues include poverty and illiteracy which, as Gbaguidi and Koumagnon (2018) notes, gave rise to the phenomenon of blesser-lessee relationships. Therefore, due to poverty, young women date older rich men for survival and not because they are in love with them. Furthermore, due to illiteracy, women do not likely further their education if they have men who financially take care of them. Sinethemba (2017) postulates that, facing the economic uncertainty that awaits them upon graduation, some young female students begin to look for other ways of getting money, rather than unorthodox sources of income. Thus, they engage in blesser-lessee relationships to make both ends. Nonetheless, Masvawure (2010) in Oyediran, Odutolu and Atobatele (2011)

emphasise that a blesser-blessee relationship occurs because parents often encourage girls to form a relationship that could eventually lead to marriage and often warn girls 'not to bear a poor boy a child.' Thus, young women are groomed to be selective when it comes to establishing companionship.

Nilyufer, Zoonen and Kuipers (2013) claim that it is 'so monotonous or tiresome to taste the same soup, the same dinner, or the same item all the time.' As a result, older men frequently date multiple young women outside of marriage. Du Plessis (2015) also believes that men are polygamists or womanisers. Considering this behaviour, a blesser-blessee relationship is more common. Despite this definition, Solontsi (2016: 1) asserts that the "media is a causative role in interactions between the blesser and the blessed." An obvious allusion is made to the movie called "Shuga," in which actors like Lupita Nyong'o, Juliani, and Wang'ombe-Varshita played sex pivots who hunted affluent older men to elevate their financial standing. Thus, it is evident that the new age of media expands the phenomenon of the blesser-blessee relationship. However, Frieslaar (2019) indicates that the blesser-blessee relationship contributes to a shame-oriented generation. Yet, these young women see these old men as loving and caring. Thus, when a young woman dates a blesser her life seems to be blessed financially (Geldenhuys, 2016).

Considering the abovementioned, Mavhandu-Mudzusi (2019) shows that in the university context, a blesser-blessee relationship between students and lecturers emerged for the sake of achieving good grades and the ability to access study materials. Although the literature drawn on this argument is little, however, it played a significant role in explaining the causes that contribute to a blesser-blessee relationship. Considering all the causes that contribute to this phenomenon, this study argued that there are consequences embedded with engaging in blesser-blessee relationship. In the subsequent section, the researcher focused on the problems that arise from a blesser-blessee relationship.

2.3.2 Problems that arise from a blesser-blessee relationship

A blesser-blessee relationship is not only embedded with living a luxurious lifestyle and spending money received from blessers, but there are also problems that arise from this relationship. For instance, Sekudu (2017:6) reveals that a blesser-blessee relationship has shortcomings. The study further indicates that if "you need to be

blessed you might deliberately pray to God for a blessing because blessers or sugar daddies are not just about scattering a lavish life over your life without paying a price.” This argument introduces the problems that blessees experience in transactional relationships. Blessees continue to suffer the major brunt of the violence. For example, in a novel titled ‘My rapist is now a deputy minister’ written by Phamotse (2017) discusses how a former model and blessee suffered gang rape and human trafficking at the hands of her blesser. Sekudu’s (2017) argument and the novel written by Phamotse (2017) play a vital role because they reveal the dangers inflicted on young women who engage in a blesser-blessee relationship.

A blesser-blessee relationship is troublesome because a substantial proportion of adolescent girls have male sexual partners who are five to 10 years older than them (WHO, 2004). Therefore, the age gap between young females and their blessers holds them vulnerable to sexual abuse and other forms of violence. This is because they can be afraid to say no to a man who provides for them (Phamotse, 2017). Although some scholars pointed to intimate violence linked to the blesser-blessee relationship, some scholars focused on studying the blesser-blessee relationship in relation to the contraction of HIV/AIDS. For example, (PEPFAR), The U.S President’s Emergency Plan for Aids Relief (2015) posits that:

Blesser/blessee relationship often coexists with risky sexual behaviours such as early sexual debut and inconsistent condom use. Consequently, there is considerable evidence linking blesser/blessee relationship to undesirable sexual and reproductive health outcomes including sexually transmitted infections, unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions, and gender-based violence.

Intimate violence and the incidence of HIV/AIDS among blessees were mentioned in (PEPFAR) The U.S President’s Emergency Plan for Aids Relief’s (2015) discussion of the issues that arise from a blesser-blessee relationship. Considering the supposition, Tinotenda (2021) says that in South Africa, rural communities face numerous difficulties that put the young population in the danger of contracting HIV due to participating in sexual encounters with older partners. Ntsieni (2017) also concurs that blessers think they have authority over the bodies of the ‘blessed’. Nevertheless, Adichie’s (2009) TED Global speech highlights the importance of a narrative and the peril of believing just one story. This demonstrates that many blessees invent violent

incidents when they want to end their relationship with a blesser or start dating someone else.

However, Manase (2016) argues that, when women agree to be in a relationship with an older man, their bodies are commoditised, and they become the site of multi-faced interaction of patriarchal abuse. Therefore, issues that result from a blesser-lessee relationship can range in severity from overt to more covert, and they typically occur in hotels, where there may be limited room for prevention. Shadle (2014) discovered that many young women disliked discussing the gender-based violence they experienced while dating blesser. Therefore, this has produced a variety of studies to explain gender-based violence and provide critical explanations to understand the concept. For Koga (2014), gender-based violence is an attack or threat based on one's gender by perhaps a seemingly 'stronger sex'. It often takes the form of domestic violence committed by men against women, but it has recently expanded to include physical and sexual abuse of young women who pursue older men to advance their financial situation. As a result, lessees are negatively perceived as amusing toys. However, this appears to imply that gender-based violence against young women is a kind of economic, sexual, psychological, and physical exploitation. It is very evident how these females date older men to get out of poverty (The U.S President's Plan for Aids Relief, 2015).

Although a substantial body of studies demonstrated the link between blesser-lessee relationship and gender-based violence, there is still a lack of developing behavioural change to educate young girls against blesser-lessee relationships. For instance, Wamoyi et al. (2016) revisit the issue of HIV/AIDS as it relates to the blesser-lessee relationship. They go on to say that because the interaction between a blesser and a lessee is operationalised as "the interchange of sex between an older man and a young lady," the chance of contracting HIV in sub-Saharan Africa rises sharply. In other words, African women are more likely to engage in dangerous sexual encounters to make a livelihood due to economic inequalities, making them more susceptible to HIV infection. The above-mentioned concurs with the idea that HIV infection is connected to interactions between a blesser and a lessee. For Katende (1993), young women frequently feel they have no right to refuse sex and lack the skills to bargain with their partners for safer-sex or alternate forms of sex. Due to this backdrop, HIV/AIDS is

viewed as a heavenly retribution for the adultery committed by young women and older married men (Charles, 1986).

However, Frieslaar and Masango (2021) report that a blesser-blessee relationship is not the origin of HIV/AIDS prevalence but rather the root of a generation that is shame-oriented. This means that a blesser-blessee relationship is viewed as a self-conscious emotion arising from the sense that something is fundamentally wrong. Having said that, Mpofu (2021) seems to imply that men objectify and think of women as objects of sexual desire. This mimics the blesser's catchphrase, "I pay you; you do what I want" (Sinethemba, 2017). Additionally, Saunderson (2013) sought to comprehend the factors that contribute to HIV/AIDS among college students at Walter Sisulu University. He also notes that it is important for researchers to investigate the sexual interactions between students and men. Additionally, the study's findings disclose that gender inequality and the motivations of patriarchy played a big role in the failure to combat HIV/AIDS. This is important because this study sought to explore the experiences of blessees who engage or engaged in a blesser-blessee relationship.

In the early stages of awareness of HIV/AIDS in the 1980s and 1990s, many stereotypical assumptions were made about women with HIV as consequences of bad sexual behaviours. Considering this context, Waston (1988) says that several medical professionals, including some doctors, concur that HIV/AIDS is a consequence of young women's sin against their married partners. Moreover, Charles (1986) supports the claim that God sent AIDS to express displeasure with age-disparity relationship. Unfortunately, the blesser-blessee relationship continues to grab the attention of various media outlets in South Africa. This supports Gatobu's (2017:64) assertion that "women, especially young ones, lack self-autonomy over their bodies." The scholar also says that more women than men are affected by the HIV epidemic in South Africa. Ramjee and Daniel's (2013) research indicate that women typically contract HIV ten years earlier than men.

Although a blesser-blessee relationship can lead to several issues, there is not much written about these issues. However, one of the issues that result from a blesser-blessee relationship is teenage pregnancy or unintended pregnancies. Teenage motherhood is linked to several negative socioeconomic outcomes, such as an increased likelihood of poverty. Additionally, as these young girls date older men, they

frequently become parents themselves (Sinead & Cameroon, 2015). Contrarily, Mushwana, Monareng, Richter and Muller (2015) carried out a quantitative, descriptive, and explorative survey to identify the variables affecting the adolescent pregnancy rate among teenage females (n=147) enrolled in four high schools in the Greater Giyani Municipality of South Africa. To ascertain the impacts on the demographic features of participants, they gathered data using a validated questionnaire with a reliability of 0.65. Chi-square tests, two-way frequency distributions, and the Cochran-Armitage Trend Test were used to analyse the data. Participants stated that they had to keep unwanted pregnancies since health treatments were not easily accessible to them. Most significantly, this study contributes to understanding how these beneficiaries have limited access to health education. They thus become parents at a young age.

As new feelings and a surge in interest in the opposite sex emerge at this stage of development, some researchers claim that these pregnancies are common (Gouws, Kruger & Burger, 2008; Shaffer & Kipp, 2007). Additionally, blessees believe that childbearing is an unwanted event. A study in Swaziland reveals that young women were pressured to have children at an early age and compete for men's affection by having children (Ziyane & Ehlers, 2007). Ntsieni (2017) states that the report shows that young women are seen as entertaining and innocent in blesser-blessee relationship, thus when one becomes pregnant, they terminate because a blesser is married but looking for someone young and vigorous to amuse himself during work holidays. Nonetheless, Patel (2011) revisits the idea of giving birth to escape poverty. The study emphasises that these young women give birth at an early age intending to earn money from child support grants and to trap a blesser into marrying them. However, many blessers tend to leave a girl once she falls pregnant.

The researcher agrees that there are several issues that young women who are involved in blesser-blessee relationships encounter. For instance, at the time this chapter was written, a video identified as "Dubai Porta Potty," featuring young women (blessees), was trending worldwide on YouTube and Twitter. The video shows women involved in various kinds of despicable sexual acts, including bestiality, to secure financial gifts from blessers.

Gang rape is one of the major problems that arise from the blesser-blessee relationship. Selikow and Mbulaheni (2013:88) claim that the blesser-blessee relationship is “an indirect kind of prostitution that takes place between a blesser and a blessee,” noting gang rape as one of the key issues that result from these connections. However, it is strongly contended that a relationship between a blesser and a blessee is not prostitution. Geldenhuys (2018:15) indicates that in a blesser-blessee relationship, a highly wealthy man sets up a woman of his choosing with clothes accounts, whereas in prostitution, a man engages in sexual activity before paying the woman. Since more and more scholars have begun to focus on the issue of a blesser-blessee relationship, there has been an increase in the amount of material available on the subject. The studies note the hardships experienced by African women who are engaging in blesser-blessee relationships with older men for survival while experiencing violence and yet remain in the relationships so that they can provide food for themselves. Therefore, the escalating severity of this phenomenon is caused by several issues and has severe consequences, with one of them being the dissolution of the blesser’s family. Although there is limited research on this, it is vital to talk about how a blesser’s marriage may suffer if he dates multiple young ladies because his married wife will likely divorce him if she finds out. As a result, divorce frequently makes national and worldwide news. Furthermore, South African lawmakers passed a new rule that stipulates that if a teenage girl is discovered to be pregnant and the medical professionals determine that the father is 10 years older than the woman, the man must be charged with the crime of statutory rape.

2.3.3 Different types of the blesser-blessee relationship

There is a rising need to address the blesser-blessee relationship in all forms. This phenomenon’s nature manifests in several ways. However, it is not just limited to older men dating younger women; there are also older women who choose relationships with younger men.

Blesser as an old rich woman

Sugaring relationship, for Upadhyay (2021), offers a discreet, short- or long-term arrangement for people looking to escape the stigma associated with professional sex work. Therefore, older single women are more likely to have sex with energetic young men (Mampane, 2019). In this context, the term “cougar” is used to describe older women who lavish gifts on younger men in exchange for their company (Scull, 2019).

Internationally, scholars acknowledge the phenomenon of female blessers. Darko (2007) concurs that sugaring relationships and compensated dating are a social issue that is ascribable to poverty, sexual fantasies, lust, and money-guided love affairs. Therefore, the 'cougar phenomenon' is not a common depiction of sugaring, playing into patriarchal relationships where men are financially dependent on women. This argument complements researchers' intention of discussing the patriarchal viewpoint of the blesser-lessee relationship.

However, African scholars criticise the phenomenon of blessers as women. For instance, Gbaguidi and Koumagnon (2018), Mushwana et al. (2015), Mampane (2018), Patel (2011), and Shadle (2014) indicate that rethinking the requirement that a man's partner must be older than the woman in African communities, still demonstrates that this sexual relationship between an older rich woman and a young man is an example of shame-oriented form. Lawton and Callister (2010) point out that, unexpectedly, sugar mommy arrangements defy African ideology and the conventional wisdom of the past, when the male partner was typically the older partner. However, Lawton and Callister (2010) adopt a patriarchal perspective of the blesser-lessee relationship, which indicates that women who are significantly older than their male partners are today very prominent in both national and worldwide media and popular culture.

In a study conducted by Milaine and Carmichael (2015), the authors examined the prevalence of the "cougar" phenomenon and the features of middle-aged women who reported having sexual encounters with young men in previous years. They used data from the National Survey of Family Growth. According to the study's findings, 13% of sexually active women between the ages of 35 and 44 had slept with a partner who was at least five years younger. Moreover, the study revealed that women who self-identify as non-White or non-Black and those with low earnings are more likely to engage in age-hypergamous partnerships. This study is crucial because it advances knowledge by showing that interactions between blesser-lessee (older woman and younger man) are not motivated by monetary gain but rather by brief sexual flings. It also emphasises the necessity of comprehending women's sexual relationships.

The research demonstrates that "cougars," or older women who act as blessers, are most prevalent in the United States. For instance, Lawton and Callister (2010) indicate

that older women who are lonely attend team sports to arouse young guys' desire for sex. Vanderheideu (2021) reports that young men love dating older women for enjoyment, since older women enjoy taking the lead in other countries. Thus, this indicates that in other countries, the culture of 'sugar mommy' is normalised instead of expecting a blesser to be a man. Bosch (2011) concurs with this by defining a sugar mommy as an older lady who is self-sufficient financially. Additionally, in Hungary, Birks, Gridley, Glanville and Parke (2020) define a sugar mommy as a woman who engages in transactional sex with several young men. The results of their study highlight the reasons why older women date younger men, including their preference for a transient intimate partner, sexual motivation, self-focus, game-playing, and manipulative love styles. Ueno (2003) notes that this phenomenon is also known as paid dating in Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, precisely when a lady in her mid-forties seeks a younger man's relationship in exchange for financial gain. Additionally, due to their sexual activity, these women seek hook-ups or brief sexual encounters with young males (Garcia, Reiber, Massey & Merriwether, 2012).

Blessee as a younger man

The blesser-blessee relationship comprises many variants of companionships, most of which do not indicate that blessees will always be young women (Kurlycheck, 2021). The scholar further indicates that it sometimes extends to young men seeking romantic connections with older women. For example, Richards and Langa (2018) carried out a study to explore male sugar babies as *Izkhothane*. They postulate that the behaviour and intentions of engaging in a blesser-blessee relationship are primarily concerned with music, fashion, dance, and linguistic prowess. Therefore, it appears that the changing identity among this subculture is influenced by a neoliberal socio-economic condition. Moreover, an article titled 'Burning to consume? *Izkhothane* in Daveyton as aspirational consumers' written by Mnisi (2015) showed that *Izkhothane* engage in what is seen as destructive and conspicuous consumption. As a result, this behaviour takes place in circumstances of poverty, involving a young black male purchasing expensive items such as clothes and food, burning them in full view of an audience. Thus, the behaviour appears to be associated with a blesser-blessee relationship in East Rand, Gauteng. This is because the phenomenon of *Izkhothane* is a street name used to refer to young men who are influential, rich, and good looking and therefore, these young men who are referred to as *Izkhothane* usually date older women who

give them money to buy expensive clothes to attract an audience through street dance. However, Ntsieni (2017) indicates that a male blessee is referred to as a 'Ben 10'. This refers to a young man who enters a sexual relationship with an older woman on whom he financially depends.

In Panther's (2016) theory, it is mentioned that young men can also engage in a blesser-blessee relationship, in addition to young women. However, because these boys are framed as sex objects by older women, they are referred to as 'toy boys' in this context. However, Bjorklund and Shackelford (1999), Buss (1989), Buss and Barnes (1986), Linker (2010), and Schwarz and Hassebrauck (2012) contend that "toy boy" emerged not only in the interest of money but also because older women are highly investing in sex since older women dislike older men as they typically face fewer restrictions during sex. South African scholars such as Ravhuhali et al. (2020), however, emphasise that young men date older women in exchange for expensive presents. Consider the emergence of the term "Izkhothane," which describes a tendency of transactional sex among urban adolescents that has spread to several South African slums and involves a fatalistic fascination with expensive apparel and money (Lee & Shek, 2013). Boys can also use their bodies to achieve what they want due to their excessive love of money and other stuff (Ravhuhali et al., 2020).

However, young men who date older women are known as "toy boys" rather than *Izkhothane* or *Ben 10* globally. Nilyufer, Zoonen and Kuipers (2013) affirm that young men who prefer dating older women for rewards or are women-handled are referred to as "toy boys" in North America. Vanderheideu (2021), who adopts the perspective of young men as beneficiaries, postulates that young men engage in romantic relationships with older women to accumulate wealth, even though they already have partners who are of the same age. Consequently, they want to benefit from sexual tourism during holidays. However, young women who date older men for payment are referred to as concubines or engage in hypergamy (Scull, 2019).

2.4 Distinction between transactional sex and a blesser-blessee relationship

Both sections A and B of this chapter discussed the literature on transactional sex and the blesser-blessee relationship, and the literature asserted that these phenomena are interchangeable. Palfreman (2020) highlights that in South Africa, relationships between women and typically older men for gifts and money in exchange for sex are

common and referred to as blesser relationships. Adjei and Kyereme (2014) say that transactional sex is also known as sugar daddy relationships in Sub-Saharan Africa and refers to sexual relationships between older rich men and younger women who are both benefiting from the relationship, potentially in different ways. For instance, a rich older man can be dating a younger woman for sexual transactions while the young woman can engage in a blesser-lessee relationship for monetary gain (Smith, 2021). Consequently, a blesser-lessee relationship becomes transactional when partners start to exchange things such as romantic encounters for a luxurious lifestyle (love money). However, given the nature of these phenomena, this study firmly believes that transactional sex and blesser-lessee relationship are not the same. Palfreman (2020) concurs that perceptions and behaviour patterns revealed in a blesser-lessee relationship and transactional sex are more complex than they appear.

Although the literature acknowledged these phenomena as one, however, the researcher found these phenomena different. This is because there are hidden characteristics between transactional sex and a blesser-lessee relationship. The emerging popularity of materialist culture (women love beautiful clothes) among young women in South Africa, and the attitudes carried out by young women, motivated this study to show the distinction between these phenomena (transactional sex and blesser-lessee relationship). The attitudes include, but are not limited to “securing the bag, milking the cow, and love cannot pay bills” (Sinethemba, 2017:8), which play a vital role in discussing the distinction between transactional sex and a blesser-lessee relationship.

In transactional sex, individuals are transactional; therefore, they have expectations that if one gives, one will receive. Thus, this means that this phenomenon is characterised by individuals who will not have sexual intercourse if there are no goods or money for exchange at hand. For example, they both calculate their benefits before engaging in transactional sex. Phamotse (2017) concurs with this explanation. The study postulates that transactional sex is typically an exchange for money or gifts in return for sex. Sinethemba (2017) adds that the attitudes characterising this relationship emphasise that the nature of transactional sex is referred to as a one-time sex meet-up (event) with no strings attached, although the benefits are important to

both parties. Consequently, both males and females keep watch or score of give and take.

In Masvawure (2010), transactional sex occurred when students in Zimbabwe wanted to be flashy, thus referring to an individual who wants to be seen as ostentatiously attractive in public but did not want to engage in a serious relationship. Therefore, female students preferred to engage in transactional sex (sex-for-money) to gain expensive materials and then go about with their lives. It is argued that the nature of transactional sex is a “no strings attached” phenomenon (Roberts et al., 2013). Hence, Mampane (2019) described transactional sex as sexually explicit art. A study carried out by Zikona (2020) defined the term sexually explicit art as the artistic creation to elicit erotic pleasure, typically presenting human nakedness as well as sexual behaviour. Based on the belief that sexually explicit art (transactional sex) cannot be described as a relationship, the researcher therefore, concurred that this phenomenon is a situation-ship where young women engage temporarily (when they want to gain) and then stop after receiving what they have been looking for. A reference can be made to a situation where a lady can have sexual intercourse with her superior to advance her career (promotion), or a student may have sexual intercourse with his or her lecturer for good grades (Ntsieni, 2017). In the context of discussing the hidden spaces between transactional sex and the blesser-blessee relationship, many scholars such as Mampane (2019), Thobejane et al. (2019), and Stoebanau et al. (2016) described transactional sex as indirect prostitution, because individuals engage in sex with someone, they do not know just to buy beer or any material that they are looking for at the time. Moreover, there is an emerging phenomenon referred to as ‘titty Tuesday’ where individuals send half-naked pictures and then get paid by their transactional partner. In other words, transactional sex can occur in various contexts depending on what the individuals want. However, there is very limited literature to back up the form of transactional sex. Concerning Scull’s (2019) theory of the Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationships, the theory refers to transactional sex as sugar prostitution, which emphasises that sex is embedded with monetary exchange, not for romantic events. Additionally, individuals who engage in transactional sex frame sex as currency.

However, the blesser-blessee phenomenon is a relationship embedded with love, the likes of money, and a luxurious lifestyle. Therefore, attitudes such as securing the bag and milking the cow (Sinethemba, 2017) influence the nature of this relationship. Kaute-Defo (2004) indicates that in a blesser-blessee relationship, middle-aged men provide ongoing financial support to young women. For example, a study conducted by Moodley and Ebrahim (2019) reports that a blesser-blessee relationship is a long-term companionship and structured as commitment, unlike transactional sex. For instance, both partners are committed to each other, and they build a genuine relationship. Moreover, a reference is made to Scull (2019) who developed a typology of sugar relationships (known as blesser-blessee relationship in South Africa). The typology refers to this phenomenon as compensated dating, which refers to a relationship that involves receiving monetary benefits from a benefactor for events such as attending a business party. Consequently, this is the most hidden space negated by most scholars in the literature. However, Singata (2020) indicates that blesser-blessee relationships compensate blessees for different reasons, not only for having sex with them.

Additionally, Scull (2019) refers to a blesser-blessee relationship as a form of sugar dating or sugar relationship because these people engage in a variety of activities with their partners such as traveling. Moreover, the relationship does not necessarily involve sexual interaction, however, when blesser-blessee relationships suggest engaging in sexual intercourse, blessees may agree. Wamoyi et al. (2010) indicate that a blesser is considered more caring, loving, and looking for a young vibrant woman to entertain him. Furthermore, the ideology of girlfriend allowance emerged due to the blesser-blessee relationship. Thus, girlfriend allowance refers to a monthly allowance that a blesser compensates his or her blessee for companionship (Scull, 2019). Hence, scholars such as Lercléc-Madlala (2003), and Phamotse (2017) emphasised that this relationship is economically motivated and women who engage in this phenomenon are stereotyped as financially dependent on men.

Given the hidden spaces between the blesser-blessee relationship and transactional sex, it is evident that the literature negated the fact that these phenomena are not the same. For example, Sin (2016) postulates that a blesser-blessee relationship (paid dating) involves transactional sex and sex activities more often, although every relationship has its way to manifest in romantic instances like intimacy, cuddling, oral

sexual intercourse, and going out on a date. Sin (2016), however, explicates that a lack of understanding of the hidden spaces between these phenomena plays a vital role in differentiating these two phenomena. In transactional sex, individuals are far more worried about the emotional risk of being cheated although they want monetary gains. However, in the context of a blesser-blessee relationship, companionship can lead to a serious relationship because they may grow fond of each other. Therefore, this echoes Yende’s (2021) study, which similarly reports that blessers who engage in this type of relationship are not only getting into a dalliance with young women, but also for companionship where they get emotionally attached. Singata (2020) indicates that blessers do not necessarily want sex, but also want deep love and seek to marry young vibrant women. To sum up this section, the table below summarises the distinction between transactional sex and a blesser-blessee relationship.

Transactional sex	Blesser-blessee relationship
Secure the bag (no commitments).	Commit yourself to a rich man or woman who can provide for you.
Love cannot pay your bills.	Loving an old partner (man or woman) is a key to accessing money to pay bills.
A one-night stand (paid sexual meeting).	In nature, it takes a little longer to engage in a relationship, and it can lead to marriage (wedding).
Transactional in nature (for instance, no sexual activities if individuals are not gaining).	No need to engage in sexual activity every day yet, a blessee receives money (for instance, receiving a girlfriend or boyfriend allowance monthly).

Table 2.1: *Distinction between transactional sex and blesser-blessee relationship.*

2.4 Conclusion

In section A, the researcher explained the nature of transactional sex, especially its forms. These forms include, but are not limited to, side-chick, slay queens, influencers, and gold-diggers. Furthermore, these characteristics revealed the manifestation of transactional sex in an international and national (South African) context among young

and old people. Section B discussed the literature based on the blesser-blessee relationship, which linked the blesser-blessee relationship to factors that contribute to a blesser-blessee relationship, different types of blesser-blessee relationships, and problems that arise from the blesser-blessee relationship. Finally, the literature discussed the distinction between transactional sex and a blesser-blessee relationship. This is because the literature framed transactional sex and blesser-blessee relationship as one. However, these phenomena differ in nature.

The literature highlighted more severe circumstances embedded in transactional sex and blesser-blessee relationships. To qualify this argument, Ruvimbo (2020) notes that these phenomena (transactional sex and blesser-blessee relationship) increase the risk of HIV infection and sexual exploitation. As a result, developing a BCC plan that can be useful in educating young girls about transactional sex and the blesser-blessee relationship is critical. The next chapter explored the literature on BCC, building on the problems and attitudes demonstrated (*secure the bag, love cannot pay bills, and milk the cow*) toward transactional sex and the blesser-blessee relationship (Sinethemba, 2017). Thus, the next chapter highlighted the need to adopt BCC to educate young girls about these phenomena and contribute to preventing the prevalence of the dilemma under investigation.

CHAPTER 3:
BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE COMMUNICATION
(LITERATURE REVIEW)

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the researcher discussed literature on transactional sex and the blesser-blessee phenomena. These phenomena were posed as part of behavioural issues that need to be addressed. This is due to problems that arise from blesser-blessee relationships, such as contracting HIV/AIDS, negative stereotypes framing blessees as vulnerable to abuse, and forms of transactional sex characterised as indirect prostitution or soft porn (the likelihood of accessing a luxurious lifestyle through sexual activities). Consequently, it is important to develop a behavioural change communication (BCC) strategy that can be used to educate young girls against these phenomena. This chapter attempted to provide a critical context of BCC and how it is associated with transactional sex and blesser-blessee relationship through the review and discussion of the literature.

A review of literature and discussion on BCC is relevant because it provided context to the third objective of this study, which was to develop a BCC strategy that can be used as a communication campaign to educate young girls about blesser-blessee relationships and transactional sex. BCC was relevant because the blesser-blessee relationship and transactional sex often operate on unequal power dynamics that make blessees vulnerable to many social and health issues. Moreover, it simplifies interaction within a health institution in crises, such as those involved in blesser-blessee relationships. In South Africa, the blesser-blessee phenomenon entails a behaviour practiced by young (occasionally naïve) women who date old men for compensation (Manase, 2016). In view of a situation such as this, it is critical to concentrate communication efforts on the blessees and ensure that there is knowledge provided, which can be useful in educating young girls about this phenomenon.

3.2 Background of BCC

Oyero, Oyesomi, Abioye, Abioye and Kayode-Adedeji (2018:1) indicate that “an objective motivates the behaviour, as there is a consistent behavioural purpose for every action displayed in belief value formulation.” Furthermore, this postulates that

the “presentation of a certain behaviour is mainly motivated by the aim to achieve that behaviour.” As a result, attitude intentionality is the most significant factor in determining a person’s behaviour. These reasons demonstrate that the primary goal of BCC is to influence behaviour change. Lewis, Ridehalgh, Moore and Hall (2021) emphasise that BCC is the adjustment or revolution of behaviour in addition to the aforementioned. However, healthy behaviour or any activity taken to promote health and well-being falls under the criteria of BCC (Bennel, Marshall, Dobson, Kasza, Lonsdale & Hinman, 2017). Additionally, it comprises educating individuals on how to choose and maintain healthy lifestyle choices and assisting them on their change-related journeys so that the change eventually becomes the new norm. It also entails communicating the benefits of these lifestyle choices to others. The underlying premise of BCC is that some modifiable behaviours contribute to both disease and mortality. Therefore, it is crucial to communicate about behavioural change.

As more researchers have focused on communicating behavioural changes over the years, there has been an increase in the amount of knowledge available. Nwankwo and Unachukwu (2012) emphasise that to understand BCC, researchers need to make use of The Reasoned Action Theory by Ajzen (1991) because the theory stipulates that actual behaviour is closely linked to behaviour and can be represented by two factors, including the behavioural beliefs, which refers to how someone feels about engaging in a certain behaviour, and the subjective norm, which relates to what the individual thinks their close friends and family will think about them acting differently. However, Koenker, Keating and Alilio (2014) observe that BCC interventions have been demonstrated to significantly modify behaviour, particularly in the areas of family and HIV/AIDS for promoting health and preventing disease. To maximise the effectiveness of health interventions, BCC targets individuals, households, or groups of individuals.

On the other hand, for Varinder (2022), altered behaviour to change people’s knowledge, attitudes, norms, and beliefs, communication is an effective style and strategy that motivates individuals or a society. In defining BCC, Nancy and Dongre (2021) rethink the disease-fighting strategy. In clinical settings and public health, for example, communication is critical to the prevention of both transmittable and lifestyle-related diseases (Nancy & Dongre, 2021). As a result, it aids in combating outbreaks

caused by evolving and new phenomena. BCC promotes a pattern of behaviour in an intended group concerning a particular dilemma over a specified amount of time (WHO, 2001). The study also demonstrates how BCC addresses the various requirements of the public through a variety of media, including television, radio, posters, and pamphlets. Consequently, it disregards that creating awareness automatically and genuinely lead to actions through an assumption of *all-size-fits-all*.

For Nancy and Dongre (2021), a BCC campaign is developed through a process of interaction with populations (as part of a larger programme) to create personalised content and strategies using a range of communication streams to promote and sustain an individual or societal behaviour change or the development of positive behaviours. Additionally, they assert that the main goal of BCC is to ensure that people may transition from a bad to a desired attitude. However, Varinder (2022) suggests that the most crucial step in achieving clearly stated behavioural targets is carefully segmenting the audience, testing messages and materials in advance, and using both mass media and direct methods. The results show that BCC is a significant impact, a consultative method that makes use of communication to support necessary social change, encourage and facilitate behaviour change for the improvement of good behavioural outcomes. This argument re-echoes Varinder (2022) who indicated that BCC is supported by a thorough ecological theory that considers both transitions at the personal level and changes at a larger environmental and structural level. Therefore, the table below illustrates how communication for behaviour change functions.

The levels of BCC	
Level	Explanation
The behaviour or action of an individual	Choosing to change one's behaviour is a personal choice.
The enabling environment	A rich context that minimises health risks toward individuals or a group. For instance, rehabilitation.

Collective action taken by groups	This encompasses the community or a group of people who tend to decide on engaging in good behaviour.
Social and cultural structures	Ways that are used by an individual or a group to introduce change.

Table 3.1: *The levels of behavioural change*

Consequently, behavioural modification in public health, where communication has been a crucial component of attempts to promote healthy behaviour, reflects the culmination of decades of research and experience (Koenker et al., 2014). The study also states that there is compelling evidence that BCC can enhance behaviour for a particular behaviour in terms of prevention and therapy. BCC is a crucial technique that lowers risk-taking. According to comparable publications, Oyero et al. (2018) reports that communication about behaviour change is also referred to as social and behavioural modification, and it emerged from information, education, and communication tactics. It includes health communication and community mobilisation. Additionally, BCC will probably be essential for persuading symptomless people that testing, treatment, and telling the community about the changes will benefit them and their communities.

Lewis et al. (2021) indicate that it should be noted that BCC is typically complex because of different assumptions, such as levels of motivation, personal preferences and that there is a need for multiple treatments. BCC, according to Nancy and Dongre (2021), is a programming technique with a theoretical foundation for effectively designing and assessing an intervention on a specific phenomenon or social issue. For the Ministry of Health in Uganda (2011), BCC is the intentional use of interaction to encourage health results. The technique also involves interacting with communities to produce customised messages to raise awareness of malaria; for example, through boosting social and communication discussion, encouraging critical attitude adjustment, and increasing demand for information and services. However, Cave and Curtis (1999) contend that BCC in environmental health is known for being challenging, and analyses of the public data have shown that they failed more frequently than they succeeded.

3.3 Connection between BCC and health communication

BCC is the core of health communication, and is the use of interaction to inform and motivate attitude change, with the aim being to act in response to a certain health concern. Park (2019) posits that the adoption of communication to influence behavioural change assumes that interaction influences perception, which in turn influences behaviour patterns. Thus, WHO (2001) emphasises that to plug BCC into existence, the audience needs to adopt communication into practice. Consequently, communication is a method used to support a set of behaviours in a target population in answering a particular dilemma. A study conducted by Nancy and Dongre (2021) reports that BCC shows a vital role in the medical context and public health in the avoidance of both transmissible and non-transmissible diseases. However, in this study, it was adopted to address the blesser-blessee relationship and facilitate awareness for behavioural change among blessees. Briscoe and Abound (2012) hypothesised that BCC is primarily employed as one of the prevention strategies to facilitate customised messages and a supportive community that compels people and groups to change their behaviour.

A qualitative study by Briscoe and Abound (2012) reveals that BCC is essential for promoting the adoption of specific behaviours that are proven to benefit health and development. Therefore, the methods employed to alter behaviour are crucial in figuring out how effective the intervention was. Additionally, the study's findings report that the most effective interventions involve the employment of three or even four different categories of approaches, including involving people on behavioural, social implementation, sensory, and cognitive level. BCC is recognised to prevent diseases and promote morals (United Nations, 2008). Information has grown in recent years toward BCC, for instance, Glanz and Bishop's (2010) observation indicates that BCC is used by health programmes to provide knowledge and a friendly context that encourages people and groups to adopt healthier lifestyles. However, Bentley, Wasser and Creed-Konashiro (2011), and Cross and Hughes (2011) report that programmes aimed at these outcomes have investigated the challenge of inducing healthy behaviour change in both industrialised and underdeveloped countries. In other words, the absence of a coherent explanation regarding the development of change and how it was executed in various nations is a significant shortcoming of many BCC plans (Davidson, Goldstein, Kaplan, Kaufman, Knatterud & Orleans, 2003).

Plans for BCC are mostly cognitive in character, making them inappropriate for use with others, particularly those who are not “cognitively willing” and are not able to respond to the change signals (Abraham & Michie, 2008). Most BCC strategies, according to Petty and Cacioppo (1986), are found in individual-focused interventions that provide information about other people’s approval (also known as a “subjective norm”) but not group-based interventions that aim to influence actual norms. However, WHO (2001) argues that, BCC is a strategy for changing or reinforcing a set of behaviours in an intended population concerning a particular dilemma over some time. To find the most efficient means of disseminating the necessary information, Ghosh and Ghosh (2020) conducted audience research. This was done to support the claim made by WHO (2001) that BCC is attributable and more flexible in aiding the audience to comprehend the disease and act against it. It is evident that scholars possess different understandings of BCC, and it played a role in exploring different uses of this technique.

As behaviour change became the primary goal of health communication, it eventually changed to emphasise the creation of environments that support behaviour change (Nancy & Dongre, 2021). However, some academics disagree, purporting that health communication, for example, teaches people how to behave in a way that will promote, maintain, and restore their health and it also includes health education (Family Health International, 2006). Park (2019) contends that the target audience needs access to tested preventative strategies, therefore, health communication alone is insufficient to start a behaviour change. On the other hand, Green, Palinkas and Horwitz (2015) imply that BCC is used as the lens through which health communication is done.

Dixey and Njai (2013) proffer that health communication conforms to a specific set of values and principles that set it apart from the larger area of public health. Additionally, it prioritises a social model of health while addressing equity, health inequities, and socioeconomic determinants of health. This was intended to demonstrate how health communication is a social movement that prioritises justice in health over behaviour. This argument demonstrates that health communication does not concentrate on behaviour but rather on promoting health justice. However, Green et al. (2015) consider health communication to be “health education” because it is essential for promoting health outcomes. Moreover, they argue that this process is concerned with

health and aims to reduce the severity of disease among people. They emphasise, for example, that health communication is more akin to health education than behavioural change, with its attendant emphasis on individual health.

Health communication approaches are more ideologically and politically akin to health promotion. For instance, Maibach and Holtgrave (1995) make a compelling case by outlining health communication as the application of communication methods and tools to positively influence young adults, groups, and institutions to promote human and environmental health. Christens (2013) asserts that health communication highlights empowerment as a key concept to influence positive health behaviour. Although these scholars highlighted a different perspective on health communication, their definitions are persistently broad because they failed to further explain how to adopt health communication on a particular phenomenon. However, Dutta (2018) indicates that health communication efforts frequently fail because there is a significant disconnect between what 'experts' say and how people receive or understand this in the context of their health experience. Thus, this led scholars such as Tulloch and Lupton (2003), Wilkinson (2001), and Willard (2013) to reinforce that the reason for the failure is based on a reductionist, deficit model that is used to explain health information, with the assumption that people do not understand, or are simply irrational. As a result, this is a conundrum because it necessitates the critical cognition of a higher-order function.

Still, these arguments vary considerably on research focus. For instance, Cross and Hughes (2011) report that health communication aims to collaborate with individuals and communities to affect long-term change and enable healthier lifestyle choices as a result, health communication has been regarded as a social movement promoting health justice. Furthermore, the scholars contend that health communication is more than just developing believable health messages; it is also about how a message is effectively conveyed to individuals, groups of people, and communities, allowing for a bottom-up approach to behaviour changes, policymakers or broader social and economic factors influencing a policy change, and co-workers working in collaboration to promote change.

Keller and Lehman (2008:27) suggest that health communication "typically conveys social consequences or health policy messages," but it also plays a critical role in

influencing people's behaviour and attitudes toward health issues and medical services. There are many approaches to health communication, and studies show that it is effective in addressing health issues in society. Health communication is significant in almost every component of health wellness, such as preventing disease, health promotion, and overall life satisfaction (Rajiv & Maria, 2009). For example, a study was conducted in the United States, and it adopted health communication to address the most causes of death such as cancer. Thus, the findings indicate that a cancer prevention health communication campaign pays more attention to behavioural change goals among the audience. Moreover, Moorhead, Hazlett, Harrison, Carroll, Irwin and Hoving (2013) posit that health communication provides knowledge on a variety of conditions to the public, patients, and health professionals, especially in HIV/AIDS prevention campaigns. However, Vuong and Nguyen (2015) reveal that the social networks neighbouring each health user also have strong impacts on their health attitudes and behaviours, implying that female students are the essential group for health teaching across universities. It is noticeable that young people will choose interpersonal communication; thus, health communication is critical. A study carried out by Don (2000) considers health communication to be a recent concept in promoting health. As a result, it is a catch-all term for a variety of results related to health education and communication activities. Furthermore, from this perception, health communication is aimed at educating health literacy. This indicates that health communication has been an integral part of interventions to encourage health and avoid disease during the twentieth century (while using the transmission of information).

Although a few studies have pointed to positive arguments in support of health communication and more approaches, Family Health International (2006) criticises health communication, stating that it is insufficient in influencing healthy attitudes among people, particularly those who are infected. Thus, while health communication effectively educates people about diseases, Family Health International (2006) demonstrates that education alone is insufficient to influence healthy lifestyles in developing countries because people require resources. Glanz and Bishop (2010), for example, cited a study in which health communication failed to implement change in

educating citizens about HIV/AIDS prevention due to a lack of resources such as preparation, condom use, or any medication due to poor health services.

Don (2000) reports in the context of outlining the limitations of health communication that health communication fails to consider individuals' social and economic cases and does not achieve the expected outcomes in health behaviour. Thus, unlike BCC, health communication is more effective only among the most educated and economically advantaged members of the community. As a result, health communication relies on media platforms rather than face-to-face interaction. Ad Hoc Committee on Health Literacy (1999) makes a similar conclusion that health communication explains the relationship between patient literacy levels and their ability to interpret messages, particularly in the United States.

After reviewing the literature on BCC and health communication, the researcher realised that these concepts are not the same, even though there is limited evidence to support the claim. For example, Green et al. (2015) demonstrate that health communication bombards people with health-related messages. However, BCC is not about telling people what to do or doing things to people; rather, it is about working with people to implement behavioural change. Furthermore, changing one's health status and taking advice, health communication tends to blame specific people or groups rather than considering the more extensive and intricate contexts of daily life (Wormeli, 2015). Conversely, BCC considers the social and environmental factors that influence behavioural choices and practices, recognising their fundamental importance in determining health and behavioural outcomes. As a result, these concepts are derived from different intentions.

Health communication does not involve the people for whom it is intended, whereas BCC empowers the public (Christens 2013). On the other hand, Dawes (1988) reveals that health communication focuses on promoting and disseminating information to the audience (information about the risk). However, the downfall is that it ignores the fact that one is at risk while focusing heavily on risk reduction. About this argument, the more messages that are tailored in health communication, the more the truth about the risk (disease) is distorted. Many studies that used health communication during the Covid-19 outbreak, for example, found that messages were biased and terrifying,

leaving the public in the dark about the nature of the pandemic (Hassin, Abir, Marvin & Van Geen, 2022). Thus, this reveals that health communication is not dependable and effective to assist in dealing with the phenomenon that affects the public. Furthermore, Ghosh and Ghosh (2020) emphasise that health communication focuses on a specific disease rather than raising awareness about the disease. BCC has several well-established approaches that can be used at the individual, group, and community levels. BCC has a viable future application in both personal and public health settings (Ghosh & Ghosh, 2020). Hinyard and Kruater (2007), on the other hand, consider BCC to be the nature of health communication. For example, to achieve the behavioural change goal, the study called for a holistic and interdisciplinary approach to investigating the phenomenon. Despite this argument, the study failed to explain in greater detail how BCC affects the nature of health communication.

However, Chishlom, Hart, Karen and Peters (2014) indicate that BCC is identified in the literature and implemented to advise a communication tool to help medical students discuss health-associated behaviour change with patients. As a result, the next section concentrated on the applications of BCC.

3.4 The uses of BCC

Over the years, the world has seen enormous growth in health, social, economic, and other negative repercussions that contribute to behavioural issues. For instance, one of the health, social, and economic factors that contribute to behavioural issues in young women is the blesser-blessee relationship (transactional sex). However, in this section, the researcher discussed the application of BCC or a plan in various research articles. The review focused on the African context first before moving on to the international context of BCC.

African context

The use of BCC resulted in several studies in Africa and South Africa. For example, Kaufman, Harman, Marina, Orkis and Robert (2017) conducted a study to advance a variety of motherly health results, including individual birth preparation and timely giving birth in health care. Furthermore, the implementation of the 'Wazazi Nipendini' campaign in Tanzania was successful in influencing better pregnancy and childbearing

outcomes in low-resource backgrounds. According to this context, BCC is appropriate for introducing solutions to any social or health problems.

On another hand, Hassin et al. (2022) explored a BCC strategy to reach out to various audience groups to influence positive behaviour in combating the Covid 19 pandemic. The study used a cross-sectional survey design to collect quantitative data from 223 health agencies in Uganda's health sector across the country. Furthermore, Academic Mentorship Educational Services' structural equation modelling and the bootstrapping approach were used to assess the facilitating role of communication resonance. The findings discovered that intervention resonance fully facilitates the relationship between knowledge appropriateness and communication strategy for behavioural change. As a result, having sufficient information does not cause behavioural change among the intended message's recipients, but rather requires a communication system that allows for high-quality interactions to influence behaviour change. Kaufman et al. (2017) concur that BCC holds the promise of introducing interventions that can lead to better outcomes in combating a specific dilemma. The preceding is critical in demonstrating that BCC is more than just disseminating information to the target group; it also involves interaction to influence positive behavioural change.

Southern African scholars, such as Conard (2005), Rabbow (2001), and Oyero et al. (2018) postulate that a behavioural change strategy has played a crucial role in psychological and social change in intervention and prevention efforts in the aftereffects of the HIV and AIDS disease outbreak. Despite its significance, it is not always visible how behavioural change strategy motivates individuals and communities to facilitate social and behavioural change. Thus, this article demonstrates how carefully considered BCC edutainment interaction resources are helpful to social and behavioural change drives. Lewin's (1974: 1) theory of change emphasises the context of complex thinking, and it is encouraged by qualitative evidence from Soul City Institute's midterm assessment of the *One Love* multimedia campaign in nine Southern African contexts. As a result, research-based and hypothesis of BCC aimed at behavioural change remain a crucial backbone in HIV prevention and treatment, where individual and social intervention plays an important role.

Rabbow (2001) asserts that HIV/AIDS is without a doubt one of the most tragic and challenging public health issues and many students have been infected with the virus. Similarly, Pitpitan et al. (2015) report that most of the South African literature focuses on the uses of BCC in the context of HIV/AIDS prevention. As a result, HIV/AIDS prevalence has skyrocketed in most African and South African cities. Consequently, many researchers conducted studies to address this social and health issue; however, the prevalence increased rapidly. Thus, health communication scholars devised a strategy to educate, influence, and facilitate awareness about HIV/AIDS prevention using BCC. As a result, BCC is acknowledged as a key component in combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic (Caldwell, 1999).

In a non-governmental organisation (NGO) in Lesotho called “Phela,” which specialises in health and development communication, Sabine (2016) conducted a research study that gives an account of how language fluency is handled in BCC regarding HIV/AIDS. Considering this, the study explored the conveyance of languages in print periodicals of a non-government organisation. Moreover, the study’s findings show that the challenge of BCC is the language used to approach minority groups, especially in the context of HIV/AIDS. It is evident that although some studies succeed in making use of BCC for desired results, some studies faced challenges in meeting the desired outcomes.

Nevertheless, Riba and Saunderson (2022) conducted a study to examine through a Foucauldian lens, the stigma and insensitive discourse surrounding mental illness discourse among adolescents in the Polokwane local government. The methodology was based on Geertz’s interpretivism and a Foucauldian viewpoint. Although the scholars did not go into detail on the history of BCC as it relates to behaviour interventions in adolescent mental health issues, one can agree that BCC is essential for dealing with mental health issues. The study also shows that the deinstitutionalisation programme, the prevalence of biomedical rhetoric, and neoliberal justifications for self-care all contribute to the stigma of mental illness. Additionally, BCC may be able to deal with this subject.

However, the Ministry of Health (2011) in Uganda postulates that BCC supports all strategic elements of malaria control and prevention programmes by assisting the delivery of interferences like case management improvement. Still, the uses of BCC

vary considerably on research focus. Barnes (2014) focuses on conducting research in exploring indoor air pollution. According to the study, enclosed air pollution is triggered by the indoor combustion of solid biofuels, which has been linked to acute respiratory infections such as pneumonia in children under the age of five. Although BCC has been considered as a possible strategy for lowering child indoor air pollution exposure, little is known about the efficacy of BCC plans to reduce enclosed air pollution. Although less is known about how the BCC hypothesis has been embedded into indoor air pollution behaviour change intervention, a review of published studies spanning 1983-2013 suggests that BCC has the potential to reduce indoor air pollution exposure by 20% to 98% in laboratory settings and 31% to 94% in field settings. To conclude this argument, BCC is effective in influencing people to adopt a particular behaviour toward a particular phenomenon. In the next section, the discussion focused on the international context of the uses of BCC.

International context

To find out if households receiving the intensive intervention (as opposed to the non-intensive intervention) increased their consumption of essential foodstuffs for mothers and children, for instance, Bashir, Nangoli, Ayibo, and Menon (2022) carried out a study in Bangladesh. These researchers employed a comprehensive intervention that includes one-on-one counselling, social mobilisation, and public relations efforts to encourage breastfeeding and complementary feeding. Twenty sub-districts that were randomly assigned to either the intensive (481 homes) or non-intensive (428 homes) intervention were compared using a cluster-randomised approach. Consequently, the measures included food and non-food expenditures, dietary diversity, and women's economic resources. To clarify the study's findings, recipients of the intensive intervention mobilised additional resources to improve diets, as evidenced by expenditures and consumption of promoted food. As a result, BCC intervention demonstrates how recipients produce desired results without additional material inputs, particularly for behaviours that are likely to require diet.

Warren, Becken and Coghlan (2016) conducted a study on the unsustainable consumption of energy and water by tourist accommodations. The authors highlight that if incremental global tourism growth and business-as-usual approaches continue, tourists will face energy and water shortages. As a result, the study concludes that

guests use more than half of their energy and water at lodging facilities and thus play a collaborative role in resource conservation. The study's primary goal was to assess the impact of persuasive communication or BCC on guests' resource consumption behaviour (energy and water) and satisfaction. As a result, the study employed an innovative intervention based on interpersonal communication, sequential influence, and environmental feedback. Over 304 days, guests' (n=759) consumption of electricity, gas, and water has been monitored using smart meters in four fully self-contained cottages. Furthermore, an ethnographic action research and departure survey were conducted to determine whether pro-environmental persuasion could encourage guests to conserve resources. According to the study's findings, guests who received the intervention used significantly fewer resources, 80% claimed they tried to save, and their overall satisfaction did not suffer. Thus, it is evident that BCC was critical in persuading tourists to adopt positive behaviour.

In a contrasting context, Oyero et al. (2018) indicate that the use of multi-sectoral communication also referred to as BCC, in humans' processes for managing the environment, is not widely accepted in the literature as a key component in winning the battle against climate change and its accompanying problems of greenhouse pollution, global warming, and the destruction of lives and property. The goal of these scholars was to investigate how people deal with climate change and are aware of it in the Ado Odo/Ota local government in Ogun State. Therefore, they combined six important in-depth interviews with opinion leaders, and survey data collected from 970 randomly chosen inhabitants in Ado Odo/Ota town. The study concludes by indicating that the current behaviours surrounding climate change in the study location include the burning of waste and bush (41,1%), indiscriminate disposal of waste (18,1%), the use of kerosene (45,4%), burning of firewood (6,4%), and coal for domestic purposes (3,3%). As a result, BCC in this context failed to adjust behavioural influence however, the study suggests adopting a more strategic approach to a multi-sectoral communication strategy (MCS) and the use of television for successful climate change awareness campaigns for behaviour modification.

Domegan (2021) indicates that most people recognise that everyday life is not the same as it was before climate change, a pandemic, inequalities, and other factors. As a result, this is a world that is increasingly shaped by both collective and individual

choices, decisions, and behaviours. In this complex world, large-scale BCC is the call to action in response, social marketing, with its primary goal of behaviour change, has grown in experience evidence, theories, and toolkits. In other words, social marketing critically examines the interface of human and natural systems, as well as their interconnected dynamic forces, as a powerful means of influencing behaviour for the benefit of individuals, communities, societies, and the planet. This study is important because it assists in evaluating the advantages of BCC in influencing behavioural change toward a particular phenomenon. In addition, Domegan (2021) refers to BCC as social marketing due to interpersonal communication.

A study carried out by Gynther, Mikkonen and Smiths (2012) was based on the findings of the *BEHAVE* Project (evaluation of energy behavioural change programmes), which was funded by the European Commission and the EU Intelligent Energy-European Programme. As a result, the project began with a review of behavioural theories and their application in the development and evaluation of energy-related BCC, it progressed to a case study approach and concluded with the publication of regulations for programme developers and policymakers. The paper focuses on the case analysis results and the recommendations that follow. Data were examined from nearly 100 cases involving behavioural changes in energy use from eleven European countries. Additionally, detailed information was collected on 41 cases that were subject to meta-analysis to identify success factors and weak points to gather information on the current evaluation practices. However, the evaluation of the cost-effectiveness of the programmes was a rarity, most likely due to the difficulties in quantitative impact evaluation. BCC is only appropriate for qualitative research studies. It is, for example, behaviour that people repeat and do without considering the advantages and disadvantages. Considering this, quantitative studies are not able to specify an individual's motivation for engaging in a particular behaviour (Morgan, 2014). Morgan (2014) asserts that quantitative investigations only use numerical data. As a result, it is challenging for quantitative researchers to use BCC because there are not enough interviews with open-minded.

BCC has produced a variety of studies. In Mexico, Kurtycz (2005) conducted a study titled "Understanding environmental behavioural change through communication: a new viewpoint on environmental education." The study presented a five-year research

project in communication sciences that was largely focused on the communicational understanding of the idea of environmental behaviour change. In this study, communication theory was used to examine BCC to comprehend the social and individual elements that influence whether a behaviour is adopted or rejected. The study concludes that the communication perspective identifies some tools for improving BCC. As a result, this adds to the study's knowledge in exploring different applications of BCC.

Lacroix and Tremblal (1997:23) support the above-mentioned as they emphasise that communication is defined as "the exchange processes among the individual and group members of a given society." As a result, these processes involving interlocutors, codes, rules, networks, techniques, and content can provide a new perspective on observing social phenomena at the individual level as well as the individual's relationship to other individuals, groups, and institutions. This means that communication is critical in implementing effective BCC. For Wolfenden, Nathan and Williams (2000), adopting BCC could alleviate much of the chronic disease burden. Print and computer communication channels, for example, can reach many people at a low cost. As a result, BCC improves the effectiveness of health interventions. That being the case, the study adopted the systematic review to assess the effect of BCC intervention focusing on four health behaviours (smoking, cessation, physical activity, diet, and mammography screening).

Still, the uses of BCC vary considerably in research focus. Lewis et al. (2021) conducted a debate study aimed to discuss reasons why clinicians must include long-term BCC into their management plan and methods they may use to facilitate the change ensuring recipients are 'empowered to act and make today the day their lives will change.' Additionally, BCC is essential because managing musculoskeletal conditions involves education, advice, and usually some form of exercise. Over and above that, the study's findings indicate that BCC is an absolute key to influencing behavioural change among patients.

On the other hand, Hiroko, and Yamaoka (2021) conducted a study to offer a BCC model for encouraging value co-creation between citizens and politicians and to draw recommendations on the justification for applying the nudge effect as well as major policy consequences. The study also revisits the close connections between

information senders and receivers from the standpoint of a citizen behaviour change plan and focuses on the nudge, which improves representatives' communication abilities and speeds up the development of the behavioural framework to explain the spontaneous incentive structure of citizens. Additionally, the study employed a conceptual discussion based on a literature review. Due to a critical analysis of the literature, it suggests an analytical model that emphasises the nudge effect proposed in BCC and considers the significance of actions to raise the sensitivity and empathy of the information recipients. The results highlight that the authors were successful in developing a conceptual framework to account for citizens' spontaneous incentive structure utilising BCC.

Although some studies have shown the use of BCC in the context of co-creation between citizens and policymakers, health, and climate change, other studies report that in the context of business-to-marketers, BCC plays a vital role because persuasive communication creates an awareness programme to influence behavioural change for customers. Consequently, by reducing the gap, the study concludes that BCC influences self-efficacy and pervasive expectations, the confidence level of the staff will be increased, and attitudinal behavioural change will occur throughout the organisation (Larcroix & Tremblal, 1997).

There has been an increasing amount of information on BCC, as more and more researchers have turned their attention to this subject. Alexandra, Peter and Bilo (1997) observed BCC as a tool to assess doctor-patient communication, further indicating that BCC failed to influence behavioural change toward non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus because the large group fear needs to communicate health issues, especially adults.

Behaviour change is a very imperative aspect in health communication and issued as an intervention measure across a wide range of health problems (Ngigi & Busolo, 2018). In the context of social marketing, BCC enables studies to practice communicating promotional health information such as in public health campaigns, health education, and between doctor and patient. This study further reveals that permits preparations in advance and track success and failures by ensuring that all opportunities are maximised (Ngigi & Busolo, 2018).

An article titled 'Preventing sexually transmitted diseases' written by Kieren, Cumming and Cumming (1992) similarly report that there are discouraging results in adopting BCC because educating the public about sexually transmitted diseases indicates that the goal of sexually transmitted disease preventive action must be long-term and must change attitudes or behaviour as well as educate the audience. As a result, many BCC plans fail to avoid an *ostrich mentality* (for instance, when an individual refuses to deal with the issue he or she is facing) about the sexual involvement of young people.

This section explored different uses of BCC, including both the advantages and the disadvantages. Therefore, this section added knowledge and aided the researcher in gaining a broad understanding of the nature of BCC. As a result, the researcher deemed the use of BCC suitable in researching about the blesser-blessee relationship (transactional sex). The next section connected BCC to blesser-blessee relationship.

3.5 Connecting behavioural change communication to blesser-blessee relationship (transactional sex)

Attitude has the power to influence behaviour. Therefore, within every adoption of the behaviour, there are attitudes carried out. Fishman, Yang and Mandell (2021) concur that attitudes may be an important construct to adopting a particular behaviour. Moreover, the term attitude has been defined as the set of emotions, beliefs, and behaviours toward a particular object, thing, or event (Fishman et al., 2021). Consequently, in the context of blesser-blessee relationship, many women who engage in this relationship express attitudes such as sex is a strong symbol of currency (transactional sex), viewing blessers as Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) who spend money over young girls (Oyero et al., 2018), as opposed to loving a poor man cannot pay bills (Sinethemba, 2017), milk the cow, and secure the bag (Sinethemba, 2017), and the culture of materialism such as the notion that women love beautiful clothes (Rabbow, 2001). As a result, the attitudes play a vital role in the prevalence of blesser-blessee relationships and or transactional sex. Hence, this study used a BCC plan to explore the experiences of female university students who engage in blesser-blessee relationships to educate young girls about this phenomenon.

Additionally, the application of BCC in addressing this phenomenon was important because, in nature, the blesser-blessee relationship is referred to as *soft porn* (Mampane, 2019) and it is embedded with health and behavioural issues, which need

to be addressed. For example, Mampane (2019) claimed that young women feel more desirable than older women and they consider dating old rich married men and engaging in sexual relationships with them. Moreover, the prevalence of blesser-blessee relationships (transactional sex) is a popular culture among young South African women because, at the family level, this phenomenon is referred to as a non-communicable culture. In other words, parents fail to educate young girls regarding this phenomenon. Thus, incorporating BCC and blesser-blessee relationship could contribute to educating young girls.

A blesser-blessee relationship refers to a form of transactional sexual relationships that involve young women who date older rich men for compensation (Ntsieni, 2017). Thus, the behavioural traits of monetary compensation among young university students may influence the prevalence of blesser-blessee relationships in Limpopo Province, South Africa. Moreover, Yende (2021) concurs that this phenomenon is attributed to power dynamics; in other words, the blesser is viewed as superior while the blessee is viewed as economically dependent and passive. Thus, power dynamics within these relationships make it difficult for the blessee to demand safe sex and good relationship conditions. For instance, Singata (2020) similarly reports that these power dynamics can result in a blesser having so much power that the blessee ends up yielding to an abusive relationship with occurrences of violence. Consider that violence against women is a troubling issue in South Africa with the country experiencing one of the highest rates of gender-based violence in the world. To qualify this argument, Graaff and Heinecken (2017:1) claim that “violence and particularly gender-based violence has become an increasingly serious problem in the democratic era of South Africa.” The study’s results show that violence has become largely normalised in the country. This echoes Gouws’ (2016) study, which indicates that the inequality between men and women hinders the process of combating gender-based violence in South Africa. Given that in South Africa, gender-based violence is prevalent, this study may assist in combating this dilemma.

A blesser-blessee relationship has both positive and negative outcomes for women. Consequently, the negative outcome, for instance, encompasses health risks such as exposure to sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies that can lead to illegal abortion, forced to engage in gang rape for blesser’s goodwill with his business

partners, and gender-based violence, which has sometimes resulted in the death of a blessee. The social and health issues that may arise from blesser-blessee relationships warrant the need for a BCC plan to educate young girls about this phenomenon, especially pre-tertiary girls.

Moreover, significant progress has been achieved in addressing blesser-blessee relationship (transactional sex) worldwide; however, there are limited studies conducted on the phenomenon of blesser-blessee relationships toward a BCC plan (Ntsieni, 2017). In a similar observation, Singata (2020) states that girls should be empowered from a young age by providing them with education so that they can be independent. Therefore, this study sought to combat the dilemma through a BCC plan that seeks to influence behavioural change or a reduction of a particular phenomenon (Nancy & Dongre, 2021). Yende (2021) reveals that forms of blesser-blessee relationships are so embedded in South African society that they are now a subject of academic research. Since a blesser-blessee relationship (transactional sex) has become part of popular culture, the researcher considered adopting a BCC plan to explore the experiences of those who engaged in blesser-blessee relationships, to educate, and to empower young girls. Asp, Odberg, Sandberg and Agardth (2014), and Gross, Schellenberg, Muyamana and Obrist (2013) reinforce the idea that the exposure of young female students and the community at large to information about blesser-blessee relationships (transactional sex) will result in positive outcomes of behaviour change.

In Chapter 2, particularly looking at transactional sex and or the blesser-blessee phenomenon, the researcher explored the problems that arise from blesser-blessee relationship (transactional sex), such as gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS infection, forced ring prostitution, and unwanted pregnancy. These problems call for the intervention of a BCC plan to combat this phenomenon. Additionally, knowledge of problems that arise from blesser-blessee relationship (transactional sex) were thoroughly discussed in the previous chapter. This section brings together a BCC plan and a blesser-blessee relationship (transactional sex) to establish a notional link between the two. Over and above that, literature shows that BCC plays a vital role in influencing individuals to adopt or reject a particular behaviour (Maibach & Holtgrave, 1995). Thus, this study noted the use of a communication plan to mobilise and provide

awareness to young girls about the nature of blesser-blessee relationships (transactional sex) to influence behavioural change. In other words, it sought to introduce a conducive solution to the prevalence of this phenomenon among young girls in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. It argued that a BCC plan could create a platform to educate young girls about this social and health problem. Ntsieni (2017) concurs that future research studies need to develop a BCC plan to combat the prevalence of these relationships.

Furthermore, Christopher et al. (2015) postulate that in any case of exploring or assessing and understanding the phenomenon of transactional sex (blesser-blessee relationship), it is important to evaluate the motivations or reasons behind the emergence of this form of relationship. To the researcher's best knowledge BCC in relation to this phenomenon has not received enough scholarly attention in South Africa. Therefore, this study applied BCC to blesser-blessee relationships to influence behaviour change amongst young girls. Koenker et al. (2014) concur that BCC can improve, prevent, or introduce treatment behaviour for a particular phenomenon, and it is important in reducing risk-taking.

Nancy and Dongre (2021) show that young people are interested in being educated about issues that result in behavioural change. This means that adopting BCC in engaging female university students will help pre-tertiary (young girls) to evaluate whether to engage or not engage in blesser-blessee relationships (transactional sex). However, Lasswell's (1948:2) strictly emphasises that "we are not and can never be experts of other people's lives and the economic, environmental, and social aspect of their lives." Moreover, "our behaviour and actions depend on various aspects of our social identity" (Rogers, 1974). Be that as it may, to avoid the dilemma this study adopted an interactive BCC while mindful of the communication dialogue of blessees and young girls to promote essential attitude change and create a demand for information among the audience. Illeris (2014:37) concurs that adopting the strategy, when blessees (young girls) "share their own experiences may inform important beliefs in educating young girls about these phenomena."

In applying BCC to a blesser-blessee relationship, health communication scholars, such as Kiger (2004) and Green et al. (2015) indicate that BCC plays a role in understanding human interaction. Therefore, in this study, BCC aided the researcher

to understand interactions of female university students engaged or engaging in blesser-blessee relationship (transactional sex). Hargie and Dickson (2004) reinforce that “our motives, attitudes, personality, emotions, age, gender, culture, context, and our values all impact how we behave.” Sinethemba (2017) revealed that in KwaZulu-Natal, grinding poverty is experienced most acutely by women who are unemployed and still expected to support themselves, and their families, and take care of other economic expenses such as paying the bills. Therefore, they consider dating a rich older man who can provide monetary support. A BCC plan can be a transformative process to introduce an alternative solution to blesser-blessee relationships in Limpopo Province, South Africa.

Furthermore, a study conducted by Clark, Spencer, Shrestha, Ferguson, Oakes and Gupta (2017) in Nepal indicates that a BCC strategy is designed to shift attitudes, norms, and behaviour that underpin the power imbalances between men and women. Therefore, since the nature of blesser-blessee relationship (transactional sex) accounts for economic and gender inequality between men and women (Groess-Green, 2014; Leclerc-Madlala, 2003; Ranganathan et al., 2017; Ruvimbo, 2020). Most women perceive a blesser-blessee relationship (transactional sex) as the easiest way to make money (Sprague et al., 2021). For that reason, the implementation of a BCC plan can empower young girls and prevent everyday negative stereotypes such as “women are economically dependent on men” (Stoebanau, 2011) and the “vulnerability of opening your legs so that you can eat” (Mensah, 2020:1). As specified above, blesser-blessee relationships (transactional sex) are associated with sexual stereotypes and challenges that need to be addressed effectively using a BCC plan. Additionally, Young and Nguyen (2015) concur that female university students are the primary units for health education across universities because the social networks surrounding each health consumer also have a powerful influence on their behaviour.

This section explored the connection between a BCC plan and a blesser-blessee relationship as a way to fulfil the third objective of this study (to develop a BCC strategy that can be used as a communication campaign to educate young girls about blesser-blessee relationship ‘transactional sex’). This was because previous literature did not apply BCC to blesser-blessee relationship. Instead, many studies have linked it to violence; for example, Moffet (2016) and Peacock (2012). Ruvimbo (2020) similarly

reports that women who engage in blesser-blessee relationships (transactional sex) are exposed to severe abuse. This is because these relationships occur between a young female (blessee) and a much older rich man (blesser). Therefore, through the age gap between the partners, women are more likely to be vulnerable to violence. These studies failed to bring solutions to how to combat this phenomenon. This study implemented a BCC plan for establishing a conducive way for promoting behaviour change among young girls.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter was grounded in the third objective of this study (to develop a BCC strategy that can be used as a communication campaign to educate young girls about blesser-blessee relationship ('transactional sex'). There are limited previous studies that applied BCC to address blesser-blessee relationships (transactional sex). This study considered the essence of applying BCC in bringing about a solution to different social and health issues. A qualitative study conducted by WHO (2001) indicates that to plug BCC into existence, the audience needs to adopt communication into practice because it plays a vital role in understanding the uses of BCC at this stage.

Most literature that probed blesser-blessee relationships (transactional sex) focused largely on the nature and challenges faced by women but ignored the implementation of plans on how this phenomenon can be resolved. This study sought to bring about a change in how this phenomenon is addressed in scholarly literature. Given that the blesser-blessee relationship is characterised by a popular behaviour practiced by young women who are seen as naïve and longing to live luxurious lifestyles (Manase, 2016), a BCC plan may help in addressing this popular phenomenon that is characterised by various health issues to encourage positive behaviour and a safer lifestyle. Hence, this study primarily intended to explore and understand the experiences of female university students (blessees) to educate young girls about this phenomenon.

At the time of reviewing the literature on BCC and health communication, the researcher discovered that the discussion of health communication and BCC was characterised by contradictions and ambiguity. For example, the Family Health International (2006) regards health communication as the process of BCC where an individual or group of people learn to behave in a particular manner to restore the

behaviour, thus wrongly making BCC and health communication one and the same. Maibach and Holtgrave (1995) revealed that the difference between health communication and BCC is that BCC is a risk communication because it utilises important lessons from the behavioural decision-making on how people make choices under conditions of risk. On the other hand, health communication primarily focuses on promoting the dissemination of information to the audience about the risk. Therefore, the researcher came to understand that BCC is a two-way communication focusing on bringing about change whereas health communication is a one-way communication plan focusing on the spread of information. However, Nancy and Dongre (2021) show that BCC evolved from health communication. As a result, this literature helped the researcher to understand different arguments concerning these two concepts. Thus, this chapter adds knowledge to the field of communication because it will aid scholars to understand and explore BCC in different contexts.

To understand young women's experiences as blesses, the type of blesser-blessee relationship they engaged in, and to explore the behaviour carried out from engaging in blesser-blessee relationship and transactional sex, the study utilised a theoretical framework that draws from the Typology of Interpersonal Sugaring Relationships developed by Scull (2019) and the Health Belief Model (Becker, Nancy, 1974). Therefore, in the next chapter, the researcher discussed the theoretical framework of the study.

CHAPTER 4: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discussed the conceptual and theoretical base of the study. The theoretical framework was drawn from the Health Belief Model coined by Becker (1974) and the Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationships Theory coined by Scull (2019). The Health Belief Model and Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationships were used in this study to examine the experiences of female university students in blesser-blessee relationship, examine the motivations for female students in engaging in a blesser-blessee relationship and explore the problems that arise from a blesser-blessee relationship to develop a communication strategy that can be useful in educating towards a behavioural change to combat the phenomenon of a blesser-blessee relationship.

4.2 Health Belief Model

What people think about their health-related behaviour is referred to as their health beliefs. In this instance, according to the Health Behaviour Model, a person's health behaviour and the likelihood that they will accept a behavioural change are predicted by the person's beliefs about a particular risk of illness (Stretcher & Rosenstock, 1997).

4.2.1 The historical emergence of the Health Belief Model

Health behaviour refers to any activity undertaken by a person who believes himself or herself to be healthy for preventing diseases or detecting diseases in an asymptomatic stage (Birch, 1945). Therefore, a Health Belief Model was established in 1950 by social psychologist Becker in the US Public Health Service in response to the global uproar caused by health issues (Rosenstock, 1974). Recent years have witnessed a continuous increase in lifestyle-related health challenges around the world (Orji, Vassileva & Mandryk, 2012). As a result, the Health Belief Model intends to focus on promoting healthy behaviours toward the audience. The main theorists, therefore, assert that the Health Belief Model was initially created to explain why patients did not engage in programmes that could aid in their disease diagnosis (Becker, Nancy & Janz, 1984).

The audience can better comprehend feelings of self-efficacy, which are related to a person's perception of their capacity to carry out a certain behaviour by using the Health Belief Model. As a result, the Health Belief Model was one of the first theories to attempt to explain how people's beliefs about health might change behaviour. Social psychologists believe that health education is essential in notifying people's attitudes regarding health issues (Janz & Becker 1984). In health behavioural cases, the major assumption of the Health Belief Model is that to engage in healthy behaviours, intended audiences need to be aware of their risk of exposure to life-threatening diseases and perceive that the benefits of behavioural change outweigh potential barriers.

Key components of the Health Belief Model:

- **Perceived susceptibility:** Refers to an individual perception of whether he or she is at a risk of contracting a specific illness or health problem. This component guided the aspect of the study that intended to link a bl esser-blessee relationship to transactional sex. This means that the provision of knowledge concerning these phenomena might influence female students to participate in behavioural change. For example, transactional sex is linked to HIV infection; therefore, female students will know the shortcomings of transactional sex, which can motivate or influence behavioural change.
- **Perceived severity:** For Janz and Becker (1984), this is the subjective feeling of whether the specific illness can be severe; for instance, permanent and worthy of one's attention.
- **Perceived benefits:** These are a person's opinions about the benefits of doing the suggested activities that will eventually lower the risk of developing a severe illness (Stretcher & Rosenstock, 1997).
- **Perceived barriers:** Encompass an individual's estimation of the level of challenges of social, personal, environmental, and economic obstacles to a specific behaviour of their desired goal status on that behaviour (Rosenstock, 1974).
- **Cues to action:** Becker et al. (1984) and Janz and Becker (1984) highlight that public or social occurrences can indicate the need to act, such as sexual agency or health campaigns.

- **Self-efficacy:** This is the belief that a person has in his or her capacity to conduct themselves appropriately and to uphold that behaviour with little or no assistance from others (Stretcher & Rosenstock, 1997). Thus, the table below summarises the components of the Health Belief Model discussed above.

Health Belief Model Key component(s)	Definition
Perceived Susceptibility	The estimation of a person's likelihood of contracting an illness or condition.
Perceived Severity	The severity of the illness is determined by the individual.
Perceived Benefits	A person's judgment of whether the behaviour is preferable to what they are currently doing.
Cues to Action	Factors that trigger behavioural change
Self-efficacy	An individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviours necessary to produce specific performance attainments.

Table 4.1: Health Belief Model key components.

Harrison, Mullen and Green (1992) assert that the Health Belief Model connects an individual's health-related behaviours to a socio-psychological theory of decision-making. However, they conducted a meta-analysis of the connections between health behaviour and the four components of the Health Belief Model: vulnerability, harshness, rewards, and costs, and proffered that:

- **Vulnerability:** Refers to the quality or state of being exposed to the possibility of being harmed either physically or emotionally. However, in Health Belief Model, people are exposed to the possibility of being infected by any disease (Harrison et al., 1992).
- **Harshness:** This encompasses the quality of being unpleasantly rough or jarring to the senses. Thus, Health Belief Model promotes health awareness by disclosing health information about a particular disease (Harrison et al., 1992).

- **Rewards:** Harrison et al. (1992) refers to recognising the efforts or achievements in preventing a particular disease. For instance, an individual who uses PREP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) is rewarded by not contracting HIV infection.
- **Costs:** Refers to a demanding action to obtain a particular behaviour. Furthermore, these are intangible costs such as the pain or suffering of patients because of a disease (Harrison et al., 1992).

The study conducted by Harrison et al. (1992) demonstrates that the Health Belief Model dimensions have a significant influence on behavioural change. As a result, the diagram below summarises the presumed interactions among components of the Health Belief model work.

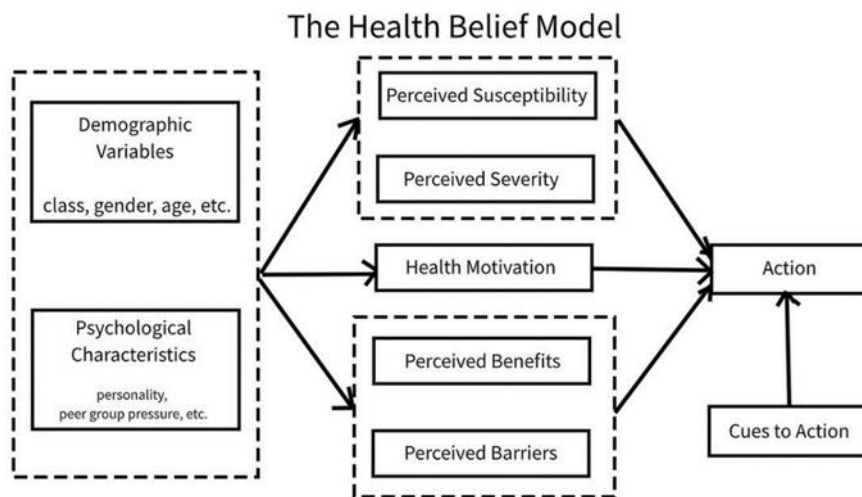


Figure 4.1: Health Belief Model diagram. Source: Glanz (2015)

4.2.2 Research literature on Health Belief Model

Health Belief Model is still widely in use. For instance, authors such as Wai Sze Lo, Sek Ying and Fung (2015) acknowledge the Health Belief Model as a model of adhering to self-care and health-promoting behaviour, thus the model provides a conducive environment for behavioural change for the audience. Hence, El-Rahman (2014) alludes that Health Belief Model is used to increase physical activity in women at risk of health problems. In describing the Health Belief Model, Pechmann (2001:189) defines this model as a “risk learning model because the aim is to educate with new information about health risks” and the behaviours that reduce health risks. Andreasen (1995) posits that the Health Belief Model acknowledges that knowledge

will bring change toward health behaviour. On the other hand, Wayne and LaMorte (2019) report that the Health Belief Model derives from psychological and behavioural theory with the foundation that the two components of health-related behaviour are the desire to avoid sickness and the belief that specific health actions will prevent illness.

Hayden (2014) carried out a study in a medical facility connected to several hospitals. They discussed the avoidant behaviour of workers with a family history of breast cancer using the Health Belief Model to boost mammography usage. According to their study's conclusion, women who were referred for mammography benefited from the Health Belief Model. Jansen, Snijders and Willemsen (2021) encourage self-protection toward healthy behaviour, the Health Belief Model seeks to ignore a bad outcome. In addition, the Health Belief Model (HBM) has undergone testing in the literature and has been found to predict outcomes rather accurately diagnosing causes (Jensen et al., 2021).

Numerous research studies have been done using the Health Belief Model. Take Kelli (2011) as an example, the scholar did theory-based research to comprehend inadequate contraceptive behaviour and the related consequences for reproductive health. As a result, the findings suggest that problems with the Health Belief Model's first family planning application included contradictory conceptualisations of contraceptive behaviour. Furthermore, the understanding of contraceptive behaviour has advanced, necessitating a more thorough application of the Health Belief Model to relevant reproductive health contexts, behaviour, and techniques. Consequently, Kelli (2011) suggests that with more careful application, the Health Belief Model can help the audience understand contemporary contraceptive behaviour determinants and facilitate initiatives to reduce unwanted pregnancy and increase effective family planning outcomes.

Menon and Szalacha (2008) acknowledge the Health Belief Model as useful to scholars who examine responses to diagnose illness, symptoms, and adherence to medical regimens. Although Menon and Szalacha (2008) have demonstrated the value of the Health Belief Model in addressing illness diagnosis. Edward and Murphy (2014) indicate that the Health Belief Model has grown to be one of the most well-known conceptual frameworks for attitudes, lifestyles, and behaviours related to health that focuses on any phenomenon at the individual level. How the Health Belief Model

was applied to affect the use of technology in mediated financial transactions provides a clear illustration (Davinson & Silience, 2014). Davinson and Silience's (2014) research sought to increase the use of the Health Belief Model by first considering internet usage in a more general sense of daily life and then considering the sustainability of automatic teller machines (ATM).

4.2.3 Application of the model to the study

To persuade female students in the Limpopo Province to curb the blesser-blessee relationship, this study evaluated health communication. As a result, the components of the Health Belief Model were crucial in guiding this study to demonstrate the severity of the issues that result from a blesser-blessee relationship, such as HIV infection among blessees. The Health Belief Model also suggests that people take action to address health issues (Becker et al., 1984). The main ideas of the Health Belief Model were applied to comprehend issues and events that result from a blesser-blessee relationship (transactional sex) with female university students (blessee). According to the Health Belief Model, certain behaviours are linked to healthy behaviour (Jansen et al., 2022).

Moreover, the major elements of the Health Belief Model enabled this study to fulfil the research objectives, which were (a) to explore the experiences of female university students in blesser-blessee relationship, (b) to examine the motivations for female students in engaging blesser-blessee relationship, while exploring the problems that arise from blesser-blessee relationship, (c) and to develop a BCC campaign to educate young girls about blesser-blessee relationship as a type of transactional sex to create a successful social and a BCC plan. Given that this study identified the issues related to blesser-blessee relationship, the Health Belief Model intervention was essential in improving young girls' perceptions of engaging in blesser-blessee relationships.

In this study, the researcher concentrated on female university students in blesser-blessee relationship as part of a communication strategy for social and behavioural transformation. A blesser-blessee relationship is a type of transactional sex that has been shown to carry the risk of health issues like HIV transmission. For instance, Groess-Green (2014) points out the fact that while young women engage in this form

of relationship, they put themselves at the risk of sexual abuse and sexually transmitted diseases by using their “titillating power” to attract “sugar daddies”.

Considering the nature of the blesser-blessee relationship in Limpopo Province, the Health Belief Model helped this study to indicate that the likelihood of a risk associated with transactional sexual relationships and consequences will create a motivation for self-protection amongst young girls (Jansen et al., 2021). Bamberg, Masson, Brewitt and Nemetschek (2017); Floyd, Prentice-Dunn and Rogers (2000), and Janz et al. (1984) similarly report that the general conclusion in the literature is that Health Belief Model indeed is a predictor of prevention behaviour. Consequently, the most imperative contribution of this study is a methodological one: the researcher sought to educate young girls about blesser-blessee relationship guided by the Health Belief Model. With a reason to contribute to combating blesser-blessee relationship in Limpopo, this study hoped to make young girls realise that social and BCC toward blesser-blessee relationship is effective in exposing problems, which arise from this phenomenon.

The researcher anticipated that the essential elements of the Health Belief Model would have a significant impact on analysing the data collected from the female participants, which revealed their attitudes and opinions about the blesser-blessee relationship and the related social and health concerns. The Health Belief Model focuses primarily on people’s attitudes, norms, and behaviours regarding a specific phenomenon or disease. As a result, the third objective of this research, which was to develop a BCC campaign to educate young girls about blesser-blessee relationships, was achieved, as will be seen in the subsequent chapters. In examining issues that emanate from blesser-blessee relationship, for instance: the researcher adopted perceived susceptibility. Perceived susceptibility focuses on a person’s impression of her (blessee’s) likelihood of developing a specific disease or health issue. Thus, these elements served as a reference for the in-depth interview questions, which aimed to comprehend the challenges experienced by blessees participating in blesser-blessee relationships. For instance, female university students might be aware of the drawbacks (i.e., perceived susceptibility) of this occurrence as transactional sex is associated with HIV infection (Mampane, 2019).

However, not all female university students engage in blesser-blessee relationships (transactional sex). Therefore, the subjective seriousness of the behaviour, such as whether an illness can result in irreversible damage, is included in perceived severity. It is therefore important to pay attention to how perceived severity plays a vital role in influencing and educating young girls about behavioural change towards the blesser-blessee phenomenon. For Ruvimbo (2020), a blesser-blessee relationship results in the risk of contracting HIV being extremely high when an older wealthy man engages in transactional sex with a young, impressionable woman. Ntsieni (2017) supports that the chances of contracting HIV are high because these old rich men attract many young women who want to date for compensation. Moreover, these young women have partners who are equal to their age. Therefore, plans for communicating behavioural and social change were created to address the effects of these transactional sexual interactions. Moreover, addressing the issues that come from blesser-blessee relationships could have an impact on how seriously young females take their decision to abstain from blesser-blessee relationship. Bubeck, Kreibich, Penning-Rowsell, Botzen, De Moel and Klijn (2012) and Valkengoed and Steg (2019) concur that perceived severity has positive effects on behavioural change.

Young women who engage in blesser-blessee relationships (transactional sex), as found in a study by Ranganathan et al. (2017), are particularly susceptible to intimate partner violence and coerced dangerous sex. Because of this, the adoption of the Health Belief Model's key component of 'perceived severity' in this study emphasised the need to talk about how the blesser-blessee relationship is prevalent with severe dilemmas. Young women also need to be educated on these moral dilemmas to affect how seriously they accept healthy behaviours. This may initiate perceived benefits among young girls. Perceived benefits are an individual's perceptions of the advantage of adopting recommended actions that will eventually reduce the risk for disease severity. The blesser-blessee relationship harms female students or women, as stated in the literature. It is crucial to help people understand how participating in health communication programs will benefit them. Individuals will have access to information about evaluating the potential advantages of taking part in the prevention of issues that result from blesser-blessee relationship, according to this study.

Ntsieni's (2017) triangulation study suggests that communication campaigns must be initiated to acknowledge the presence of the problems that come from blesser-blessee relationships. In addition, initiatives should be created to empower young women and boost their self-esteem so they will not engage in blesser-blessee relationships. Christina, Jones, Jensen and Jeremy (2016) reinforce that the Health Belief Model seems to be ideal for communication research. Thus, this study may contribute to a stopgap toward social and BCC concerning blesser-blessee relationships.

'Self-efficacy' refers to an individual's belief and ability to participate in an action for a particular behaviour. The Health Belief Model is based on the reality of how a person is willing to change their health behaviour. Champion and Skinner (2008) contend, however, that the Health Belief Model does not establish variable ordering. They also suggest that the study must adequately address perceived barriers, benefits, self-efficacy, and threads to accomplish the best behavioural change with Health Belief Model communications. To counteract blesser-blessee relationships in Limpopo Province, an exposure to social and BCC strategies will be beneficial. Additionally, Rosenstock et al. (1988) postulate that self-efficacy can overcome perceived obstacles to executing the desired behaviour. The Health Belief Model may be applied to a variety of research areas; thus, the researcher used this model to help develop a BCC strategy that will inform young girls about blesser-blessee relationships (transactional sex).

Critiques of the Health Belief Model

Although the Health Belief Model has been used widely and many scholars such as Bubeck et al. (2012) acknowledged it as the best in establishing conducive behavioural change, other scholars report that Health Belief Model has limitations. Some academics advise against using the Health Belief Model. For instance, Andreasen (1995:10) and Rosenstock and Kirscht (1974:472) believe that the Health Belief Model in the field of health communication is insufficient to affect change. The Health Belief Model needs to be developed and tested for application in recognising characteristics that influence health-related behaviours (Davidhizar, 1983). For example, Sulat, Prabandari, Sanusi, Haspari and Santoso (2018) indicate that Health Belief Model fails to account for predicting behavioural changes. Moreover, many participants are not interviewed about their influence on a particular behaviour. Consequently, this shows

that the Health Belief Model is more information-oriented than considering the audience's experience with a particular behaviour. However, in this study, the primary aim was to explore the experiences of female university students in blesser-blessee relationships to develop a communication strategy that can be used to educate young girls. Therefore, this means that this study guarded against the limitation of not considering the audience's experience (Salut et al., 2018).

A study conducted by Boskey (2022) highlights that Health Belief Model has various limitations. These critiques encompass the following: failing to consider how people's decisions may be shaped by habitual behaviours; and it focuses on the health-related reasons for behaviours but ignores the fact that people often engage in actions for other reasons such as social acceptance. Moreover, the Health Belief Model does not address the economic and environmental factors that can affect a person's health behaviour. For example, living in a food desert context, people may engage in various behavioural acts such as transactional sex to gain money to buy food. However, for this study, Health Belief Model paved the way to explore economic and environmental factors that can affect young women to engage in blesser-blessee relationship (i.e., exploring the motivations of engaging in a blesser-blessee relationship). To qualify this argument, in Chapter 2, the researcher acknowledged scholars such as Phamotse (2017) and Zikona (2020) who aligned the blesser-blessee relationship to social norms known as materialistic culture and peer influence, which raised uproars in the media through trends such as '#tag influencer' or 'I am blessed.' Therefore, due to these trends and considering the second objective of this study, which was to examine the motivations for female university students in engaging in a blesser-blessee relationship while exploring the dilemmas that arise from the blesser-blessee relationship, the study was able to use the Health Belief Model to explore the social acceptance of blesser-blessee relationship.

For Wagle (2019), the Health Belief Model is more descriptive than explanatory and does not suggest a strategy for changing health-related actions. This study was explanatory because it intended to develop a communication strategy that could be used to educate young girls about the blesser-blessee relationship towards a behavioural change that may be used to combat this phenomenon. To sum up, the use of the Health Belief Model paved a way towards understanding and evaluating

blessees' behaviour and experiences in blesser-lessee relationships, not just highlighting protective behaviour. Despite its limitations, this study found the Health Belief Model as effective in accounting for an association between the blesser-lessee phenomenon and BCC.

4.3 Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationship Theory (TISRT)

The Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationship Theory was used in this study to gather accurate information about the blesser-lessee relationship. Scull (2019:139) made the following assumption, which led to the development of this theory:

I discovered that the subcultural relationship script that governed participants' behaviour and affected their interpersonal contacts with their benefactor made sugaring a special relational package that, for the most part, was distinct from traditional dating and prostitution.

This presumption focuses on sugaring relationships that develop between young women and old men (benefactors and recipient phenomenon). The typology describes the many sugar connections kinds. The following are some of the seven different kinds of interpersonal relationships:

- **Sugar prostitution:** Selling sex and/or sexual acts within the framework of a sugar relationship was involved.
- **Compensated dating:** Scull (2019:145) classifies this as a kind of sugar relationship in which the recipient received monetary and/or material benefits in exchange for accompanying the beneficiary to events. In this instance, "the compensated dater frequently served as 'arm candy,' which is to say an attractive person one may parade to acquire attention, respect, status, and/or prestige.
- **Compensated companionship:** It has some of the same traits as paid dating, but the beneficiary (participant) forges a stronger bond with the benefactor (blesser) in a way that can be witnessed by others (Scull, 2019).
- **Sugar dating:** With their blessers (benefactors), lessees (participants) engage in a range of activities, such as going out to dinner and travelling (Nayer, 2017; Scull, 2019). Nevertheless, in this kind of sugar relationship, there will be sexual encounters.

- **Sugar friendship:** There is no sexual activity involved in this relationship. However, blessees may concur when the blesser offers advice about sexual activity (Scull, 2019).
- **Sugar friendships with sexual benefit:** This type of blesser-blessee relationship is marked by frequent sexual encounters and little other activities, such as going to the movies (Scull, 2019).
- **Pragmatic love:** Scull (2019) reveals that in these situations, the women perceive their blessers (benefactors) as future partners who will take care of them.

4.3.1 Research literature on Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationships Theory

Scull (2019) claims that the Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationships Theory was created to investigate and comprehend different types of compensated dating. However, because this idea is still relatively new in the field of research, there is very little literature, particularly recent sources.

In a study conducted by Bernstein (2001: 402), paid dating is viewed as “bound authenticity” hook-ups because the pleasant feelings that are produced during the encounter do not go beyond the parameters of the engagement. Furthermore, although compensated dating differs from direct prostitution in that blessees participate in sexual activity as a business, Motyl (2013) refers to this connection as sugar prostitution in the context of compensated dating. Scull (2019), on the other hand, contends that not all situations in which sex is sold for cash qualify as prostitution. Nevertheless, Albert (2001), Brewis and Linstead (2000), and Sanders (2008) contend that these relationships constitute sugar prostitution since they typically involve eating supper, drinking alcohol, and having company while sex is most often the centre of attention. Nevertheless, Chu and Laidler (2016) conducted a study that emphasises that not all compensated dating relationships involve sexual activity. Further, according to Scull’s (2019) study findings, women who participate in compensated dating desire to have a sincere affection for their sponsors. Therefore, this describes those who have a strong social sense. Scull (2019) claims that as a result, this arrangement was more typical than other forms of compensated dating during the data collection. As a result, blessees frequently develop a sincere affection for their blessers. However, Nayer (2017) postulates that sexual interactions are also

predominant in sugaring or compensated dating. Blessers are therefore unable to purchase expensive gifts for a blessee without experiencing sexual gratification. Therefore, sex is a direct means of obtaining things in blesser-blessee relationships (transactional sex). A reference is made to an article by Manase (2016) titled “When you open your legs you eat,” which examines the practice of *sex-for-fish*.

The claim is consistent with Scull’s (2019) description of these agreements as the “pay-for-play” format. As a result, benefactors are expected to give presents and financial benefits to female recipients at the risk of commodifying female bodies. While some research indicates that not all types of blesser-blessee relationships (transactional sex) are sex work; for instance, Zembe et al. (2013) contended that compensated dating relationships are informal prostitution. Conversely, Swader et al. (2013:613) re-evaluate the definition of prostitution and claim that “it is prostitution when a person engages in sexual activity with someone, they have no feelings for to make money.” However, in contrast, Motyl (2013) refers to the Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationship Theory as the ‘frank exchange’ of sex for money without including any form of social companionship. In other words, this means that this arrangement can be a one-night stand or no-string-attached format. Despite the above-mentioned, Chu and Laidler (2016), Kong (2003) and Kaute-Defo (2004) show that many of these interactions took place because women believed that because many older wealthy men propose to their blessees even though they are married, the arrangement will turn into a “vanilla relationship”, which refers to a relationship that involves dates and time with each other. It is also used to refer to sex with no strings attached just plain sex (Scull, 2019). Thus, one of the main factors encouraging young women to participate in this phenomenon is the perception that old men are competent at caring for their loved ones. Some agreements, however, do not provide for relationships. For instance, Sanders (2008) reveals that because blessees have spouses who are the same age, their lives typically do not overlap. To sum up, blesser-blessee relationships vary from sex work.

4.3.2 Application of Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationships Theory in this study

To create a communication plan that may be employed to educate young girls towards a behavioural change that may be used to combat this occurrence, the researcher

wanted to learn more about the experiences of female university students who were in blesser-lessee relationships. The researcher was thus more able to understand the nature of blesser-lessee phenomenon according to this theory. Additionally, the construction of the interview questions and the data collection process drew from this theory. Because of this, the qualitative technique was developed to examine the subjective or personal experience of individuals, and as a result, the application of the Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationships Theory (Scull, 2019) aided this study to develop a thematic analysis to evaluate the motivation of female university students who engaged in blesser-lessee relationships. The Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationship theory also provided a platform to understand the different forms of sugaring relationships that the research participants were involved in. The researcher primarily used this theory to study and comprehend the experiences of female college students who were in blesser-lessee relationships. Considering this, incorporating this theory into the methodology and data collection enabled the study to accomplish its objectives of examining the experiences of female university students who were in blesser-lessee relationships as well as the reasons behind their involvement and the issues that result from such relationships. The Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationship Theory intersects with behavioural change communication through its influence on power dynamics and health risks because all health issues addressed above need to be addressed in effort of promoting a positive behaviour amongst female university students within these transactional relationships.

4.4 Conclusion

Although the Health Belief Model by Becker (1974) has been widely used to understand patients' responses to symptoms of a disease, in this study, the model was used to explore and understand the experiences (lifestyle behaviours in transactional sex) of a lessee who engage in blesser-lessee relationships. Consequently, the Health Belief Model assisted this study to develop effective interventions that may change the behaviour of young girls concerning blesser-lessee relationship through using various key components of the Health Belief Model. On the other hand, since the study focused on female university students who engage in blesser-lessee relationship (transactional sex), the Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationships Theory (Scull, 2019) was adopted as part of the methodology and data collection (in-depth interviews with the participants). Thus, both theories were important in this study.

Both the Health Belief Model and Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationship Theory shared similarities that were helpful in addressing the objectives of this study. Most imperatively, both theories developed an assumption that a blesser-blessee relationship (transactional sex) relate to the subjective experience of a female university student (blessee) and not the objective state of transactional sexual relationships. However, the difference was that the Health Belief Model was likely to be used for health behaviour prevention; hence, the Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationship Theory was used for identifying and discussing different forms of blesser-blessee relationships among young women. In the next chapter, the researcher discussed the research methodology adopted in this study.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methods the researcher adopted to collect data and achieve the following objectives of the study:

- To explore the experiences of female university students in blesser-blessee relationships.
- To examine the motivations for female students in engaging in blesser-blessee relationships, while exploring the problems that arise from these relationships.
- To develop a BCC strategy that can be used as a communication campaign to educate young girls about blesser-blessee relationships.

The methods adopted encompassed the research design, research paradigm, and the method for data collection, and the analysis conducted. Moreover, the researcher discussed ethical considerations for research participants.

5.2 Research design

It was important for the study to investigate the blesser-blessee relationship and create a social and BCC to advise young females away from this occurrence. To do this, the study employed qualitative research method utilising an applied research approach and the interpretivism research paradigm.

5.2.1 Qualitative research method

The qualitative research method gathers rich story materials using adaptable data collection techniques to investigate a phenomenon, usually in-depth and holistically (Bubeck et al., 2012). Thus, it enabled this study to clarify subjective and individual human experiences in this study. For Brink et al. (2012), qualitative research encompasses a wide range of designs and methodologies used to examine social action phenomena that we do not fully understand, for example, examining the motivation for female university students to engage in blesser-blessee relationships. Botma, Greef, Mulaudzi and Greef (2010) reinforce that qualitative research method is employed when little is known about a phenomenon and its boundaries are ill-defined. There is a dearth of literature geared towards BCC. Although they are actively participating in this phenomenon, several of the participants in this case displayed

widespread health and safety concerns during data collection. Therefore, this study intended to educate young girls about blesser-lessee relationships. Ntsieni (2017) urged that there should be research studies to create BCC or health education campaigns that can help fight transactional relationships. The use of a qualitative study design delved into the experiences of female university students who are in blesser-lessee relationships. For an illustration, look at Do Plooy-Colliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout's (2014) article on qualitative research design, which describes how it captures the insider's knowledge of a specific social phenomenon.

5.2.2 Applied research approach

This study employed an applied research approach. The purpose of an applied research approach is to investigate whether solutions to a social and behavioural dilemma can be found. Therefore, it was essential to use an applied research approach in this study to educate young girls about blesser-lessee relationships. In accordance with Thanh and Thanh (2015), applied research design aimed to address problems that are special to an individual, a group, or a society and offer creative answers. To qualify this claim, it should be noted that although the blesser-lessee relationship is a phenomenon that affects young people, little is known about its drawbacks and psychological repercussions on lessees (Singata, 2020). Thus, the use of applied data collection method fulfilled the third objective of this research, which is to develop a BCC strategy.

The uniqueness of using applied research approach in this study relied on bringing solution to combat blesser-lessee relationships by developing a behavioural change communication that aimed to educate both parents and young girls against transactional relationships. Moreover, applied research data collection enabled the researcher to collect further data from the participants (Career guide, 2023) by adopting in-depth interviews. It further paved an opportunity to use the issues identified in blesser-lessee relationships and make use of those issues to come up with solutions (Watkins, 2017). Another school of thought postulates that applied research is a non-systematic way of finding solutions to specific issues (Rodriguez & Spirling, 2020). These problems can be on an individual; therefore, it is called 'non-systematic' because it goes straight to finding solutions. However, in the context of health, applied research combines scientific knowledge and procedures with health experiences to

produce evidence-based result (Cresswel, 2003; Rodriguez & Spirling, 2020). As a result, the researcher interviewed health practitioners such as nurses at a university to get the insight information and evidence linked to a blesser-blessee relationship.

In summary, applied research study was important in investigating the blesser-blessee phenomenon because it aided this study to find the real-world solutions to specific dilemmas while increasing their output and productivity.

5.2.3 Interpretivism research paradigm

This study leaned towards interpretivism as a research paradigm. The goal of the interpretivism research paradigm is to comprehend how one person perceives a unique aspect of reality (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). The researcher chose this paradigm because, given the characteristics of the blesser-blessee phenomenon, the researcher wanted to understand and study people's experiences, motives, and perceptions (specifically, examine the experiences of female university students in blesser-blessee relationships). The interpretivist paradigm, according to Alharahsheh and Pius (2020), enabled this study to obtain more depth through pursuing experience and perceptions of a specific social situation.

The interpretivist research paradigm further enabled this study to take an action-research approach by finding practical solution to help young girls by guiding them against blesser-blessee relationships. Thus, this was done through analysing information shared by participants during in-depth interviews. For example, Career guide (2023) indicates that interpretative paradigm helps the study in creating new approach to meet new target on an existing phenomenon.

The society has elements that foster the blesser-blessee relationship, and people who participate in this phenomenon are affected (Ntsieni, 2017). The blesser-blessee relationship, for example, is a type of transactional relationship that is entwined with health problems and other social problems like physical abuse and sexual objectification of blessees. This mirrors Yende (2021), who asserts clearly that power dynamics are attributable to transactional relationships and that blessees are subject to abuse since they are perceived as being economically dependent on their blessters. As a result, blessters can exert control over a blessee's physical appearance and other aspects of conformity. The interpretivist paradigm helped the researcher to understand

the attitudes and influences of pursuing a relationship between a young woman and an older man because it focuses on issues like experience and the impact of a particular situation. Moreover, rather than depending solely on statistics to understand this phenomenon, the researcher intended to investigate the blesser-blessee relationship through the experiences of those involved in the practice and offer BCC.

5.3. Research design

This study made use of an exploratory research design. Naess (2018) indicates that exploratory research design is used to investigate research questions that have not previously been studied in-depth. For example, over the last decades, African countries such as South Africa have experienced unprecedented growth of blesser-blessee relationship manifesting among women (Moodley & Ebrahim, 2019), and poverty has been identified as the contributing factor while neglecting to explore other contributing factors for blesser-blessee relationship prevalence. Thus, an exploratory research design enabled the researcher to collect data focusing on exploring the experiences of female university students in blesser-blessee relationships within a rural context. Moreover, the researcher focused on how and why female university students engaged in transactional relationships. On the other hand, the researcher adopted the exploratory research design to explore BCC in the context of blesser-blessee relationship due to limited literature (Ntsieni, 2017). Consequently, the information available on blesser-blessee relationship and developing BCC has not been robustly studied. For example, studies did not focus specifically on female university students' experiences in blesser-blessee relationship within a rural context. During the interviews, exploratory research design was used to seek internal validity on blesser-blessee relationship.

5.4 Research study's setting

The province of Limpopo served as the study's setting. The province's western and northern borders, the Limpopo River, were the inspiration for the name. Polokwane, the capital city of the province. Consequently, this province is divided into three cultural settings, namely, Lebowakgomo, Gazankulu, and Venda, with two universities, eight TVET colleges, and two nursing colleges. Limpopo Province has about 6,572,721 population and about 125,754 dwellings (Statistics South Africa, 2022). To evidence this, Statistics South Africa (2020) reports "the provinces with the highest headcount

of adult poverty are Limpopo (67,5%), Eastern Cape (67,3%), KwaZulu-Natal (60,7%) and Northwest (59,6%). For these four provinces, significantly more than half of their population were living in poverty.” Thus, Limpopo Province has a large population but also suffers from a low standard of living.

Given that Mampane (2019) and Phamotse (2017) claim that young women are particularly susceptible to this phenomenon at such social gatherings, materialism as a culture may have a strong influence in the province. Mampane (2019) and Phamotse (2017) assert that materialism may further motivate female university students to engage in blesser-blessee relationships to live up to expectations of being deemed attractive, seductive, and a social symbol. The researcher therefore felt the need to investigate female university students who were involved in blesser-blessee relationship in the Limpopo Province. The map of the Limpopo Province is shown in the figure below.



Figure 5.1: A map depicting Limpopo Province. Source: Adeola, Botai, Rautenbach, Adisa, Ncongwane, Botai and Adebayo-Ojo (2017).

5.5 Population of the study

The study’s initial emphasis was on female university students in Limpopo. The researcher selected female university students who are in transactional relationships at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, as well as nurses who work closely with female university students because they have experience on health issues experienced by female university students who engaged in transactional sex. For instance, if they encountered health issues, such as sexually transmitted diseases

such as gonorrhoea, they visit health centres on campus. The fact that female university students, both at undergraduate and graduate levels, have different reasons for participating in this phenomenon is another reason why it is crucial to focus on them when creating behaviour change messaging to inform young girls about the blesser-blessee relationship.

A research population is an amalgamation of elements that share a particular set of standards (Ntsieni, 2017). Thus, the ideals or reasons shared by female university students in blesser-blessee relationships (i.e., financial hardships, peer pressure, and other personal variables that lead them to engaging in this phenomenon) drive them to engage in transactional relationships. However, not every beneficiary experience this. The researcher was able to investigate the unspoken causes, drives, and experiences of female university students in blesser-blessee relationships by focusing on this population group, which is crucial. In addition, health professionals included those who work directly with female university students, such as nurses, since they are exposed to the health problems that blessees suffer. The researcher gained insight into the health problems caused by the blesser-blessee phenomenon by enrolling health practitioners in this study.

5.6 Sampling

Burns and Grove (2009) and Ntsieni (2017) regard sampling as the researcher's procedure of choosing a sample from the population to gather data on a phenomenon that represents the population of interest. Purposive sampling was thus used in this study to sample the identified people. Purposive sampling seeks to establish a homogeneous technique, which includes the same features (i.e., same age, gender, and educational level). Purposeful sampling helps the researcher to select individuals who are educated about the phenomenon or issues at hand (Cresswel, 2003).

Consequently, in this study, purposive sampling has been used to select six undergraduates, nine postgraduate, and three health practitioners (nurses who work directly with female university students) to explore the experiences of blessees in transactional relationships and to develop a BCC strategy that can be used to teach young girls about blesser-blessee relationship. The following are included in the inclusion criteria:

- Be a registered postgraduate student in Limpopo Province.
- Be a registered undergraduate student in Limpopo Province.
- Be willing to participate.
- Health practitioner who works directly with female university students.
- Engage or engaged in blesser-blessee relationship (transactional relationships).

Purposive sampling, according to Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2016), aids in data collection since research data are intended to help researchers better grasp the theoretical underpinnings of their study. Purposive sampling, on the other hand, or judgement sampling, (Tongco, nd), is the deliberate selection of participants based on their characteristics (i.e., their experiences as beneficiaries of transactional relationships). Additionally, Bernard (2002) in Ntsieni (2017) opines that purposive sampling simply involves the researcher deciding what information is necessary to know and going out in search of those who can or are willing to supply it due to their knowledge or experience. As a result, the study's subjects gave their consent and participated in transactional relationships; nevertheless, some of them stopped doing so. Identification and selection of people or groups who are knowledgeable and skilled in a topic of interest are included in purposeful sampling (Etikan et al., 2016). The researcher asked questions that were specific to the features of the target group (e.g., being a female university student in a blesser-blessee relationship).

5.6.1 Sampling procedure

The researcher employed the homogenous technique (purposive sampling) to choose female university students who met the requirements as the participants. Undergraduate students were chosen because some actively participated in transactional relationships and had a blesser-blessee relationship (Bhui & Bhugara, 2018). For example, six undergraduate female university students were engaging in transactional relationships and one participant was no longer in transactional relationship at the time of the research data collection. They also had a variety of motivations for doing so. They were also in the tertiary level's foundation phase. The researcher further made use of snowball sampling. Thus, the researcher contacted three undergraduate female university students that the researcher had already interviewed. Among the three participants, two of them referred the researcher to eight postgraduate students involved in transactional relationships. Consequently, these

acquaintances confirmed that they wanted to participate in this study. Moreover, the researcher created a flyer inviting female university students to participate in the study and uploaded it on social media sites including Facebook, WhatsApp, and TikTok in addition to physically pasting it on walls and four female students volunteered to participate.



Figure 5.2: A poster used to recruit participants. Source: Picture retrieved from <https://www.news24.com> 06 June 2021

The researcher joined a peer educator’s campaign to access first-hand information about a blesser-blessee phenomenon in tertiary educational contexts. The peer educator’s campaign assisted students who were enrolled in various universities and educating them about health issues and social dilemmas in universities. Thus, the researcher was exposed to various motivations for female universities who engaged in transactional relationships (i.e., there were in-reach and outreach programmes held for university students).

The choice of the postgraduate students was based on their participation in various transactional relationships (Mampane, 2019). Furthermore, they had been enrolled in tertiary education for at least long enough to be familiar with the requirements and expectations for behaviour at universities. For example, Ntsieni (2017) claims that

postgraduate students are aware of the dynamics and other materialistic influences that come with being a student and are familiar with the locations where hook-ups are common.

The selection of health professionals was based on their experience and exposure to female university health issues. To set up a meeting with them for an interview, the researcher first went to the University of Limpopo Health Centre because many participants were enrolled at this institution. The researcher ended up gathering data after speaking with 15 female university students (both undergraduate and postgraduate students) and three health professionals.

5.6.2 Sample Characteristics

The individual in-depth interviews consisted of 18 participants, 15 female university students (i.e., six undergraduate and eight postgraduate students) in blesser-blessee relationships aged between 18 to 30 and three health practitioners who work directly with female university students. Among the female university students, three participants were no longer engaging in blesser-blessee relationship and 12 were currently in a blesser-blessee relationship. The table below shows the demographic profile of the individual in-depth interviews.

Participant's number and aliases.	Age	In transactional relationship?	Duration in transactional Relationship	Education	Degree status
Participant 1 (Khomotso)	20 years	Currently engaging	2 years	Student in a university.	Undergraduate student.
Participant 2 (Dineo)	18 years	Currently engaging	1 year	Student at a university.	Undergraduate student.
Participant 3 (Mahlatse)	24 years	No longer engaging	3 years	Student at a university.	Undergraduate student.

Participant 4 (Thando)	22 years	Currently engaging	2 years	Student at a university.	Undergraduate student.
Participant 5 (Thatong)	25 years	No longer engaging	6 years	Student at a university.	Postgraduate student.
Participant 6 (Phindile)	23 years	Currently engaging	2 years	Student at a university.	Postgraduate student.
Participant 7 (Nsovo)	23 years	Currently engaging	4 years	Student at a university.	Undergraduate student
Participant 8 (Tlharhani)	25 years	Currently engaging	Till to date	Student at nursing College.	Undergraduate student.
Participant 9 (Lutendo)	22 years	Currently engaging	3 years	Student at a university.	Postgraduate student.
Participant 10 (Pimani)	28 years	Currently engaging	1 year	Student at a university.	Postgraduate student.
Participant 11 (Valencia)	29 years	Currently engaging	9 months	Student at a TVET college.	Postgraduate student.
Participant 12 (Omphulusa)	26 years	No longer engaging.	2 years.	Student at a university.	Postgraduate student.
Participant 13 (Tshimangadzo)	24 years	Currently engaging.	3 years.	Student at a TVET college.	Postgraduate student.
Participant 14 (Thuso)	23 years	Currently engaging.	2 years and 5 months.	Student at a university.	Postgraduate student.

Participant 15 (Dikeledi)	30 years	No longer engaging.	7 years.	Student at a university.	Postgraduate student.
------------------------------	-------------	------------------------	----------	--------------------------------	--------------------------

Table 5.1: Demographic profile for individual in-depth interviews.

In addition to the student participants, the researcher also interviewed health practitioners. The table below shows the demographic profile of in-depth interviews with three health practitioners.

Aliases	Age	Gender	Occupation
Nurse Khaya	34	Female	Nurse/ Social work at a university.
Nurse Caroline	47	Female	Nurse at a university.
Nurse Eunice	32	Female	Nurse at a university.

Table 5.2: Demographic profile of health practitioners

5.7 Data collection method

The researcher used individual in-depth interviews with open-ended questions for this study.

5.7.1 In-depth individual interview

In-depth interviews are most suitable for circumstances where one wants to ask open-ended questions that elicit in-depth information from a small number of persons (Guion, Diehl & McDonald, 2001, cited in Ntsieni, 2017).

Thus, this study made use of open-ended questions to gain access to valid knowledge about a blesser-blessee relationship from people who are actively participating in this phenomenon. For the respondents to provide more information than a simple “agree or disagree,” open-ended questions must be phrased correctly (Diorkin, 2021). For instance, numerous open-ended inquiries begin with a why or a how. In addition, the researcher asked questions such as “how would you define transactional sex?” The researcher then prompted more inquiry in response to the individuals’ responses (see the interview guide in the appendices section). Therefore, using open-ended questions aided the researcher to obtain rich background data, gain insight into the respondent’s thoughts, and experiences on the subject (being a blessee).

5.7.2 Data collection procedure

Data for this study were collected over a period of three months from January 2023 to March 2023. To allay any worries or misunderstandings, the researcher gave copies of the participants' information sheet and informed consent form after screening these subjects. Thus, it gave participants time to familiarise themselves with the study, and the information sheet was distributed a day before the real in-depth interview. Moreover, 12 participants agreed to schedule face-to-face in-depth interview at the University of Limpopo. However, three participants preferred a Google Meet interview because they were not near researcher's dwelling. On the other hand, the in-depth interviews with nurses were scheduled at the University of Limpopo Health Centre.

5.8 Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research is described as a process of reducing the raw data that the researcher has collected (Kawulich, 2004 in Doyisa, 2019). Thus, the analysis process involved arranging the data, summarising them into categories, and patterns, which were related to the themes identified by the researcher. The form of analysis adopted in this study was thematic analysis. For Sutton and Austin (2015), thematic analysis consists of checking and editing transcription, interpreting, and verifying data. The researcher used deductive thematic analysis. Consequently, the interpretation of the data in this study was informed by the theoretical framework, which comprised the Health Belief Model (i.e., used to comprehend and evaluate the behaviour of people) and the Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationship Theory (i.e., used to explore sugar relationships). The researcher explored, compared, and analysed the theories and the data obtained from participants, thereafter, categorised them into themes.

5.8.1 Steps taken in analysing data

Coding

The researcher printed data into a hard copy to use for analysis and developed codes using NVIVO release 1.6.1 (1137) software application. The NVIVO process for coding encompassed step one: importing data. Firstly, the researcher imported the transcribed data from iTranscribe application and added them to NVIVO for the researcher to see the data collected during the individual in-depth interviews with the participants. In step two and three (coding stage), the researcher explored the data by

opening the data findings per participant and group familiar statements and developed codes. Step four, thus, the researcher classified codes according to their importance. The figure below shows the NVIVO software application used to code the data collected from the participants.

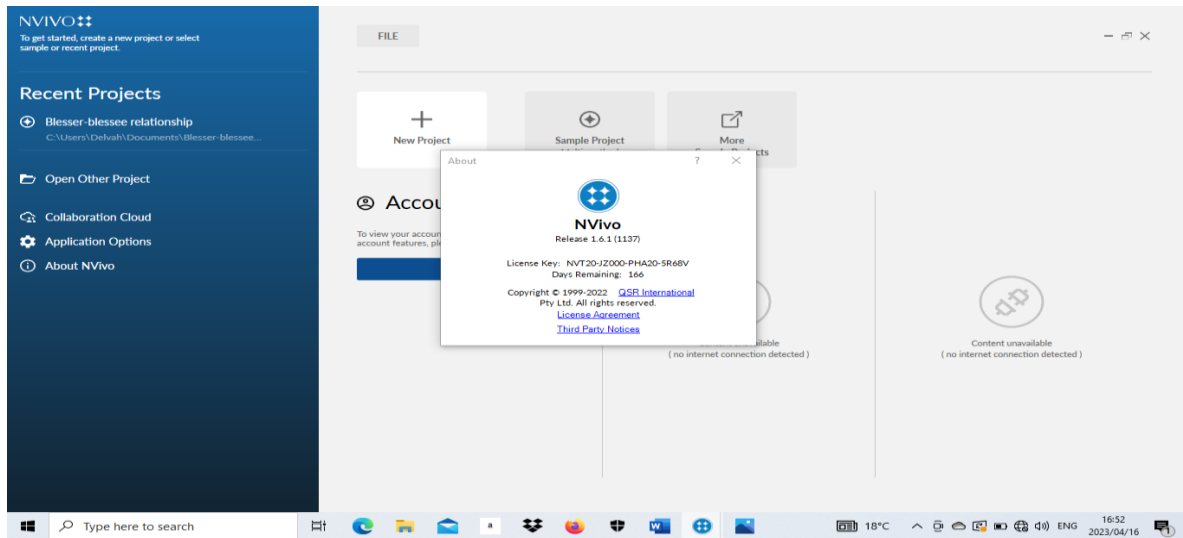


Figure 5.3: NVIVO software application used for coding research data.

Categories

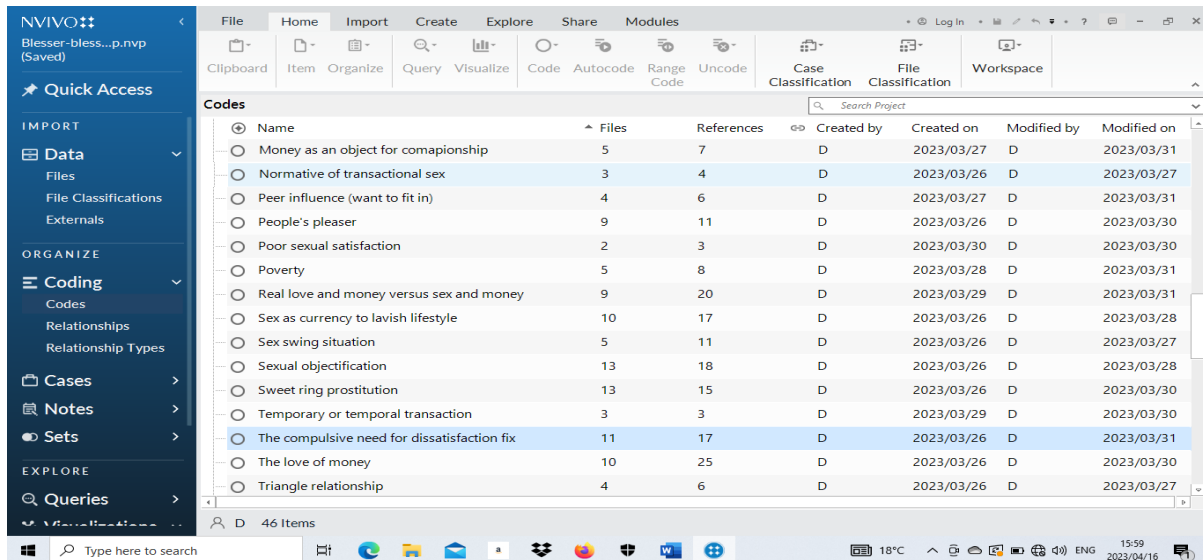


Figure 5.4: Depiction of 46 codes developed from NVIVO software application.

With reference to the figure above, the researcher developed 46 codes. Therefore, 46 codes were merged into 19 categories and these categories enabled the researcher to combine the similar data into relevant groups. For example, during the process of coding, many participants highlighted the influence of money and other monetary gifts

as the initial motivation to engage in transactional relationships. Consequently, the consistent testimony of money as the initial motivation for these participants to engage in transactional relationship, the researcher developed the category of “the love of money”. As a result, throughout the process, every monetary influence mentioned by the participants was placed under this category. Moreover, this was applied throughout the saturation of 19 categories.

Themes

Although the researcher grouped 46 codes into nineteen categories, the data were still scattered. However, the researcher grouped 19 categories into five major themes. Consequently, three major themes made up Chapter 6: Study findings on female students’ understanding and experiences of blesser-blessee relationship, and the remaining two major themes made up Chapter 7: Study findings on challenges of blesser-blessee relationships. As a result, the table below emphasises the major findings found after the researcher analysed data.

Major findings
Forms of blesser-blessee relationships.
Motivations of engaging blesser-blessee relationships.
Hidden dynamics of blesser-blessee relationships.
Blessee’s emotional experience in blesser-blessee relationships.
Problems that arise from blesser-blessee relationships.

Table 5.3: Major findings found after the researcher analysed data

5.9 Ethical considerations

5.9.1 Informed consent

The researcher ensured that consent is given by each participant. A clear consent form which explained the aim, objectives and nature of the study was provided to every participants. Individuals were not forced to partake in the study. Moreover, all the

participants who were interviewed, signed the consent form. Later, after each individual in-depth interview with the participants, the researcher scanned and stored the consent forms on Google drive for safety and further use related to this study.

5.9.2 Permission used to undertake the study

The researcher requested permission to conduct the study from the Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) of the University of Limpopo. The researcher also asked for a permission to undertake the study with three health practitioners (who directly work with female students). Moreover, the researcher wrote a permission letter requesting permission to conduct the study and sent it to the respective offices.

5.9.3 Anonymity and Confidentiality

During data collection and reporting study findings, no participants' identities were exposed. The researcher informed and assured that no participant's name or information will be revealed. Therefore, the names used are aliases to aid the researcher in identifying each participant.

5.9.4 Respect for participant's rights and dignity

All research participants had lawful human rights, which were not infringed on. The researcher respected each participant regardless of their age, race, language, and educational level. All participants were treated correspondingly and with extreme respect.

5.9.5 Benefits and risks associated with the study

Transactional sex and blesser-blessee relationships are common among young women in South Africa (Mampane, 2019). Therefore, this study primarily focused on exploring the experiences of female university students in blesser-blessee relationships to develop a communication strategy that could be used to educate towards a behavioural change that may contribute to combat this phenomenon. The researcher interviewed participants who had knowledge of and experience regarding this phenomenon. This aided the researcher to explore in detail the experiences, motives, and understand the forms of blesser-blessee relationships. There were no risks of physical injury to the participants during individual in-depth interviews. The possible risk was believed to be the fact that interviewees would be sharing their

personal experiences, which they would prefer to keep as a secret. However, the anonymity of participants was maintained, and no personal identifier was revealed that linked data to the identity of the participants. Also, some participants experienced emotional or psychological distress from talking about their involvement in transactional sex and blesser-blessee relationships. This led to the participants exhibiting behaviours of stress or fear such as crying, shaking or shy to open up. Therefore, the researcher adhered to ethical principles such as stopping the interview and offering immediate support. For example, participant 15 (Dikeledi) requested a break since she was emotional about her experience. Fortunately, she was able to carry on, and the researcher tried not burden her with questions that triggered her emotions. All the participants were advised to consult the counselling centre for help, if they needed it at their own free will. The researcher also provided the contact details of a counselling psychologist to them.

5.9.6 Bias

The researcher conducted the study without bias toward any certain outcome in data collection and analysis. The findings of the research study were reported without any bias.

5.10 Quality Criteria

5.8.1 Credibility purposes to guarantee that the study's findings portray the truth and reality of the study (Streuber-Spenziale & Carpenter, 2003). It stresses the steadiness of the study's results. To accomplish the credibility of the study, the true correspondence between the collected data and participants' responses were truthfully offered. An audio recorder was used to ensure the true representation of the research findings.

5.10.2 *Dependability* emphasises the study's replication (Merriam, 2002 in Mbongwe, 2012). For the study's replication to be achieved, a clear research process was followed, and the research methodology was discussed thoroughly.

5.10.3 *Confirmability* goes in hand with the truth instead of ideas. Therefore, the researcher reported the findings based on the truth of the study's participants in such a way that the findings were free from biases (the researcher revisited the literature to show if the findings are supported or rejected instead of relying on the ideas of the researcher).

5.10.4 *Transferability* refers to the extent to which research findings can be transferable to other similar situations. The process required full details of the research location, the researcher, and her relationship with the participants (Sutton & Austin, 2015). This study achieved this criterion by providing detailed information about the study area and a description of the researcher's insider and outsider perspectives.

5.11 Conclusion

To learn about female university students' experiences in blesser-blessee relationships, this study used a qualitative research method, specifically individual in-depth interviews with 15 female university students and three health professionals. As a result, the methods employed to obtain information were effective. This chapter described the data analysis and thematisation process. The researcher adhered to ethical standards, and the participants were made aware of their freedom to withdraw from the study at any time. The benefits of the study, informed consents, permission to conduct the study, anonymity, confidentiality, and quality criteria were all covered in this chapter. The researcher presented and examined the study's findings regarding the blesser-blessee relationship in the following chapter.

**CHAPTER 6:
RESEARCH FINDINGS PART 1**

(FEMALE STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING AND EXPERIENCES OF BLESSER-BLESSEE RELATIONSHIP)

6.1 Introduction

With the goal of exploring the experiences and understanding of the blesser-blessee relationships, this chapter presented the findings from individual in-depth interviews conducted with 15 female university students and three health practitioners. To safeguard their identities, the participants were assigned aliases (i.e., the names used are not their real names). Three main thematic findings emerged from the thematic analysis of the data. These three main findings were: forms of blesser-blessee relationships, motivations for engaging in blesser-blessee relationships, and hidden dynamics of blesser-blessee relationships. The key findings and supporting themes for each result are displayed in the table below.

Major findings	Sub-themes
Forms of blesser-blessee relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sweet ring prostitution. ➤ Love triangle.
Motivations for engaging in blesser-blessee relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ego of gratification. ➤ Aura of materialism. ➤ Wanting to fit in (peer pressure). ➤ Framing blesser-blessee relationship as a simple way to make money. ➤ Family's influence. ➤ Poverty.
Hidden dynamics of blesser-blessee relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sex as currency to access lavish lifestyle. ➤ Age limit. ➤ Economic entitlement.

Table 6.1: Major themes and sub-themes.

6.2 Participants' definition of a blesser-lessee relationship

It is crucial to comprehend how the transaction develops and how sexual partners decide to engage in certain behaviours given the nature of the blesser-lessee relationships. The participants broadly saw a blesser-lessee phenomenon as one in which two or more sexual partners participate in sex for payment. Additionally, these participants reiterated that they did not necessarily view transactional relationships, such as blesser-lessee, as romantic ones because they suspended emotional bonds and sex was not treated with the same reverence as it would be in a conventional love union. For instance, the importance of sex in a traditional romantic relationship was to demonstrate the couples' love for one another and to establish an emotional connection.

The participants clarified the distinction between "having sex and making love." For example, Khomotso, who engaged in a no strings attached transactional relationship said:

Having sex refers to having sexual intercourse with everyone. It is like you are not emotionally connecting with the person because it can be a one-night stand. For example, you don't know the person personally. It normally occurs with a stranger or someone you just met. It is all about satisfying the body. So, making love is about being in love with the person that you have sexual intimacy with and exchange feelings. I can say whatever you do, it matters. Most importantly, you make sure that you connect with the person before you make love.

Although these two phrases refer to sexual activity between humans, their meanings vary based on the type of companionship. As a result, in the context of a typical romantic relationship, the phrase "making love" refers to lovers who both see sexual intercourse as a crucial component of building their emotional and physical connection. However, in the context of the blesser-lessee phenomenon, the phrase "having sex" refers to participants in transactional relationships who use sex as a kind of currency to access affluent lifestyles. Consequently, sex has no emotional value, and those who engage in it are only doing so when they are promised financial rewards. The researcher then concentrated on outlining the study's results that could help in better comprehending the blesser-lessee phenomenon.

6.3 Forms of blesser-lessee relationships

The foundation of a blesser-lessee relationship is reciprocity. For instance, both parties are focused on what they stand to gain from the relationship. Participants disclosed that they had some sort of agreement with the blessers when they transacted with them. The study's participants disclosed two types of blesser-lessee relationships: sweet ring prostitution and love triangle.

6.3.1 Sweet ring prostitution

During the process of analysing data, the researcher found out that the 15 participants in this study indicated that a blesser is likely to have many lessees and sometimes, these female university students recommend their friends to date the same blesser because they are benefitting well or the blesser wants to transact with them at the same time. Consequently, the researcher developed this sub-theme focusing on how the participants recruited each other (i.e., they formed a sort of a ring agreement) to transact with the same blesser. Sweet ring prostitution refers to having an agreeable form of direct prostitution where multiple individuals are involved in the operation of body commodification or selling sex. This entails a group of people recruiting each other to plan sex acts that can be performed in a transactional relationship. Additionally, this type of blesser-lessee relationship makes it easier to trade sexual favours for monetary gifts. For example, Thatong, a university student noted:

It's quite easy to recruit girls to engage with blessers. For example, if we are friends and I'm quite benefitting well from that blesser and he says wait, I am interested in your friend. Then, I will recruit my friend. So, it is now a thing that my friend and I are dating one blesser.

According to this assertion, the essence of a sweet ring prostitution is characterised by lessees who voluntarily sell sex. As a result, this participant describes the process of recruiting, which is defined as actively persuading someone to take an action. In this case, peers persuade one another to transact with the same blesser. In this phenomenon, sexual activity has a more significant role in a person's happiness. For instance, Thatong disclosed that the "Blesser engages in negotiations with his lessee to get her friend to join them in receiving benefits because he likes her." The word "interested" describes a desire for sexual activity with a certain person. This further suggests that the blesser decides to satisfy his lust.

Contrarily, Dikeledi, Khomotso, Lutendo, and Thatong claim that the prevalence of sweet ring prostitution is caused by things like money or a scenario where a blessee feels economically unfulfilled because they simply decide to engage in sexual activity with several different blessers. The assertions that follow shed light on the practice of sweet ring prostitution. Khomotso, a female university student who engaged in sweet ring prostitution noted that:

But the only problem about engaging in blesser-blessee relationship is that these people cheat a lot. Yes, they do, you must settle for I scratch your back and you scratch my back because they have sexual partners all over.

Pimani also noted that:

Although the guy was offering to provide everything, I wanted more. I mean, I wanted real love and that is why I was dating other guys, including the baby daddy. I dated multiple people, and it was not a secret.

It is evident that these participants engage in some form of open arrangement given the nature of sweet ring prostitution and given that they do not conceal their relationships with other sexual partners. In a blesser-blessee relationship, for instance, an “open arrangement” is a type of transactional sex in which both partners consent to the flexibility to pursue sexual and other paid dates with persons who are not part of the core transactional relationship. Consequently, the statements above evince that the situation of no-strings-attached permits them to do what they want as long it is beneficial. Additionally, Thando revealed that:

We both wanted each other. I mean, he had a sexual fling for me, and I felt the same way, but we were not willing to dump [leave] our partners. He had a girlfriend, and I had a boyfriend. So, yeah, that was how things were for us, we had a deal that every time when we link up, he will give me money and I go my way, and he goes his way too.

It is therefore obvious that this participant engaged in sweet ring prostitution (i.e., sexually transacting with various sexual partners) while extremely aware of her desire to avoid losing her boyfriend and transactional partner. She consequently voluntarily

consented to having a sexual partner who would commodify her body each time he sought sexual fulfilment from someone other than his girlfriend. Valencia agreed that this phenomenon is more widespread since these individuals engage in multiple sexual relationships and negotiate their terms before starting a sweet ring prostitution phenomenon. For example, Valencia said that “*A blesser who is well established is likely to be sexually involved with many blessees*” and her statement reveals that blessees who have concurrent sexual partners are aware that their blessers have other transactional partners. Similarly, Tshimangadzo defined the phenomenon of sweet ring prostitution as:

This is where a person has sexual partners who cater for different things. For example, there is no personal connection with this person, but there is economic connection done to sustain the sexual meet up. The connection is not solid because we both have other sexual partners.

The phrase ‘*the connection is not solid*’ demonstrates the nature of selling sex without being prepared to compromise or at the very least, form an emotional connection with the sexual partner. Furthermore, by engaging in sexual activity with someone they do not love, this phrase implies that having sex with someone is not very special. Additionally, this claim demonstrates how consenting to suppress emotions facilitate these participants’ participation in sweet ring prostitution. For example, Thando said that:

It was nothing serious. Even if he sees me or I see him with someone else, we both don’t ask questions. It’s like that, we meet when we must transact in most cases, but we are not dating. We only have sex for fun and money. I engage with guys who prefer no strings attached, but sexual fulfilment and monetary gains.

These participants addressed the ambiguity that is associated with sweet ring prostitution by giving out the characteristics and how both partners come into terms of freely having multiple sexual partners. This demonstrates how the dynamics of real love are altered since what the society regards to be significant and sacred is carried out without any regard for the significance of their actions in blesser-blessee relationships. Participants such as Khomotso, Mahlatse, Phindile, and Tlharihani

agreed not to establish commitments with their sexual partners because they no longer believed in real love. This finding contradicted the script in Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationship Theory, because Scull (2019) established pragmatic love assumption, which indicates that women in transactional relationships perceive blessers as future partners who will marry them and establish love. However, it supports the script of selling sex in sugar relationships (Scull, 2019). For example, Phindile, who has been in transactional relationships for almost two years revealed that:

In most cases, these men do not have a one side dish that satisfies them sexually. You find out that we are many in his life. So, you can't say he loves you or you believe in love.

Moreover, other participants revealed that:

The aim is to get sexual allowance. There is no real love in this relationship. In fact, there is no true love (Nsovo).

Tlharihani, who engaged in transactional relationships since 2016 until today, said:

This is a sexual and monetary exchange between two people. This means that one demands sex while the other engages in sex for gaining.

Tlharihani explained that she engages in sexual intercourse only if she will get monetary gifts in return. However, if she does not gain, she will not engage in sexual intercourse. These statements agree that these participants do not want to form an emotional bond, but focus on securing their bags (i.e., the act of blessees taking advantage of demanding money from their blessers cited in Sinethemba, 2017). To conclude, this sub-theme revisits the Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationship Theory (Scull, 2019). For example, sugar prostitution assumption indicates that blessees sell sex and blessers prefer sexual acts within the framework of sugar prostitution (Scull, 2019). The researcher, however, focused on addressing blessees' experiences with sweet ring prostitution.

6.3.2 Love triangle

Three people having a romantic relationship is referred to as a triangle. This phenomenon is referred to as love triangle because in nature, it takes a triangle shape. As one person takes the top angle (i.e., an individual dating two people), and two partners take bottom angles (i.e., these are the ones dating the same person). To qualify this example, the figure below depicts the nature of love triangle.

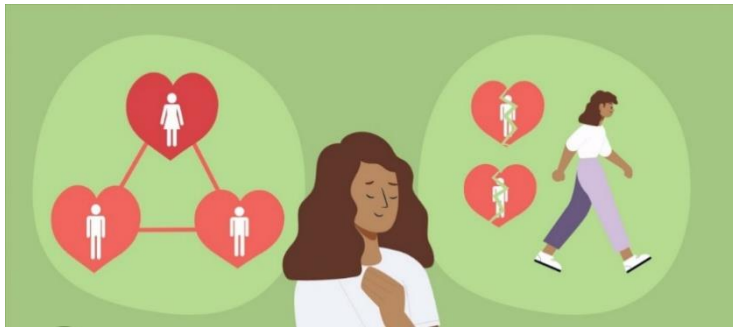


Figure 6.1: The nature of triangle love. Source: Pompey (2022).

Usually, a love triangle involves one individual having romantic relationships with two different individuals who are totally unconscious and sometimes conscious of one another (Willoughby, Carroll & Busby, 2018). In a blesser-blessee relationship, although neither the blessee, nor the wife is aware that they are in a relationship with the same person, the participants demonstrate that it is frequent to learn that their blessers are married. Four female university students who were in a blesser-blessee relationship, showed that blessers are most likely to be found married. For example, Dineo said that:

The blesser is committed to his wife, but still goes outside and looks for a young woman to entertain him. Vunghwadla (Love triangle), I don't know how to say it in English.

The statement above reveals that a love triangle emerges when a blesser commits his feelings and love to his wedded wife and still go out to look for someone young who can entertain him sexually. Phindile similarly revisits the fact that blessers are most likely to engage in a blesser-blessee relationship, while they have left their wives at home. She said, '*Blessers are married men, and they secretly engage in extramarital affairs with young women.*' This assertion fully concurs that a love triangle is a covert arrangement created by a man looking for various romantic interactions with two

women. For example, a blesser can have a wife because he wants a family with an old responsible woman. However, on the other hand, he finds himself a young vibrant woman (i.e., blessee) who will sexually satisfy him while his wife takes care of his family. Dineo asserted that “Blessers have a mindset that young women are still fresh and flexible.”

Due to the widely accepted belief that young women are still sexually vibrant and can sexually fulfil older men (Mampane, 2019), blessers solely participate in blesser-blessee relationships with young girls to satisfy their own sexual desires. Although one person favoured the explanation for why blessers and blessees form a love triangle, another participant claimed that blessers do not marry their blessees because of unfavourable stereotypes. For example, Thando said:

He doesn't see me as someone to have a family with or raise a child with. Hence, he transacts with me and still go back to his wife.

The assertion demonstrates that, even after having intercourse with these young women, blessers were willing to pay. However, they do not consider their blessees to be suitable partners for a lifetime commitment. According to blessers' perception, young women are amusing objects during working holidays. Additionally, this demonstrates how female university students in blesser-blessee relationships are perceived as not being suitable for marriage or at the very least being able to raise a well-behaved child. This is consistent with the creation of a communication strategy for behaviour modification to address the reasons why blessers decline to marry their transactional partners.

A study conducted by Gronlund and Pettie (2014: 2) positively agree with this sub-theme. For example, a love triangle emerged due to the phenomenon of threesome or *you, me, and your wife situation*. Thus, Gronlund and Pettie (2014) further demonstrate that sexual partners have similar behavioural patterns, which entail being beneficial. However, that cannot be done when they are married because in nature, a blesser-blessee relationship is a no strings attached agreement. It is evident that a love triangle occurs because a blesser is committed to his wife and he still engages in a transactional relationship for sexual pleasure. Consequently, Braithwaite and Holt-Lunstad (2017) report that this phenomenon occurs because a third person is added to a relationship (i.e., a blesser dating a blessee while he is married to his wife). To

conclude, a love triangle is a unique relationship dynamic because those who engage in it revealed that they were willing to be together, however, not necessarily for establishing long-term emotional attachment because there was a third person (i.e., the blesser and the blessee). It is evident that a love triangle is complex, especially the fact that the blesser is in a committed relationship with his wife and still finds himself a blessee who is willing to engage in a transactional relationship for monetary gains. Pompey (2022) concurs that love triangle occurs because individuals want different things.

6.4 Motivations for engaging in blesser-blessee relationships

This study also tried to examine the motivations for why students engage in blesser-blessee relationships. A broad theme that came from the data was the culture of materialism that influences the lifestyle of today, where many young women frame people who own cars and wear fashionable clothes as rich and happy. However, those who have no cars or fashionable clothes are seen as poor and not happy. Evidence of this, is the claim by Khomotso who observed that dating a person who drives a car gives a woman social respect. Also, people around her will see that she is not struggling. Thus, this concurs with an observation that relationships between rich older men and young women are embedded with monetary benefits instead of creating emotional ties. For example, Sinethemba (2017) and Ravhuhali et al. (2020) highlight that the motivation of female university students to engage in transactional relationships is because they prioritise money and it changes certain dynamics of love. The ideology of *securing the bag [taking an advantage of demanding money from a blesser], milk the cow [forcing blessers to pay for everything that a blessee wants], and uthando lungumanqoba' [love is victory]* (Sinethemba, 2017) forms financial insurance in the partnership instead of prioritising emotional commitment.

As noted above, the love of money and mutual benefits (sex-for-money) are vital influences in establishing a blesser-blessee relationship. The participants were asked what motivated them to engage in blesser-blessee relationships, and six sub-themes emerged from the analysis of the data provided by the participants:

- Ego of gratification.
- Aura of materialism.
- Peer influence (i.e., wanting to fit in and people's pleaser).

- Framing blesser-blessee relationship as a simple way to make money.
- Family's influence.
- Poverty.

6.4.1 Ego of gratification

Ego of gratification refers to the psychological fulfilment that a person experiences because of their own successes and encouraging comments from others (American Psychological Association, 2020). This phenomenon also connects to the idea of self-esteem, which denotes assurance in one's value or respect for oneself. 15 female university students in this study shared the trait of placing an excessive amount of emphasis on ego fulfilment. For example, the participants revealed that it is important for them to fulfil the desire of looking good and a need to feel superior around fellow students. Although the study conducted by American Psychology Association (2020) argued that ego fulfilment is attained by achieving a personal victory. However, in this study, the participants demonstrated how their desire for ego pleasure is satisfied through transactional relationships and how much emphasis they place on having more money than others. The quotes below came from female university students who engaged in blesser-blessee relationships to satisfy their egos.

Most importantly, the body disposes (appearance). Now, the truth is that you must be picky on your clothes to maintain a certain standard to your blesser and the fact that there is hostility between normal students and blessee girls (varsity girls). You must put up with this front, being defensive and always on point (Thatong).

I can say that the benefits of being financially blessed are the treats, such as him buying you gifts, taking you out for lunch or dinner dates, and vacations. Remember, drip is forever, and if your blesser takes you out and buys such expensive clothes as celebrities that means you are living a life (Tlharhani).

The benefits that I experienced are that I got money, and I lived the life that I always wanted. See, I would buy every fashion that I wished to have (Lutendo).

These participants agree that having a decent appearance boosts their self-esteem and that engaging in a blesser-blessee relationship allows them to select the lifestyle

they wanted to lead without worrying about how much money they are spending to satisfy their egos. The statements fervently concur as a result, stating that the participants engage in blesser-blessee relationships to receive financial presents so they can live a rich lifestyle that makes them feel superior.

Focusing on the statement made by Thatong, the term hostility refers to a negative emotional state characterised by feeling of resentment toward female university students who are in blesser-blessee relationships. Female university students who are not in a blesser-blessee relationship harbour anger toward blessees, which drives blessees to acquire expensive possessions to protect themselves from social shame. For instance, she indicated that *'one must be picky when it comes to what you wear to sustain the standard of being superior around campus'* (Thatong). These words refer to the practice of dressing up to win people's respect. This indicates that these participants believe that dressing well is essential for communicating intelligence and self-worth.

On the other hand, Tlharihani highlights that wearing expensive clothes gives her a sense of respect in public and she prefers maintaining that lifestyle through a blesser-blessee relationship. Moreover, both Tlharihani and Lutendo said *'living the life'*, which speaks of leading a life that is satisfying, meaningful, and joyful since it reflects the importance of materialism. The blesser-blessee relationship entails access to a lavish lifestyle, which induces these young women to pursue old wealthy men to stand out from those who are not in such a relationship. The statements below support the ideology of being beneficial to fulfil the desire of ego gratification.

And when it comes to the lifestyle, it has been so amazing because I can get anything that I want from my blesser. We have agreed that each time we meet he will sponsor my wants (Phindile).

Yoo, there were many benefits because with the money that I got from the guy, I was able to do my hair, nails, and buy expensive clothes (Nsovo).

Given the meaning of the statements above, the researcher found out that these participants are more interested in getting money to buy expensive material and to enhance the quality of being influential among other students. It is evident that they

believe that wearing expensive clothes is important. For example, 'as a student, when you look good it gives you more vibes' (Lutendo). The term "vibes" is often used on social context such as describing positive energy, however, referring to the statement above, the participant meant a respective appearance that an individual earns due to owning the most expensive clothing label. In other words, she expresses her self-worth through clothes. The phenomenon of ego of gratification is a psychological condition. For example, the participants postulated that they bear in mind that looking beautiful makes people around them respect them. It is evident that the motivation of female university students to engage in blesser-blessee relationship is to fulfil their ego of gratification. Another participant said:

Like I don't have to worry about anything, and I have been getting lots of inboxes from different girls wanting to be my friend. I am popular because they see the lifestyle that I live, and they also want it (Phindile).

In this study, the ego of gratification revealed by the participants overtly revolves around the fact of presenting themselves as fashion gurus (people who wear expensive and stylish clothes) to sustain the idea of being rich. As a result, the researcher found out that these participants care much about fashion and receiving compliments. The fact of being popular motivated many of the participants in this study to engage in blesser-blessee relationships.

And I am used to being that varsity girl, being recognised everywhere I go. I used to get compliments all over. I mean people would remind me how beautiful I look, and I had to maintain the standard of appearing good to show that my blesser gives me more money to sponsor the look. Most importantly, you must mind your body weight because your body got you there and it means your body must keep you there (Thatong).

The statement above indicates that once an individual develops an ego, as a result, the individual will focus on various ways to fulfil it. For example, the participants had an ego to look superior through wearing extravagant clothes; therefore, when they fail to meet the requirements, they engage in blesser-blessee relationships to fill the gap between their ego of gratification and the lack of money. Another participant added, 'I

wanted to live a good life hence, I engaged in a blesser-blessee relationship' (Thuso). Moreover, nurse Khaya concurred with this,

My patient said, I didn't have much money to buy expensive things. But because I'm hanging around with my friends who have expensive clothes, and they were receiving more allowances from their partners. So, I decided to get one to sponsor my good lifestyle.

This statement highlights that ego of gratification amongst female university students is popular and they do not have enough money to enhance their ideal type of lifestyle. Therefore, they seek out the most immediate way to satisfy their wants. For instance, nurse Khaya revealed that one of the students was hanging around friends who owned expensive clothes and they were tired of lending her. Therefore, the patient revealed that she felt less of a woman, and she finally decided to engage in a blesser-blessee relationship to develop the ego of gratification as her friends. Additionally, nurse Eunice said:

If you see your friends being involved with blessers and as a girl, you want to have lavish lifestyle that they are leading. You end up being like them and engage in a blesser-blessee relationship.

After the researcher carefully reviewed the statement made by this participant, the researcher found out that these female university students unconsciously revealed the lack of ability to wait so that they can afford or at least save the living allowances sent by their parents to buy their wants. However, they immediately want to satisfy their ego of gratification and their option is to establish sex-for-money with older rich men. A study conducted by American Psychology Association (2020) refers to the phenomenon of waiting as deferred gratification, which entails an ability to wait to obtain something that a person wants or need. As a result, the participants in this study did not practice deferred gratification.

This finding concurs with Sinethemba (2017) who reported that young women aspire to a lifestyle that demonstrates wealth and superiority; hence, they prefer dating older rich men. The sub-theme of ego of gratification in this study echoes Goffman's (1959) theory of self-presentation that highlights the power of acting on-stage and off-stage. Thus, Goffman's theory of self-presentation refers to a phenomenon where people are

acting in a particular manner because they want those that are around them to have a certain perspective about them (i.e., on-stage). However, when they are alone, they tend to act normally (i.e., off-stage, or backstage). Consequently, in this study, the participants vehemently agreed that when they are with other students, they prefer to present themselves as rich and able to afford things, and they do this through wearing expensive clothes received from blesser-blessee relationships.

With reference to the above findings, Gray (2014) indicates that adolescent girls' behaviour is significantly influenced by how they display themselves. This refers to what they wear and look. Gray (2014) contributes to understanding ego of gratification revealed by the participants interviewed. Moreover, the findings of this sub-theme revealed the abnormality possessed by these participants because they showed a phenomenon of obsession in expressing their feminine body shape and beauty through wearing expensive clothes and dating older rich men who can afford to sponsor their obsession. For example, Hawkins et al. (2009) report that women idealised a lifestyle driven by pursuits of trendy clothing and wearing opulent Peruvian or Brazilian hair extensions. Overall, the participants showed negative consequences of ego gratification because they were influenced to engage in blesser-blessee relationships due to the lack of practicing deferred gratification (i.e., ability to wait). Thus, the high value to satisfy the ego of gratification significantly led to the aura of materialism as one of the motivations that influence female university students to engage in blesser-blessee relationships. The researcher then focused on reporting data found under the sub-theme of aura of materialism.

6.4.2 Aura of materialism

The sub-theme of aura of materialism refers to a behaviour and a mindset that places a high value on material possession and material wealth. It is attributed to a belief that accumulating wealth and acquiring material possessions is the key to happiness, success, and fulfilment in life. Individuals who exhibit an aura of materialism tend to prioritise their material possessions over other aspects of their lives such as emotional well-being. They engage in compulsive shopping and hoarding behaviour such as a blesser-blessee relationships to fulfil their desire. Another issue that the researcher found was that these participants who prioritise materialism may experience the

feeling of anxiety and dissatisfaction when they are unable to acquire the material goods that they desire.

In this study, the aura of materialism is associated with engaging in transactional relationships and consumer culture, which promotes the idea that happiness and success can be obtained through the acquisition of material goods. For example, Pimani stated, *'I decided that I want someone who can help me with money and other important stuff that involves money.'* On the other hand, Khomotso and Mahlatse emphasised that having expensive material is a language that they use on the street to explain that they are happy and living in their best era.

The motive for me to engage in transactional relationship is that he was driving a nice car, and he had a nice job. So, imagine dating him meant that that I won't buy cheap things. I don't beg him to take me out for a date. He just gave me anything that I wanted (Khomotso).

He used different cars each time we went out. Last time he invited me to join him on a business trip for four days. Oh, my goodness, he gave me his card and the pin. I did a big shopping trip (Mahlatse).

The statements above highlight that the initial motivation for these participants to engage in blesser-blessee relationships was to access materialistic lifestyle that allows them to own as much as they want to fulfil their happiness. Moreover, the statements above indicate that a blesser-blessee relationship is embedded with the love of materialism. Other participants similarly asserted that a blesser-blessee relationship is embedded with materialistic culture:

It's either you go out and buy things such as food, clothes, iPhones, or go to luxurious hotels and parade in public with your blesser. Bathong, when he approaches you, his attire will tell you that this guy has money. Look at his shoes first, then look at his car, then you will know. Shoes don't lie, even if he is walking, aah, well, you will know that he is a rich guy (Thando).

A follow-up question that the researcher asked this participant was how do you know that the guy you want to transact with is rich? Thus, the participant above indicated that when an individual is a materialistic person, it will be easy to identify if the blesser

is wearing expensive clothes because they both compliment their desire of owning expensive material. For example, she emphasised that a materialistic person always googles the most recent clothing labels and stylish brands. Reference was made to when she postulated that '*trust the shoe game*' (Thando). Additionally, she emphasised that the love language that female university students understand in a blesser-blessee relationship is to sustain their desire of owning expensive materials such as clothes or electronic gadgets. It is evident young women in this study engaged in transactional relationship focusing on materialistic benefits and this changed the dynamic of the relationship for love. For example:

The reason why I started having a blesser is because I grew up loving things, and things got worse when I started going to university because I met friends who had expensive clothes and phones (Phindile).

The statement above concurs that the aura of materialism amongst female university students has a dominant role. This is because the participant revealed that the behaviour of loving things or material such as expensive clothes exacerbated when she formed friendships with people who had the similar desire. This revisits the fact that the aura of materialism changes certain dynamics of love. For example, one of the participants directly emphasised that she engaged in a blesser-blessee relationship for materialistic gains. Valencia said:

A blesser is not really committed but he just wants to show off his wealth and spend it on everyone who seems stranded. The time I dated this guy, nails (manicure or pedicure) were not popular. So, I just felt so special because he would offer to take me and pay for my nails. Also, if I can tell him that I saw certain fashion, he would go and buy. Most interesting thing is that he wouldn't buy the same clothing brand, but he would buy something expensive than what I asked for.

The statement above revolves around an ideology of getting expensive materials to feel happy and successful among her peers. As a result, the expectation of these participants in blesser-blessee relationships is that the relationship should give them the worth of material than the effort they are putting. For example, no participant mentioned anything related to loving the blesser. However, their primary objective to

be with blessers is to access expensive materials and other luxurious things that add to their happiness. This sub-theme correlates favourably with the literature. For example, a study conducted by Ravhuhali et al. (2020) emphasised that there is prevalence of material dissatisfaction among university students; hence, they engage in blesser-blessee relationships to enhance their materialistic desire. The researcher asserts that the struggle of meeting the requirements such as who is rich through the possession of extravagant material is the foundation of transactional relationships in this study. Moreover, material incidents such as owning luxurious clothes, slay at your best outfit (i.e., who is wearing most beautiful and expensive clothes amongst the peers) and having financial provider (blesser) to sponsor all one's wants are big evidence to prove why female university students date older rich men. Thus, the findings from Khomotso, Nsovo, and Mahlatse in this study contradicts the study carried out by Sprague et al. (2021), which indicated that young women engage in blesser-blessee relationships because they are seeking out love. The study further reported that old rich men are viewed as loving and caring. However, in this study, the participants were not interested in such neither did they mention that their blessers were loving and caring other than transacting whenever is beneficial. It is evident that being beneficial is an initial aim of establishing a blesser-blessee relationship. For example:

You know as a blessee when I say I want to do my hair. He just send R5000.00 just for plaiting my hair. It is like living a life. You see some shoes and I be like; I want those shoes. I will call him and explain my wants to him. He would do exactly as I asked him (Dineo).

This statement revisits the words said by Khomotso. Both participants believe that a blesser or a transactional partner should always provide monetary gifts to keep the blessee motivated to remain in the relationship. A study conducted by Orenstein (2016:1) asserts to this finding. For example, Orenstein's (2016) study indicates that '*many of these relationships exist on a spectrum of materialistic obligation*' rather than a single type of a relationship that can be easily assessed with binary measure. As a result, this study reveals that the participants initially focus on gaining materialistic wealth; hence, they decide to establish the relationship.

Understanding the aura of materialism in a blesser-blessee relationship was made clear when 13 of the participants indicated how their appearance mattered most because other students tend to respect them based on what they wear or own. This statement correlates favourably with the literature because it reveals the phenomenon of slay queen as a form of transactional relationship. For example, Hawkins et al. (2009, in Omondi & Pamela, 2020) emphasised that young women idealised a lifestyle that is driven by pursuits of trendy clothing, riding expensive cars, and wearing opulent Peruvian hair extensions. During the in-depth interviews, the researcher found common behaviour amongst 15 participants. For example, almost all the participants (female university students in blesser-blessee relationships except health practitioners) were wearing extravagant clothing brands, applied make-up, and had lavish hairstyle in a way that it complimented with what they were saying concerning the phenomenon of aura of materialism.

Moreover, the researcher realised that all the participants were likely to highlight that wearing extravagant clothes can be an advantage to entice old men for transaction. For example, Omondi and Pamela (2020) indicated that one will know that she is a 'slay queen' when she forces her hips on you. This argument claims that young women use their bodies as currency to access lavish lifestyle in transactional relationship. As a result, Phindile concurs with this statement. She said that "It is important to reveal her nice body to complement her feminine side."

It is evident that the sub-theme of the aura of materialism reveals that female university students in blesser-blessee relationships felt that it is important to base their sense of well-being, self-identity, and social stand on material possession. As a result, participants in this study proved that fashion is positively identified with middle class and somehow used to label the importance of a person. Giving an overview of this sub-theme, the researcher found out that the ego of gratification played a role in influencing the aura of materialism because most of the participants unconsciously revealed obsessive behaviour in terms of owning expensive clothes. For example, they had more dependence on external validation or contribution. This means that these participants consistently depend on the approval of others (i.e., being complimented or at least someone commenting on how their clothes are expensive so that they can feel good). Additionally, these participants showed a high level of

economic dependence toward their blessers. Most, if not all, participants claimed that they did not engage in blesser-blessee relationships with a mere person, but they preferred a person who is financially stable and not stingy. This means that the blesser must be willing to pay for everything that they pick without minding the costs of the material.

Another causal factor of valuing materialism among these participants is that Limpopo Province is a rural area with a high rate of poverty. For example, many people are less recognised unless the individual uses social handles to post things that show that she comes from a rich family. Hence, many participants revealed that the consumption of expensive accessories and beauty goods is crucial to defining their self-worth. Be that as it may, the negative effect of the aura of materialism results in an inflated sense. For instance, two participants showed arrogance and entitlement because they believed that owning expensive material makes them better than other students who do not afford to buy such expensive materials. For example, Khomotso and Thatong similarly revealed that “If you are wearing expensive clothes, people must notice and give you respect to show that you are not like them.” Thus, this is evident that they boast much of their materialistic possession, and they lack empathy for others.

The researcher realised that to fulfil their realistic desire, these participants engage in risky behaviour such as dating old rich men for money who will financially sponsor their materialistic goal. As a result, these issues were thoroughly discussed under the theme of problems that arise from blesser-blessee relationships. The researcher saw a need to develop a BCC plan because this phenomenon of the aura of materialism is a mindset that negatively influences female university students to engage in blesser-blessee relationships to enhance their desire to own expensive material.

6.4.3 Wanting to fit in (peer pressure)

Peer pressure refers to a phenomenon of the influence exerted by one’s peers to conform to their attributes, behaviour, and beliefs. Thus, it can be both positive and negative as peers have an ability to encourage each other to adopt a particular behaviour. In this study, most of the participants revealed that peer pressure played a vital role in motivating them to engage in blesser-blessee relationships. The researcher identified two causal factors: peer pressure and being a people’s pleaser.

The participants showed that the causes are intentional and have a significant impact on their decision-making. For example, the term 'wanting to fit in' encompasses the desire to be accepted by a particular group and conform to the attitudes that make an individual comfortable around peers. The response from those involved was often about fitting in to having luxurious material like their peers. For example,

What motivated me to be in that blessed relationship? I can say, was an influence from my peers you know. When your friends do something, and you don't do it, you feel bad and feel like you are left behind, you see? So, yes, I was influenced because I felt like what I was doing was wrong and what they were doing was good because they were benefiting, or should I say enjoying the benefits? That pressure, that influence from peers (Nsovo).

They would say, I didn't want to be involved with an old man, but my friends were involved with the older rich men. They kept on calling me names (shaming). So, I wanted to fit in, for example, they kept on saying we can't borrow your clothes every day. You know how we get these expensive things, and you have the body. So, join us (Nurse Khaya).

So, for them to continue studying and to continue fitting in into society or into peer group. They engage in a blesser-blessee relationship. It's just influence and peer pressure from other people (Nurse Caroline).

The statements explain the peer pressure that the participants experienced and the power of wanting to fit in. As a result, these statements show the commonality of young women wanting to fit in and accessing a luxurious lifestyle and when they find out that they cannot afford to purchase these expensive clothes, they likely engage in blesser-blessee relationships to transact and conform to the behaviour of living a luxurious lifestyle. Another thing, these participants revealed that all the influence that they experienced came from people who were already in transactional relationships. It is evident that tertiary education level is a context that leads to the prevalence of blesser-blessee relationships (Masvawure, 2010), because many female university students carry the ideology of wanting to appear rich and beautiful. A reference is made to how Lutendo said that *'Looking good gives vibes around campus.'*

The statement indicates that female university students engage in blesser-blessee relationships due to peer pressure (i.e., wanting to fit in to a popular group of peers). This reveals that students who get into university and see other students living a luxurious lifestyle end up wanting to live the same lifestyle. For example, Phindile said that “she met friends who were living lavish lifestyle and she engaged in blesser-blessee relationship to access the life that she wanted.” This statement echoes the idea of female university students adopting the phenomenon of being people’s pleasers. The phenomenon of people’s pleasers refers to an individual who has a strong desire to make others happy at the expense of her or his own needs and desire. As a result, four participants in this study revealed that they struggled to assert themselves (i.e., not engage in blesser-blessee relationship) because they feared disappointing their peers. For example, Khomotso revealed that every Friday, her friends went out for a shopping spree and shopping (this is a club next to University of Limpopo) and they hooked up with blessers who sponsor them to live a lavish lifestyle such as wearing expensive clothes and drinking expensive drinks. Therefore, she would not say no to this phenomenon because friends would stop going hanging up with her. It is evident that the behaviour of people’s pleasers can become problematic. For example, this participant showed that she was obligated to remain in transactional relationship to keep her friends.

In the context of conforming to the phenomenon of a people’s pleaser, another participant highlighted that engaging in a blesser-blessee relationship as a people’s pleaser can be harmful both physically and emotionally. This participant said that *‘I felt compelled to engage in a blesser-blessee relationship just to fulfil the desire of my friends who believed in looking beautiful as a way to gain social respect’* (Dineo).

This participant shows that although she did not initially plan to engage in a blesser-blessee relationship, she found herself involved with a blesser to conform to her friend’s materialistic goal. Friends are one of the reasons why many young women succumb to blesser-blessee relationships. For example, *“If your closest friends have something expensive as an individual, you often see a need to own similar brand and when you later realise that you cannot afford, it is then you decide to engage in blesser-blessee relationship to access money immediately after transaction”* (Khomotso).

The literature forms the backbone of this finding (sub-theme). A reference is made to how the literature described the form of transactional sex as the influencer phenomenon. For example, a study carried out by Roberts et al. (2013) indicates that an influencer refers to a phenomenon where young women frequently brag about their lavish lifestyles on their social media. This vehemently supports that some influencers flaunt their lavish lifestyle in a way that female university students' resort to a blesser-lessee relationship to make money and live a lavish lifestyle like their peers (influencers). Ntsieni (2017) confirmed that peer pressure plays a role in blesser-lessee relationship prevalence, especially in places like Limpopo because many students want to live lavish lifestyles and create a sense of belonging to middle class. Hence, there are many cases of female university students engaging in a blesser-lessee relationship because of peer pressure.

6.4.4 Framing a blesser-lessee relationship as a simple way to make money (i.e., free will of engaging in a blesser-lessee relationship)

A blesser-lessee relationship can certainly involve the exchanging of money and luxurious lifestyle, or sex-for-money. Participants in this study solely framed a blesser-lessee relationship as a simple way to make money. As a result, the participants showed that this phenomenon involves much more than just the exchange of extravagant materials or goods, they negotiate terms and the expectations. For example, a sugar relationship can involve a paid date. This mean that a blesser pays certain amount for lessee's companionship. Overall, while money can be an important factor in a blesser-lessee relationship, the participants showed free will to engaging in this phenomenon. Dikeledi said:

To me, I just told myself that I am pushing my life with him. I was applying for jobs, but I was disadvantaged. However, he wanted a child, but I didn't agree to fall pregnant because of our age gap and I was not willing to settle with him. I hated the fact that if I asked for R500.00, he would send the exact amount. So, I had to do something so that my kid and siblings can have something.

The statement above highlights three contributing factors to the phenomenon of framing a blesser-lessee relationship as a simple way to make money. For example, she explained that she was '*pushing life*' with the blesser. These words mean that this

individual engages in transactional relationship prioritising the fact of benefiting and ignore the dynamics of natural relationship such as emotional commitment and wanting to have children for her blesser. Secondly, the statement highlights that the participant was not willing to settle. Since she was suspending her emotional ties whilst engaging in a transactional relationship, the phrase “not settle” in this context alludes to this phenomenon. In other words, this female university student can actively engage in sexual activity with the blesser while fully aware that it is just sex for money and that she will feel anything special. It is therefore obvious that this participant freely entered a blesser-lessee relationship with the philosophy of presenting this phenomenon as the most straightforward way to fight poverty and provide for her child and siblings.

Moreover, two participants showed the similarity of framing a blesser-lessee relationship as the easiest form of making money. For example, ‘*look, I am a varsity student okay; I must live on a certain budget*’ (Dineo). On the other hand, Thatong said:

I was not working hard for the benefits that I was getting. I just get into the event (VIP section), and I get access to luxury lifestyle. So, it is not cute to work hard. For example, when you study as a student, you just want to get your degree and get a job. But, in blesser-lessee relationship you just hook up with someone who has money.

These participants emphasise the traits of being reliant on money and being unwilling to put in a lot of effort since they have already benefited from the rewards of the blesser-lessee relationship. Most of the participants bravely showed confidence that they engaged in this phenomenon with the calculative mentality of being advantageous rather than creating meaningful relationships such as emotional closeness in the context of the blesser-lessee relationship as a straightforward approach to make money. For example, Phindile said that ‘*So, dating the blesser was the only option because he was paying all of my wants, and I sometimes took myself out with his money.*’ Moreover, two participants supported her motivation to engage in a blesser-lessee relationship.

I got into this situation just because I wanted to benefit. My background is good. I am from a family where my parents are employed and if I ask for something they can do it for me (Nsovo).

My motivation to engage in blesser-blessee relationship, I wanted to have access to living a soft life. I wanted to gain more things because being at a university you must look good and have a life. So, I can't say my background contributed because my parents are working' (Lutendo).

The participants above firmly showed their willingness to engage in a blesser-blessee relationship, especially Nsovo and Lutendo. These participants are evidence of the ideology of framing this phenomenon as the easy way to make money. Thus, they both revealed that their parents are working but their ambition of having more made them engage in a blesser-blessee relationship. Moreover, although they were not materially lacking because they have working parents, they still used the money from blessers to buy food just because they wanted more than what they already had. Referring to the statement said by Phindile, it differs from Nsovo and Lutendo. Nevertheless, it also serves as the foundation for pursuing a blesser-blessee relationship for financial advantage. She also emphasised the idea that entering in transactional relationships is the only alternative available. This expression frequently acknowledges the fact that female university students choose to enter a blesser-blessee relationship even when they are not in need of money. Their goal is to improve what they currently possess.

The study's participants said that the phenomenon of a blesser-blessee relationship provided them with a chance to fulfil a highly valued desire to live a luxurious lifestyle without having to put in a lot of effort. Another crucial aspect is that the participants had a value for dealing with elderly wealthy men who are not stingy and are eager to comply with their demands. For example:

The convenience of being given gifts and money is very important. He was so stable to the level that I was like here, I will have a nice life. So, love doesn't matter, as long I benefit. Transacting with these guys is kind of nice, you just receive money whenever you want it. This is because these guys are willing to be entertained and as a blessee you want to benefit. It is a win-win situation (Dineo).

According to the statement, none of these female university students in blesser-blessee established real love and emotional bond with their blessers. They do, however, have their ideal man in mind, who is wealthy and unwilling to develop

emotional closeness. For instance, they choose wealthy guys so that they can have access to pricey clothing brands like Gucci or Louis Vuitton. They lack the ability to bear disappointment every time they want to purchase a certain item. They favour men who are financially secured. All participants underlined that a blesser should not be stingy and should also be prepared to supply when needed. Thando said that '*In blesser-blessee relationship, you agree to hook up not with everyone but with one good filthy rich guy.*' The statement reveals the willingness and dedication of picking the ideal man that qualifies to be a blesser. Additionally, during the individual in-depth interview, this participant revealed that '*dating a broke man is overrated.*' This indicates that since her primary reason for transacting is to gain the benefits, she does not prefer dating or engaging in a blesser-blessee relationship with men who lack the capacity to fulfil her requests. Not every man meets the requirements to be a blesser, and these participants do not build relationships with any males for the purpose of conducting transactions. Before agreeing to date someone, they first determine whether they are financially stable.

6.4.5 Family influence

The rich cultural past of Limpopo, where numerous traditional communities still maintain their unique religious beliefs that a family has an influence on individual's relationship, played a vital role in influencing three participants who engaged in a blesser-blessee relationship in this study. For instance, there is a strong extended family system in the province, and family members are very important to the decision-making process. This system is strongly embedded in the society and has an impact on every part of life, including the blesser-blessee relationship that female university students engage in. To qualify this argument, the literature favourably concurs that a blesser-blessee relationship occurs because parents often encourage girls to form these relationships that could eventually lead to wealthy marriage (Oyediran, Odutolu & Atobatele, 2011).

Participants in this study disclosed that their extended family members, including cousins, aunts, and other relatives, engage in transactional relationships. Therefore, three female university students in this study were encouraged by their family members to establish a blesser-blessee relationship to access luxurious lifestyle. Additionally, they demonstrated how these family members gave them peace of mind

by demonstrating how a transactional relationship secures a luxurious lifestyle. For example, two participants showed that their family members negotiated for them to engage in this phenomenon. *'They used to tell me about being well-taken care of by a rich man. So, my cousins introduced me to a blesser'* (Thatong). The other one said that *'they have always wanted girls in our family to live soft life. So, we would go to functions where blesser meet young girls who want to hook up'* (Phindile). Frequently, the statements show how family inspired them to form a blesser-blessee relationship. Thus, the idea that one must get into a transactional relationship with elderly, wealthy man to access a luxurious lifestyle is ingrained by family's influence in this study.

It is evident that three participants picked up their transactional behaviour from their extended families. Another participant claimed that she entered a blesser-blessee relationship because she was worried her family would reprimand her for dating poor men. Khomotso said that:

The family also gave me motivation to engage in transactional relationships because they would always advise me to date someone who is filthy rich, and he should be able to becha [meaning provide money]. So, I said, okay, that is what my family wants. Then I will do it. Where I come from old people practice mavuso. There is a place where old people meet to transact every Monday, we call it muhulu Monday. So, transacting is normal where I come from.

The statement "date someone who is filthy rich" refers to the actions of family members who believe that a man should provide for a woman and that, if he does not, it means that he does not love her. Another significant implication of the assertion is that female university students who originate from families that value materialistic culture find it simple to get into a blesser-blessee relationship to uphold the expectations of the family values. The participants in this study therefore believed that this phenomenon originates in the household. This means that they normalised this phenomenon before they could be admitted to the university. Masvawure (2010) suggests that the university influences female students' decision to engage in a transactional relationship, but this study goes against the grain of that research because participants said their families were important in helping them establish blesser-blessee relationship. Family members have the final word on whether a blesser-blessee

relationship is appropriate or not, therefore, this is why. For example, Nsovo said, *'My cousins used to ask me what I gain from my relationship so, that they can accept him as my partner.'*

According to the statement, this participant was observed to see if she was getting more out of the relationship than she was putting into it, so the cousins would have a good reason to recognise the partner. These three participants came from various locations but shared a similarity of family influence in engaging in blesser-blessee relationship, the researcher discovered that amongst these three participants, families have a greater effect on such partnerships. During a follow-up interview, for instance, Khomotso revealed that her family was aware of transactional relationships because they also engage on *muhulu Monday (mavuso)*.

This demonstrates that transactional relationships are openly practiced in some parts of Limpopo, where young females are exposed to the phenomenon. Later, they develop into adopting the attitude because it is acceptable in their family. It is more crucial to notice that some families do not forbid young people from dating wealthy older men if they can support them, as the family can criticise a woman for dating a guy who cannot provide for her. For example, Dikeledi said that *'I remember the blesser moved in to stay with my family because we needed his money.'* It is evident that when a man provides, the family acknowledges the relationship to an extent of welcoming the man as a member. This is because Limpopo households practice Ubuntu, which is referred to as communalism (Mhlongo, 2019). Therefore, if the man provides for the family, he is viewed a real man among men.

A study conducted by Thobejane et al. (2019) revealed that family members may not even be aware that these young girls date old rich men, since they keep it a secret. Although Thobejane et al. (2019) claimed that the family has less or do not have influence in motivating young women to engage in blesser-blessee relationship, this study contradicts it because it found out that most of the participants engaged in blesser-blessee relationship because their family members motivated them to do so. It is evident that not all families disagree or perceive a blesser-blessee relationship as bad behaviour. Consequently, some initially motivate their children to engage in a transactional relationship to benefit because they value materialistic desire. for example, Dikeledi revealed that her first blesser was rich and famous, therefore, he

moved in to stay with her family and that positively impacted her family's financial state because the blesser used to do good things or provide for the family. It is evident that if the family gains, they will make everything possible for their child to remain in a blesser-blessee relationship for the benefits. Thus, this echoes Mampane's (2019) argument, which emphasised that a blesser must make economic provisions for a blessee. Although the scholar did not relate it to family's influence, however, it has relevance to the context of family members motivating young women to engage in a blesser-blessee relationship.

To conclude, a study conducted by Mhlongo (2019) supports this finding because it indicates that the family plays a role in influencing young women to engage in a blesser-blessee relationship to elevate the family's standard of living. This means that young women are seen as a bait to achieve families' desire to own luxurious material through a blesser-blessee relationship. On the other hand, Ott, Bärnighausen, Tanser, Lurie and Newell (2011) claim that family influences these young women to date rich men so that they can economically support the family and the extended members. This is what Braithwaite and Holt-Lunstad (2017) referred as family indolence because family members embrace a blesser-blessee relationship among young women knowing very well that when they are blessed (i.e., given money and luxurious material), they will share with the family.

6.4.6 Poverty and its contestation

This sub-theme is underpinned by evidence from research literature on this theme and by the health practitioners interviewed in this study. In the literature, various scholars such as Mampane (2019), Ntsieni (2017), Sinethemba (2017), and Thobejane et al. (2019) indicated that the initial motivation for these young women to engage in a transactional relationship is because they are exposed to harsh economic backgrounds (i.e., poverty). This means that they engage in blesser-blessee relationships to sustain their economic needs such as food, shelter, and paying fees (Sinethemba, 2017). It is evident that these scholars claim that a blesser-blessee relationship occurs because of poverty in South Africa.

The health practitioners interviewed in this study supported the claim of poverty as a motivation for female university students to establish blesser-blessee relationship. It is evident that these participants carry the knowledge of perceiving Limpopo as a

province stricken by poverty, and many female university students come from underprivileged backgrounds; hence, there is the prevalence of blesser-blessee relationships. For example,

What I have experienced here is that the reason they find themselves, e.g., their background or financial situation. That is, when they find themselves in this position where they need money urgently to pay for their fees and rent and they end up dating blessters (Nurse Khaya).

The statement claims that these female university students experience poverty in such a way that they fail to pay their fees, accommodation, and food, so they decide to establish a blesser-blessee relationship to sustain their economic needs as students. Another health practitioner concurred as she highlighted that many female university students find themselves stranded (i.e., having no option) to a point where they succumb to a blesser-blessee relationship not because they want to, but they choose survival. Nurse Caroline said:

As an African child, most of them are coming from the under-privileged family, where they are hidden by lots of poverty and the social economic status that is not up to standard. For example, maybe their parents fail to send them living allowances and they fail to pay rent and buy food. So, when they realise that they can't cope with poverty in university they engage with a blesser to sustain their living.

This statement reveals that their economic sufferings motivate young women to engage in a blesser-blessee relationship with older rich men who can take care of their economic needs such as paying rent and buying food. Moreover, the third health practitioner stated that poverty influences female university students to engage in long-term transactional relationships to sponsor their living conditions in the university. For example:

The motivation behind this phenomenon, I think in most cases it could be their background. If you come from a poor family where maybe they cannot afford to pay for your rent, and maybe give you money to buy food and academic accessories. Then the only plan is to date someone who can sponsor you financially (Nurse Eunice).

Although the statement above asserts that poverty is a motivation for female university students to engage in blesser-blessee relationships, it is somehow biased because the participant used her own knowledge instead of describing the blessee's experience when they came for consultation. Additionally, it is evident that this participant perceives female university students as poor and lacking; hence, they succumb to a blesser-blessee relationship to escape poverty. The researcher found out that although health practitioners assumed poverty as one of the motivations for female university students to engage in a blesser-blessee relationship, it is not the reason cited by many of the student participants in this study. Only one participant concurred that she engaged in a transactional relationship with an old rich man due to poverty. The participant said:

Yes, I was an orphan, and we were depending on a child's grant. My background was forcing me to engage in a blesser-blessee relationship because after I have completed my degree and registered for honours, I was still unemployed. So, I had to find a way to provide for my family, especially my siblings (Dikeledi).

In the context of poverty, this statement indicates that this participant was obligated to engage in this type of a relationship so that a blesser could provide for her since her parents died. However, other fourteen participants contradicted the assumption of poverty as a motivating factor. These participants revealed that their poor background had nothing to do with their desire to engage in a blesser-blessee relationship. For example, *'I engaged in blesser-blessee relationship because where I come from there is muhulu Monday and I kind of liked to groove a lot'* (Khomotso). This statement clearly shows that poverty is not always the cause of establishing a transactional relationship. Consequently, this participant had her own reasons to engage in this phenomenon.

Moreover, this statement contradicts the statements postulated by health practitioners and previous scholars that place poverty as central to engaging in blesser-blessee affairs. For example, Thando said that *'For female university students, money will never be enough, and they engage in blesser-blessee relationship to get more money not because they are poor.'* Moreover, this participant further emphasised that not all blessees come from a poor family, yet they still decide to stay in transactional

relationships. This participant shows that engaging in a blesser-blessee relationship does not mean that an individual is poor, however, she has her own decision that makes her develop a desire to transact with an old rich man. This echoes Thatong statement. This participant said that '*I just wanted to benefit and have more money.*' It is evident that for these two participants, Thando and Thatong, poverty was not the reason to engage in a transactional relationship. They just wanted to benefit from their blessers. To support the phenomenon of engaging in transactional relationship not because of poverty, the statements below came from female university students in a blesser-blessee relationship and disagreed that poverty motivated them to engage in a blesser-blessee relationship.

I come from a very normal background. We are not being, if I may say, we afford to survive. The problem is that my parents do not want to buy me everything that I want. They would tell me to wait for a little while before they can buy me things such as iPhones or glue less hair extension (Phindile).

My background had no influence. Honestly, I wanted more because my parents were able to send me money and I would still go and have a transactional partner. My background is good, I am from a family where both my parents are employed and if I ask for something, they can do it for me (Nsovo).

I come from a family where I can say we afford our needs but not that rich. Both of my parents are working. So, we do not really suffer if I may say (Lutendo).

The statements above show that the findings of this sub-theme contradict some research literature that locates poverty as central to young girls engaging in blesser-blessee relationships. For example, a study conducted by Sinethemba (2017) emphasises that poverty influences young women to engage in blesser-blessee relationships for survival. Similarly, Frieslaar (2019) indicates that young women living in poverty need financial assistance to make a living, therefore, transactional relationships pave a way for them to access financial security. Thus, Frieslaar (2019) and Sinethemba (2017) echo Gbaguidi and Koumagnon (2018) who believe that a blesser-blessee relationship emerged due to poverty in South Africa. Thus, these

participants did not establish a blesser-lessee relationship due to poverty but chose to engage in a blesser-lessee relationship to fulfil their personal desire. This is because the statements above indicate that their parents are working, and they get living allowances despite the monthly allowance from their bursaries and transactional partners. This shows that these participants are consumed by wanting to more and feel a need to engage with older rich men to add money to their living allowances. It is evident that the literature neglected to explore the experiences of female university students in blesser-lessee relationship; hence, it broadly claims that poverty leads to blesser-lessee prevalence. Moreover, none of the participants in this study revealed that they were experiencing financial exclusion, lack of food, and failing to pay for accommodation; hence, they transacted with older rich men. However, they showed more interest in materialism and traveling as a significant influence in engaging in this phenomenon. To conclude, female university students showed that poverty is not the cause of engaging in transactional relationships. For example, Omphulusa said that *'After he replaced me with another girl, I decided not to continue dating older rich men.'* Thus, if this participant engaged in blesser-lessee relationship for survival, she should have continued with another blesser who would provide for her, but because she was not poor, she decided not to continue with this phenomenon.

6.5 Hidden dynamics of a blesser-lessee relationship

The term hidden dynamic refers to the underlying, often unnoticed mechanisms that drive the behaviour of a blesser-lessee relationship. These dynamics may not be immediately apparent and can thus be difficult to observe. However, these hidden dynamics play a crucial role in shaping the behaviour of a blesser and the lessee in a transactional relationship. During the individual in-depth interviews, participants highlighted various hidden dynamics in a blesser-lessee relationship, and it was evident that society was not aware of these dynamics. Data from the interviews revealed themes that described these hidden dynamics that were categorised into three sub-themes:

- Sex as currency to access lavish lifestyle.
- Age limit.
- Economic entitlement.

6.5.1 Sex as currency to access lavish lifestyle

The term romantic relationship refers to a close connection between two people, especially one involving romantic and sexual feeling (Braithwaite & Holt-Lunstad, 2017). In a clear perspective, this relationship includes traditional ways of doing things such as emotional ties, sexual intimacy, and affection. As a result, in this form of a relationship, sex is a significant part of being romantic and establishing an emotional bond. Furthermore, sexual intimacy becomes a way to express love, affection, and desire for one another. It can also be a way to deepen emotional and physical intimacy and to create a stronger bond.

However, in the context of a blesser-blessee relationship, things are different from a traditional romantic relationship because this phenomenon is based on a reciprocal exchange where both partners benefit. Given the nature of a transactional relationship, sex is treated as currency, and it does not carry significant meaning such as creating an emotional bond or expression of love. Thus, it is a phenomenon where sex is seen as a commodity that can be bought and sold for one to gain monetary benefits. The participants in this study revealed that 'sex as currency' is underpinned by a cultural perspective of individuals, especially women where they are expected to exchange sexual favours for something that they want. A reference is made on Khomotso's statement:

But a blesser is someone that gives you material things and money in exchange of sex. Aah, same as a blessee, you just work as you give him sex. Obvious, the only thing that a blesser demands is sex. It is like work because he demands sex and calls you whenever he wants sex I wanted money, so in transactional sex you benefit not just anything but things such as iPhones, clothes, traveling to good places, and other exciting stuff.

The statement above highlights that in a blesser-blessee relationship, the blesser demands sex before he can financially provide to a blessee's needs. It is evident that in the context of transacting, partners have sex and feelings are suspended. In other words, sex is traded for material gains, not to form an emotional bond like in a traditional relationship. Consequently, since sex is traded for one to access the

benefits, this means that if a lessee fails to provide sexual pleasure to the blesser, the transaction (i.e., monetary gain) will not take place. Omphulusa said:

The relationship did not last long because I engaged in a blesser-lessee relationship during my first year, and I was still a virgin. So, it ended immediately because I had to have sex with the blesser and I was not yet ready, I refused. Then, he decided to replace me.

It is evident that when the lessees choose material gain such as money, clothes, and cell phones, blesser demand sexual pleasures as part of the transaction. Moreover, this participant highlights that in the absence of sex, a lessee cannot access a luxurious lifestyle because the blesser does not just spend money over someone who does not provide what he wants. One can agree that this is related to body commodification (Cwynar-Horta, 2016), because these young women use their bodies to get what they want. As a result, body commodification refers to the practice of treating the human body as an object that can be bought or sold (Mpofu, 2021). Therefore, one of the most controversial aspects of body commodification in blesser-lessee relationships is treating sex as currency. The statement below asserts the context of body commodification.

You know how we get them, and you have the body. So, why can't you join us? Why can't you do what we do? So, she plans to use her body to access lavish lifestyle (Nurse Khaya).

This participant indicates that being in a blesser-lessee relationship means that the young woman sells her body to access monetary gains. Thus, this reveals that the hidden dynamic lies on how these young women commodify their bodies to blesser. This echoes the statement made by Omphulusa, who said that '*it always leads to sex to get what I want or need.*' This statement refers to the phenomenon of trading sex because every monetary gift comes after sex. In other words, blesser do not give lessees money unless they use their bodies to entice them in spending any amount that the lessee asked for. Consequently, the participants show that sex is important in a blesser-lessee relationship, and it has no significant meaning like it is in other relationships excluding transactional relationship. For example:

Obviously, we are at the hotel, and we are sharing a room. So, 1+1=2. I mean, we had sex. That is where I learned that indoda, he will give you everything if you sexually satisfy him (Mahlatse).

In a context of treating sex as currency to access a lavish lifestyle, Mahlatse reveals that blessers do not just spend their money on everyone, as a blessee, one needs to go beyond handing their body but do sexual activities that will thoroughly lead the blesser to see them as worthy of getting monetary gains. For example, during the individual in-depth interview with Dikeledi, the participant emphasised that her daily sexual performance played a crucial role in receiving a reasonable amount from her blesser. Thus, this means that the girl must perform exceedingly well to the satisfaction of the blesser during sexual encounters. Evidently, a blesser-blessee relationship is embedded with body commodification because the utterance made by Dikeledi clearly shows that if one wants to benefit, she must use her body.

Trading sex in a transactional relationship is identified as important because Phindile and Thatong indicated that their bodies helped them to remain blessed in a relationship. For instance, *'I bring my body to the table, and I expect him to provide for me after every sexual encounter'* (Thatong). Moreover, Phindile said *'both parties are getting something out of that sex.'*

The statements made by these two participants actively show that female university students in this study present their bodies willingly because they know that there are benefits after every sexual encounter with a blesser. Moreover, it shows that body commodification is not a problem to them as long they get monetary benefits in return. However, Phindile indicated that sex paved a way for both transactional partners in the context of gaining. This reveals that despite the nature of the benefits, both transactional partners are equal because at the end of the day, they receive benefits according to their expectations. For example, a blesser gets sexual satisfaction and on the other hand, the blessee does not care about the sex, but only focuses on benefitting material things. The researcher found out that sex in blesser-blessee relationships does not carry significant meaning such as in traditional relationships. For example, having sex means that the couple is establishing an emotional bond, and other important romantic aspects in a traditional relationship.

Given the nature of a blesser-blessee relationship, blessees are obligated to use their bodies as a token to access lavish lifestyle. This indicates that for one to be considered blessed, the person has to offer her body as a sacrifice to get whatever she wants. The statement below shows the disadvantage of treating sex as currency to lavish lifestyle.

The challenge is that after being blessed, you have to offer your blesser sex to say thank you for providing. Thus, sex sustains the relationship and his provision to all your needs (Thuso).

The statement above reveals the shortcoming of body commodification or sex as currency to access a lavish lifestyle because this phenomenon negatively impacts the lives of the blessee due to the likes of money. Moreover, women experience menstruation cycles every month, which means during that period, they are not worthy to be blessed because they cannot have sex with their blessers and that leads them to be financially unstable because blessers cannot provide money without sexual pleasure. For example, Nurse Eunice showed that the benefits occur after a sexual encounter. She said that:

So, yes, it occurs after sex. The guy must give you money because you guys were having a sexual encounter.

Revisiting the phenomenon of body commodification, the health practitioner highlights that a blesser pays everything after sex. This refers to a situation where a female university student in blesser-blessee relationship is tamed to believe that there is no gain without sex. In other words, it is worthy for female university students in transactional relationships to use their bodies to gain any form of monetary gift. This finding contradicts some research literature. Mampane (2019) disagrees that a blesser-blessee relationship is a form of direct prostitution. Mampane (2019) views transactional relationships as indirect prostitution because these young women have a choice of whom to transact with. However, nine participants revealed that they treated sex as currency to access lavish lifestyle. Therefore, the researcher found that there is no difference between a blesser-blessee relationship and prostitution. The reason being that both phenomena allow women to use their bodies to get access to a lavish lifestyle. Consequently, it shows that body commodification is most common for young women who want to access lavish lifestyle immediately.

6.5.2 Age limit

The sub-theme of age limit encompasses the nature of a specific age requirements that must be met to engage in a blesser-blessee relationship. As a result, the participants revealed two hidden dynamics of age in this phenomenon. Firstly, they revealed that in a blesser-blessee relationship, there is a specific age required for a woman to qualify to be a blessee. Their statements thoroughly emphasised that not any woman of any age qualifies to be considered as the blessed one in a transactional relationship. Another evidence to support the phenomenon of age limit in a blesser-blessee relationship was that the researcher interviewed fifteen female university students and eleven of them showed that they were still engaging in blesser-blessee relationship because their age still permitted them. Moreover, Dikeledi showed that she no longer qualified to be a blessee because she was over 30 years and blesser preferred young, vibrant women.

In reference to age limit, these young women have limited time to engage in a transactional relationship and once they pass that stage of being a blessee, they need to find other ways to sustain their financial stability. Secondly, the participants revealed that in the context of age limit, a blesser is not really an old man but a rich man who can afford to provide monetary gains for his sexual partner and willing to transact with whoever wants to. It is evident that the key findings of this sub-theme reveal the hidden dynamic that is uncommon for scholars to investigate. Thus, this indicates that age has no significant influence for one to qualify to be a blesser. However, having money makes one to be considered a blesser. For example, the statements below show the meaning of a blesser while suspending the role of the age.

A blesser is rich, but some are not old. A regular who affords to provide for his sexual partner (Pimani).

A blesser is a person who has everything to offer in a relationship. For example, he spends money whenever the partner asks for it. On the other hand, a blessee is someone who dates a person richer than her level (Valencia).

These two statements revealed unnoticed attributes that form part of the nature of a blesser-blessee relationship. The participants clearly indicated that being a blesser means that a person had be able to afford providing monetary gifts for the sexual

partner and that age did not matter. It is evident that the concern of age is suspended in this study. Moreover, another participant revealed that dating an old man did not mean that an individual dates a blesser.

Because you are dating an old man it doesn't mean that you are dating a blesser. But dating a man who materially provide for you after sexual encounter that means that he is your blesser (Phindile).

This reveals the cultural norm of South African belief that women should date old men due to maturity on the part of the men, which plays a vital role in indicating that dating an older man does not make him a blesser. However, if the man is rich and the relationship is transactional, that means the man can be labelled as a blesser. Another participant similarly revealed that an age gap does not regard the relationship transactional (i.e., a male partner is not called a blesser because he is dating a young woman). For example:

But being a blesser there is no age range because once you [can] afford to pay the bills for each sexual encounter with your partner. Automatically you are considered as a blesser (Tharhani).

Consequently, this participant highlighted the important factor of knowing who qualifies to be a blesser and what it takes a blessee to acknowledge that she is blessed in a relationship. Since a blesser-blessee relationship occurs due to sex-for-money, a man does not need to be old to transact or called a blesser, but he needs money to sustain the profile. Moreover, this shows that there is ambiguity in understanding a blesser-blessee relationship because the literature emphasised that this phenomenon is attributed by age difference between transactional partners. For example, Adam and Mutongi (2007) indicate that in a blesser-blessee relationship, the blesser is an old rich man who provides things like monetary gifts to a young woman. Additionally, Peacock (2012) similarly indicates that in a blesser-blessee relationship, age gap plays a significant role because blessers are likely to be old and rich while blessees are young. However, fourteen participants in this study showed that a person (man) does not need to be old to be a blesser.

The participants revealed that a man does not need to be old to qualify to be a blesser. However, they radically emphasised that the age is important when it comes to a

woman if she is to qualify to be a blessee. This means that age plays a crucial role for a woman to engage in transactional relationship as a blessee. For example:

You will realise that you no longer qualify to be a blessee at the age of 30 or something because being a blessee has an age limit. Blessers want someone who is young and vibrant. The more you grow the more you lose value (Phindile).

The statement above reveals the impact of age as a contributor of attracting a blesser in a transactional relationship. As a result, the phrase of '*lose value*' reveals that there are specific characteristics that blessers want in a woman. For example, the participants show that blessers view a blessee as someone young, vibrant, or flexible to sexually satisfy them. This re-echoes the ideology of blessers viewing women as entertaining objects (Frieslaar, 2019). Therefore, age radically plays a role in identifying who should engage in a blesser-blessee relationship as a blessee. This sub-theme initially shows that men have many expectations toward women who engage in transactional relationship. It is evident that gender dynamics play a vital role because looking from the participants' experience in blesser-blessee relationships, men are privileged (i.e., they are expected to have money); however, physical attributes such as being sexually fit do not count.

However, when it comes to evaluating who qualifies to be a blessee, attributes such as age, sexual fitness, body shape, and appearances play a vital role. Thus, this is living evidence of gender inequality. This sub-theme concludes that there is a huge difference between a blesser and a sugar daddy. A blesser is rich and wants to transact. However, a sugar daddy is characterised by age difference because the person who is old and dates young women for sexual pleasure.

6.5.3 Economic entitlement

Some research literature broadly emphasised that blessers use their economic power and are entitled to ruling the lives of blessees (Mampane, 2019; Phamotse, 2017; Sinethemba, 2017). On the other hand, Bosch (2011) postulates that a blesser is an influential man who uses his money to exercise power and lure young women to date him. However, in this study, the participants showed uncommon findings, which radically contradicted those in literature. For example, the participants showed that they had power to influence their blessers on how to spend their money and other

things that contributed to blessees' benefits. It is evident that economic entitlement in a blesser-blessee relationship varies depending on the specific arrangement between a blesser and a blessee. Consequently, participants show that this sub-theme is characterised by blessees' rights in transactional relationships. For instance, Pimani said that *'he would do everything that I want.'* This reveals that blessees have power to influence their blessers to do what they want. This means that if a blessee wants something, a blesser is obligated to provide.

Furthermore, participants in this study reinforced that they had equal rights to demand because blessers also need blessees' companionship. In other words, they are both beneficiaries in this transactional relationship. For example, a blesser-blessee relationship is attributed to a reciprocal transaction, which means that a blesser benefits from a blessee (i.e., a blesser pays for sexual pleasure) and on the other hand, a blessee economically depends on a blesser (i.e., a blessee uses her body to receive monetary gifts). Therefore, this argument reveals that these partners are establishing an equilibrium agreement for satisfying mutual benefits. Another participant indicated the power of being a blessee in this phenomenon.

He will give you any reasonable amount that you ask for. In fact, everything that you mention he must provide. For example, if you say you want to do your hair, he will provide money because he also benefits from you (Valencia).

This statement reveals that not all blessees are impacted by gender inequality such as being sexually violated and controlled (Thobejane et al., 2019), and viewed as passive (Yende, 2019). Thus, blessees also have power to negotiate their desire concerning their economic wants and how the blesser should provide to fulfil blessee's demands. Moreover, these participants revealed that their experiences in the context of economic entitlement varied, however, they all emphasised that they had the right to choose what they wanted to gain and a blesser must provide due to an agreement made. Dineo said that *'a blesser fulfils his promises. Getting a blesser means you can even buy yourself an apartment.'* This statement shows that this participant feels entitled to the riches of her sexual partner because she is rest assured that she can get whatever she wants, including an apartment. This further shows that these

blessees engage in a blesser-blessee relationship knowing very well that they have power to obtain what they want.

Although a blesser-blessee relationship is sometimes characterised by violence and social stigma, fourteen participants in this study revealed that there are hidden dynamics of power equality; for example, blessees being able to exercise their power to demand and choose how the blesser should economically provide. The statements below are examples of blessees' economic entitlement:

You don't have to work hard because he will be providing for you. Now, I am working as an intern, it is quite difficult to work and not being recognised. I am used to getting compliments and money so easily. So, I feel disadvantaged that I can't climb the ladder so fast (Thatong).

And by him providing, it means he must give me everything that I want. But when it comes to the lifestyle that I have been longing for, it has been so good because I do not have to worry about not having money to fix my hair, not having money to buy clothes, or not having money to take myself out. I know that he will take care of everything. The benefits that I've been experiencing are that I can afford anything that I want (Phindile).

Despite the power to influence their blessers to provide what they want, these participants revealed that they are entitled in that they wanted their blessers to provide for them without working hard. At this rate, these participants reinforce that a male sexual partner is obligated to provide and on the other hand, the woman must demand and expect the blesser to hand out. Thus, this phenomenon of expecting a man to be the messiah in a transactional relationship is further seen on the statement made by Nsovo. She said:

I would be receiving my girlfriend's allowance and whenever I was in financial trouble, I would call him and tell him that I needed this and that. I was able to do many things in a way that I wouldn't complain about money. The support that he provided was good. Remember, he had a car so, the support he provided was to take me from point A to

B whenever I wanted. So, if he is not present, I would face financial challenges.

This statement emphasises that this female university student enjoys being a ‘trophy girlfriend’, which refers to a lady who is paid to parade her beauty and for sexual performance (Scull, 2019). Moreover, this statement indicates that a blessee is lazy to work hard and whenever her blesser is absent, she experiences an economic burden. This means that a blesser-blessee relationship familiarises women into a phenomenon of being taken care of without exhausting their power. Another participant asserted:

I prefer a relationship that can give me assurance that I am financially prioritised so that I can be happy. I prefer dating a stable man, who can afford and be able to be financially present whenever I need him. The most interesting thing is that when you are financially blessed, you don't mind spending because you know the money maker will send you money anytime (Tlharihani).

This participant vehemently concurred that in a blesser-blessee relationship, money is important than establishing an emotional bond. Thus, this participant shows economic entitlement, which encompasses having more focus on getting monetary gains than experiencing love. It is evident that this participant is lazy to work hard and frames a man as someone who is obligated to take care of her needs and wants. A reference was made when she said, ‘*assurance that I am financially prioritised*’ (Tlharihani). This phrase refers to a phenomenon where one sees a need to value the fact that he or she must sacrifice whenever there is a financial need or want. Therefore, this participant indicated that she preferred to transact with a partner who would value her monetary needs and wants. As a result, if a blesser failed to prioritise her, she would end the relationship.

To conclude, the researcher found that it is uncommon for blessees to use their power to manipulate blesser's economic decision. These participants revealed that it is possible for a female university student in a blesser-blessee relationship to negotiate her economic demands and dismiss her blesser if he is not willing to provide for her. Therefore, a blesser-blessee relationship is not only associated with men power (i.e., blesser controlling blessee) because the participants in this study, showed that they had power to demand and influence their blesser's economic decision.

6.6 Code words

The researcher discovered that female university students who are in blesser-lessee phenomenon tend to use language to communicate the nature of their experiences in a transactional relationship. Therefore, this section interpreted the meaning of the words that lessees use in describing their experience of a blesser-lessee phenomenon.

6.6.1 I scratch your back and you scratch my back

This is a situation where someone informs another that when they offer their assistance, the other person must return the favour. As a result, the blesser-lessee phenomenon is reciprocal in nature because both sexual partners must agree to have sex to make a benefit. For instance, the lessee desires a wealthy lifestyle while the blesser desires sexual pleasure. As a result, “I scratch you back” can either refer to a lessee who consents to having sexual interactions with a blesser in exchange for payment or a blesser who agrees to pay for sexual pleasure.

6.6.2 Baby daddy

The phrase “baby daddy” is used to describe a man who had a child with a woman but who is no longer dating her or who neither of them considers to be married and have children. Additionally, he is regarded as the baby’s father despite not always acting as a father figure or providing for the child until the mother makes him. So, Phindile claimed that while dating the baby’s daddy, she engaged in the blesser-lessee phenomenon. He was not supporting his child, and they had a child out of wedlock.

6.6.3 Vunghwadla

This is a polyamory-related Xitsonga word that when translated into English, the term is used to describe a behaviour in which individuals engage in several sexual relationships with everyone’s agreement. As a result, lessees are aware that their blesser have other relationships and are married due to the nature of the blesser-lessee phenomena. They still organise sexual encounters with these married men, though.

6.6.3 Drip is forever

It is a slang term used to describe someone’s sense of style, which stands for high social status and aesthetic appeal. However, this slang is used to describe someone who will go to great lengths to look nice and who will forgo other things to buy

expensive clothing. As a result, in a blesser-blessee relationship, these female college students cannot freely accept financial gifts without offering up their bodies as a form of sacrifice to live the affluent lifestyles they seek.

6.6.4 Climb the ladder fast

A ladder is a set of stairs or levels leading to a higher position. Consequently, this shows that dating a blesser enables the blessee to enjoy a better social status and attain an affluent lifestyle readily without working hard. It is obvious that blessees are too lazy to put in much effort, so they assume that blessers would take care of them in that way.

6.6.5 *Becha*

This is a slang expression for when someone gives another money, like a girlfriend allowance, really. Therefore, it has to do with how blessers help their blessees financially following sexual contact. Someone who can *becha*, as stated by Khomotso, is a blesser who uses money to lure a sexual partner.

6.6.6 *Mavuso*

Khomotso claims that the phrase “*mavuso*” refers to cash given after sex. For instance, a woman might anticipate her transactional partner to give her money the next morning after a sexual encounter, and if he does not, she might accuse him of rape because he broke his promise. Nurse Eunice disagrees with Khomotso’s interpretation, saying that *mavuso* relates to the pleasure experienced during transactional sex. This implies that they use the term “*mavuso*” to describe sexual fulfilment. It is obvious that various people interpret the same phenomena in different ways based on their personal experiences.

6.6.7 *Soft life*

The phrase “soft life” describes a comfortable, carefree way of living with zero obstacles. Because they deal with wealthy men and give them expensive gifts after having sex, the participants used the phrase “soft life” in the context of the blesser-blessee phenomena to refer to a life that incorporates riches and luxury. As a result, they see their lives as being straightforward and unburdened by obligations and financial hardship.

6.7 Conclusion

In the presentation of data to reveal the understanding and experiences of female university students who participated in this study, this chapter presented three major findings, the first being the forms of a blesser-blessee relationship. The second was motivations for engaging in blesser-blessee relationships and six sub-themes were discussed in detail. For the third major theme, the researcher discussed the hidden dynamics of a blesser-blessee relationship, including three sub-themes. The information provided by the participants about the blesser-blessee relationship is based on their own experiences (i.e., female university students in blesser-blessee relationship) and professional experience (i.e., health practitioners that work directly with female university students). The study revealed that a blesser-blessee relationship is perceived as a simple way to make money among female university students. The reason why female university students engage in a blesser-blessee relationship is because they want to advance their already existing materialistic value. In this study, participants (blessees) revealed that poverty or academic needs such as financial exclusion and failing to pay for accommodation had nothing to do with their desire to engage in a blesser-blessee relationship. Moreover, they revealed that age disparity is not significant because a blesser is rich and willing to transact for sexual pleasures. For example, they disclosed that their ideal men for a transactional relationship should be wealthy and willing to pay for anything that the blessee demands after every sexual encounter. During the follow-up in-depth interview, the participants revealed that they no longer believed in love; hence, they engaged in a phenomenon of no-strings-attached, but for monetary benefits. Thus, the participants further indicated that they had concurrent sexual partners, and it was not a secret. This is because when a blesser is stingy, they tend to move on to another blesser who is willing to satisfy their economic demands. Factors that lead to blesser-blessee relationship prevalence were highlighted in this chapter, for example, the aura of materialism and wanting to fit in. Although the participants (i.e., female university students) came from different backgrounds, however, fourteen participants disclosed that their background had nothing to do with their desire to engage in a blesser-blessee relationship because their parents are employed. However, one participant showed that she engaged in a blesser-blessee relationship because she is an orphan and had to make means to take care of her family. The study found out that the high value for

materialistic desire, ego of gratification, and the compulsive need for dissatisfaction fix put a great influence on female university students to engage in a blesser-blessee relationship. In the next chapter, the researcher discussed the research findings on the challenges of a blesser-blessee relationship.

**CHAPTER 7:
RESEARCH FINDINGS PART 2**

(CHALLENGES OF BLESSER-BLESSEE RELATIONSHIPS)

7.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the researcher discussed the findings on female students' understanding and experiences of a blesser-blessee relationship. The chapter discussed three dominant themes, namely, forms of a blesser-blessee relationship, motivations for engaging in a blesser-blessee relationship, and hidden dynamics of a blesser-blessee relationship. Now, considering that female university students in this study indulged in the blesser-blessee phenomenon to finance their ambition to lead a luxurious lifestyle. The researcher found that the requirement for a return on their investment (i.e., agreeing to engage in sexual activity for financial gain) causes the transactional relationship to be burdened with safety concerns and health risks for blessees. These difficulties cause the blesser-blessee phenomenon to inevitably become toxic. This chapter covers the results from individual in-depth interviews with the goal of sharing the experiences of female university students in blesser-blessee relationships. The researcher presents two major themes in this chapter, and they are divided into sub-themes. The table below depicts the major themes and its sub-themes.

Blessee's emotional experience in blesser-blessee relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Absence of happiness and self-confidence. ➤ Denialism.
Problems that arise from blesser-blessee relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Disadvantaged by power dynamics. ➤ Blessees sugar coat their bad experiences in blesser-blessee relationships. ➤ Sexual objectification. ➤ High chances of being derailed academically.

	➤ Vulnerable to social and health issues.
--	---

Table 7.1: Major themes and sub-themes.

7.2 Blessees’ emotional experience in blesser-blessee relationships

The theme “blessee’s emotional experience” in this study refers to any subjective experience that includes emotions and feelings. As a result, it might include a variety of feelings, such as joy, happiness, sadness, wrath, fear, and love. Personal views, values, attitudes, and the type of connection can all have an impact on emotional experience. Additionally, emotional experiences can significantly affect a person’s behaviour, thoughts, and well-being (Bryant, 2019; Fredrickson, 2013). Consequently, negative emotional experiences can therefore result in tension, anxiety, depression, lack of happiness, and low self-esteem (Denson, Grisham & Moulds, 2014). Overall, emotions can have both positive and negative impact on blessees’ mental and physical health.

It was found that there were emotional experiences that blessees encountered when they dated older rich men. During the in-depth interview, the researcher was able to better understand these emotions by observing the participants’ nonverbal clues. The absence of joy, confidence, and denialism were the two subthemes that comprise the main subject.

7.2.1 Absence of happiness and self confidence

The sub-theme of the absence of happiness and self-confidence was developed due to the radical claims made by the participants. They emphasised that there are emotional challenges that come with being in blesser-blessee relationships, such as absence of enjoyment, happiness, and confidence due to blesser-blessee relationship toxicity. Moreover, they indicated that although they experienced emotional challenges, they remained in transactional relationships. For example, they demonstrated this by prioritising a benefit-seeking goal over making an agreement that would satisfy their emotional. These individuals thus demonstrated that being the beneficiary (blessee) of a transactional relationship causes an absence of satisfaction and a loss of self-confidence.

It was found that Khomotso and Thatong both experienced the lack of peace and happiness in blesser-blessee relationships. Thus, their statements indicated the lack of affirmation toward emotional freedom, happiness, and love. This is because they both indicated that their blessers were not emotionally supportive. However, they were providing finance to their lavish lifestyle goals. This is because their relationship with their blessers was transactional and that is what mattered the most; hence, they failed to experience emotional support. For example, Khomotso stated that:

I ended up being unhappy because I started to be emotionally unstable. I changed many transactional partners and I only found financial satisfaction but as an individual, I was not happy. Being a blessee, you will never find peace.

On the other hand, Thatong supports that a blesser-blessee relationship can challenge emotional stability. She said:

The nature of this relationship is an emotional and moral dilemma. So, the reality is that it causes you a lot of your peace and joy because as a blessee, you are unhappy it is just that you want money. The pride of saying this is my money, I have worked for it, it is not there (Thatong).

For both participants, the word “unhappy” draws attention to the emotional conflict that results when one is not emotionally contented. Additionally, Thatong made note of her emotional instability, which is related to the idea of being depressed in a transactional relationship while choosing to settle for financial benefits. Moreover, their statements make it abundantly evident that the blesser-blessee phenomenon is exchanged for material pleasure while neglecting to provide emotional components that support healthy relationships and the wellbeing of these blessees. Most importantly, these two participants showed that although they were content monetarily, they were unable to be happy because of lack of emotional support. Thus, this leads to the phenomenon of lack of confidence in blesser-blessee relationship.

Phindile reveals that the blesser-blessee relationship exhibits a lack of contentment and self-confidence:

My experience of dating a blesser at first, it was hard because people judged me and some told my parents that I am dating this other old Nigerian guy, you know how parents are. They will never understand. So, being a blessee can cost you your freedom and confidence. I mean, you will be traveling with your blesser, and you will be drinking just to sustain the fact that you cannot do these things when you are sober (Phindile).

The participant above discloses that her own lack of pleasure and confidence was caused by societal stigma, in which she was judged by others and her parents did not fully encourage her wish to engage in blesser-blessee relationship. It is evident that the phenomenon of blesser-blessee does not only affect those who are in it, however, it also affects those who are close or related to the young woman. Thus, because people are different, it is more likely that some may face emotional difficulties such as accepting to conform to the lifestyle that their child lives. Williams's (2017) study supports the idea that a blesser-blessee relationship has an impact on others around them as well as those who are in them. Due to this, Phindile was not pleased and was not likely to enjoy her connection with her blesser in public. However, she persisted in her blesser-blessee relationship despite all these negative emotions. Another participant concurred that being in a blesser-blessee relationship negatively affects one's confidence; hence, one blessee said: *'I was ashamed to be seen with him in public'* (Khomotso). It is found that when female university students engage in a blesser-blessee relationship for financial gain, they feel less autonomous and emotionally unsatisfied because their companionship is focused on helping them meet their financial obligations; as a result, they continue to date blessers despite feeling unhappy and lacking in confidence.

Some previous studies support this finding. For example, Williams (2017) reports that having a sugar daddy (blesser) may seem like a quick fix to get tuition paid, but that fix does not come without a cost. It often leaves the students psychologically and emotionally damaged. This is to say that, although blessees are well sponsored financially, their emotional and psychological well-being is challenged, and they lack attributes that can make them feel fulfilled such as being happy. The finding on this study revisits Williams' (2017) study because three participants in this study,

emphasised that being in a blesser-lessee relationship, they only experienced financial satisfaction not emotional support, and it affected their confidence because the relationship in nature is transactional, not emotionally bound.

The researcher concluded that it is crucial to create a BCC plan that would work to nurture more attentive behaviour to teach young girls to place a higher priority on their emotional wellbeing than on entering transactional relationships for financial gain. Given that they were unable to truly be happy, female university students in blesser-lessee relationships experienced emotional dilemma, which had an impact on their mental health. Despite this emotional drain, they continued to want to be in blesser-lessee relationships. Consequently, at some point, the phenomenon of the absence of happiness and self-confidence led these participants to adopt denialism as a defence mechanism. To conclude, this sub-theme revealed the distinction between intimacy and intercourse, where intercourse refers to the phenomenon where partners just have sex and emotions are suspended because they are not willing to build emotional ties. For instance, the emotional wellbeing of a lessee is harmed when blesser are emotionally unavailable because they are already married. However, intimacy is an emotional connection in which couples have strong emotional links. This is significant because intimacy allows partners to have healthy emotional selves and a strong partnership. For instance, intimacy is crucial in a relationship because it helps partners get to know one another to the point where they can support one another emotionally and plays a big part in developing healthy brains and self-esteem. As a result, the blesser-lessee relationship resulted from sexual activity. The researcher will now concentrate on talking about the second sub-theme, denialism.

7.2.2 Denialism

In this study, the sub-theme of denialism was a result of the participants' experiences such as absence of happiness and self-confidence in blesser-lessee relationships. As a result, due to emotional challenges and social judgement lessees experienced, they unconsciously adopted denialism as a defensive mechanism. This sub-theme showed up clearly because during the in-depth interviews, participants were initially reluctant to admit that they engaged in transactional relationship such as transactional sex or a blesser-lessee relationship. However, their facial expressions confirmed that they were afraid to be open due to social judgements, therefore, they chose not to

directly agree that they dated blessers. For example, Phindile revealed that some people judged her for being in a blesser-blessee relationship.

For these participants, denialism refers to a rejection of established facts on a particular phenomenon (i.e., being in blesser-blessee relationship). Consequently, participants showed an essential irrational action that withholds the validation of a historical experience and that is the reason they were initially reluctant to accept that they had blessers. In addition, judging from how participants behaved during in-depth interviews, denialism is a psychological defence mechanism that allows them to satisfy their sanity of being secretly engaging in the blesser-blessee phenomenon. The comments below are from the participants who showed denialism during the in-depth interview:

I have not dated a blesser because age is just a number (Khomotso).

He used to approach me although he was not that old, but I cannot say he was a blesser because he was just a taxi owner (Dineo).

Using the street language, we call them big boys. This is because we know that they are old, but we are not willing to call them old men (Mahlatse).

It is evident that denialism to these participants is a defence mechanism to protect themselves from being negatively stereotyped. For example, Khomotso highlighted that '*age is just a number*', which shows that, if she gets what she wants, her age does not matter to the one she dates. Thus, the matter of an age gap is important, but the participant chose to ignore the fact. Moreover, the researcher realised that the word '*blesser*' carries a strong economic superiority, meaning many young women are afraid to concur that they are involved with a blesser because society views this phenomenon as a bad behaviour and young women are stereotyped as passive or individuals who sell sex for a living.

Another participant revealed how they ignore using the word blesser when they describe their transactional partners. For example, Thatong called the blessers '*big boys*', which indicates that the slang language aids the blessees to avoid the fact that they are transacting with old rich men. It is undeniable that language can affect this participant's psychological make-up, leading her to strongly adopt denialism by

considering her blesser to be a large lad. Due to the enthusiasm he brings to a relationship, the term “big boy” is used to describe an older male who nevertheless acts young. One of the participants went on to say that because her blesser appeared so youthful, it was unnecessary to refer to him as old. For example, Khomotso said that *‘Eish, I cannot say he is a blesser because he looked so young and rich. He used to spoil me every day.’*

Although the participant’s claim that her blesser was young and could not be called old. It is demonstrated in the statement above, but the researcher nevertheless asked the participant how old her transactional partner was in a follow-up inquiry. As a result, the researcher learned that the participant and blesser were 27 years apart in age. The participant also demonstrated that, although entering this relationship to satisfy her financial needs, such as access to a nice lifestyle, she firmly refrained from referring to her transactional partner as a blesser. It is evident that the participant was not confident enough to speak about the nature of the relationship she was involved in. It seems likely for all the participants in this study that they were embarrassed to reveal the nature of their transactional relationship with others. For example:

There are people who date sugar daddies (there is an age gap in that relationship). Then a blesser is a person who might be young and in a relationship with his age mate. So, I do not think that age matters (Mahlatshe).

The comment emphasises how crucial it is to distinguish between a blesser and a sugar daddy. She therefore made it clear that a blessee might be young and involved with a person of the same age. A person who has a transactional relationship with a person who is younger than him is known as a sugar daddy, on the other hand. This participant distinguished between the two terms. Since she was eager to do so, the participant was able to describe the type of transactional relationship she had. However, denialism made her to hold off on confirming that she is associated with a blesser. For instance, the researcher followed up by asking her if she considered herself a blessee. She did not respond to the query; instead, she persisted in highlighting the distinction between a sugar daddy and a blesser.

This finding concurs with what Ntsieni (2017) revealed that university students engage in blesser-blessee relationships to obtain material benefits to secure their privileged

status. Therefore, it is hard for them to agree that they are dating old men to secure their financial wants (Sinethemba, 2017). Thus, they want to be seen as independent or affording the types of lifestyles they are living. Moreover, another school of thought revealed that there is a great deal of stigma and judgement attached to this phenomenon; therefore, many opted to keep them secret (i.e., in this study, the participants denied being in a blesser-blessee relationship) from their friends (Choudry, 2015 in Doyisa, 2019).

Although the participants were pre-screened by the researcher before the interview (i.e., the researcher called the participants and asked them about the nature of their transactional relationship they were engaged in, and if they were still willing to participate in this study), their denialism often reflected how they behaved throughout the in-depth interview. As a result, eight of the participants denied being involved with a blesser while attempting to defend their connection. They consented, for instance, to openly respond to other probing inquiries like “what are the benefits you have experienced”. The researcher also discovered that it was challenging for these participants to affirm categorically that they were in a blesser-blessee relationship.

Although six participants in this study showed denialism during in-depth interview, however, one of the participants vehemently agreed that she was engaged in a blesser-blessee relationship and described the nature of her transactional relationship. For example:

The guy I dated looked old and roughly like someone who is 50 years old. He used different cars each time we went out and he would stash [give] me lots of money on every date. Of course, I had to sexually thank him for taking care of my wants (Thando).

The emphasis of the remark is to highlight that while eight research participants had a high level of denial regarding their involvement in blesser-blessee relationship, this was not the case for all participants. Thando had the bravery to accept and kept on dating blesser in public despite the social stigma. The primary conceptual goal of this sub-theme was to fulfil the study’s primary goal, which was to investigate female university students’ experiences in blesser-blessee relationships. As a result, this study’s findings provided detailed information about the emotional experiences of blessees in a blesser-blessee relationship.

7.3 Problems that arise from a blesser-lessee relationship

A blesser-lessee relationship in South Africa originates due to cultural and economic standards that encourage young women to date men who are twice their age for financial stability (Silberschmidt & Rasch, 2021). Additionally, Silberschmidt and Rasch's (2021) study shows that almost all women who participate in this phenomenon suffer because of many factors, such as an age difference, economic dependence, and lack of power. As a result, participants in this study shared their personal experiences that helped to clarify the problems that can occur in a blesser-lessee relationship. The participants demonstrated that although being embedded with being advantageous, transactional relationships also include challenges toward lessees.

Several sub-themes emerged under this theme. These included being at a disadvantage due to power dynamics, having their negative experiences covered up (i.e., being unable to discuss their sexual abuse), paying back the blessers indirectly rather than directly, being sexually objectified, having a high probability of having their academic careers fall apart, and being susceptible to health problems, as discussed in the subsequent sub-sections

7.3.1 Disadvantaged by power dynamics

The sub-theme in this study titled "Disadvantaged by power dynamics" depicts female university students as helpless victims with a limited ability to bargain for safety in a blesser-lessee relationship. This includes the possibility of influencing their actions as victims. When someone is socially, economically, or physically disadvantageous, for instance, blessers, may feel superior and have the right to impose their will on lessees, including having power over their bodies and lives (Mampane, 2019).

The emphases on literature also assert that a blesser-lessee relationship is associated with some social, power, and physical dilemmas. For example, Phamotse (2017) indicates that since young women date older men, they are automatically disadvantaged because blessers have more influence than these young girls. Thus, it is evident that female university students in blesser-lessee relationships cannot be blessed without paying back their blessers. The focal point of this sub-theme was to satisfy the first objective of this study, which was to explore the experiences of female university students in a blesser-lessee relationship. In this study, the participants

showed that they did not have equal rights as their blessers because they are financially depended. For example:

I had a boyfriend, in fact, the baby daddy. So, this rich guy separated me with the baby daddy because he was providing all the things that I demanded (Pimani).

Sometimes, he would be so controlling and all that. These guys nei, they want to engage in transactional sex with a lady who is stranded (vulnerable), they don't want someone has something on her name. Another challenge is that these guys forcefully wanted me even though I was with my boyfriend. He was controlling and hard to convince (Thando).

The first statement above highlights that the participant had a boyfriend with whom she happened to have a child with and have a blesser to sponsor her lavish lifestyle. However, she highlighted the effect that because the blesser was providing everything that she demanded he exercised the power of controlling to an extent where he succeeded to separate her from the father of her baby (baby daddy). On the other hand, Thando indicated the cruellest point of the power dynamic in blesser-lessee relationships. For example, she indicated that these rich old men want to transact with a young woman who has nothing so that they can easily manipulate her to accept their terms in this phenomenon. These words are living evidence that power dynamics harshly impact lessees in this transactional relationship.

The statements above are consistent with the fact that blessers hold a pedestal of a 'God-like' character (Frieslaar, 2019). Therefore, they exercise their power since lessees engage in blesser-lessee phenomenon for monetary gifts and luxurious lifestyle. Yende (2021) concurs that blessers are viewed as superior while on the other hand, lessees are viewed as economically dependent on blessers and are passive. Hence, they experience problems. As a result, during the individual in-depth interview, participants showed that power dynamics in this phenomenon deny quality between the blesser and a lessee because a blesser provides money and a lessee must obey to access the desired lavish lifestyle. The statement below is from a lessee who emphasised her experience of being disadvantaged by power dynamics.

I sort of lived an autocratic life where I basically adopted a particular behaviour day in and day out. For example, I was depending on a blesser to sponsor my life. That means I had to be a robot; you know I had to do things so he can give me the money that I ask for (Thatong).

Consequently, this participant emphasised that she was controlled because a blesser would use his power to demand her to do certain things such as unprotected sex or having sex before he could give her money to buy the things she wanted. This is because in a blesser-lessee relationship, young women trade their bodies for a luxurious lifestyle. Lutendo asserted that *'He can even control you. He can even instruct you not to go places or date someone else because he is your provider'*. This statement reveals that blessers are entitled to control lessees and these lessees do not see their blessers as their potential partners because they still want to date others, although they have a blesser. Consequently, lessees suffer due to power dynamics in this phenomenon. Moreover, participants in this study revealed that these power dynamics lead a blesser to have so much power in a way that a lessee yields to an abusive relationship. For example:

Sometimes, he would emotionally and physically abuse me. So, we started fighting and he wanted to trap me with the baby, then I decided to end the relationship. But it was not easy because he wanted to own me, and I was still 21 years old (Thatong).

The statement places an emphasis on women's powerlessness in a blesser-lessee relationship. In some cases, a blesser feels in control to an extent of demanding unprotected sex so that he can trap the lessee (female university student) to remain dependent and vulnerable to power dynamics. Reflecting on the literature, this sub-theme compliments existing literature, such as Jeawon (2023), who indicated that women's powerlessness in blesser-lessee relationship take various forms and these include intimate partner violence, and physical, sexual, economic, and emotional abuse. Thus, this means that blessers have control over everything because they have money. However, women are groomed to submit to blessers because they need to be financially taken off. World Health Organisation (2004) similarly reveals that blessers are characterised by toxic masculinity, which leads to violence against women. It

shows that power dynamics in blesser-blessee relationships reached a peak because the nature of this transactional relationship allowed the provider (blesser) to have more rights than the receiver (blessee). Moreover, the in-depth interview in this study included health practitioners who showed more concern on how female university students are disadvantaged by power dynamics. For example:

The blesser would not want to use protection because the person feels entitled (i.e., blessees are treated as properties (Nurse Khaya).

The problem could be GBV, because if the older person has control over a young girl. He can abuse her either, emotionally or physically because he is older than her and he has more authority over her choices (Nurse Eunice).

Consequently, the health practitioners showed that power dynamics negatively affect young women because blesser demand more challenging things such as unprotected sex knowing very well that blessees have limited power to negotiate for safe sex in a blesser-blessee relationship. Most importantly, they highlight that a transactional relationship allows the provider (blesser) to demand everything that he wants, and the receiver (blessee) is obligated to do as the blesser wants. Thus, this consists of risky behaviours where gender-based violence is common.

7.3.2 Blessees sugar-coat their bad experiences in blesser-blessee relationships

The sub-theme of blessees sugar-coating their experience in blesser-blessee relationships (i.e., unable to talk about their sexual abuse) emerged in a review of power dynamics between a blesser and a blessee. Moreover, during the in-depth interviews, participants' non-verbal cues showed that they experience unpleasant conditions and situations, such as social stigma and sexual abuse, however, they tried to act normal and not affected. In other words, these participants experienced power imbalance and it leads them to sugar-coat their experiences. The statements below were presented by blessees:

They should at least be in a relationship with someone who is at their age to avoid being raped (Thatong).

I cannot stop them to do what they want to do. But I can only say, do all the fun but be careful. Stand your ground and tell him that you are not his object because they tend to be controlling and over possessive. Tell him that you are not a cow to do whatever he tells you to do (Thando).

The statements above highlight that blessees go through sexual exploitation and other physical abuse, however, when the researcher asked them to talk about the challenges, they experienced in blesser-blessee relationships, they selected a few things, and they were likely to keep some when they were asked to advise young girl against this phenomenon. They reveal certain things and their non-verbal cues, such as facial expression, showed that they could have once experienced these challenges but not willing to directly talk about it. Thus, this is radical evidence to assert that participant in this this study, sugar-coated their bad experiences.

The participants also revealed their fear of being attacked when they speak out about their abuse experienced in transactional relationship. However, they used an opportunity to advise young girls against a blesser-blessee relationship to indirectly talk about their experience. For example, *'no one will believe you that you were raped because he is your blesser'* (Tlharihani). Her facial expression changed in a way that her eyes started to tear, but she looked down and asked for another question. Thus, during the in-depth interview, although this participant did not say it directly that she was sexually abused, her non-verbal cues revealed the truth. For example, she lowered her voice as if she was scared someone will hear her that she is talking about her personal experience in a blesser-blessee relationship.

In nature, a blesser-blessee relationship is embedded with physical and sexual problems because for a young woman to be considered as blessed in a transactional relationship, she needs to cater sexual exchange to her blesser and if she is not willing to have sex while the blesser wants to, she is somehow forced to obligate to sexual demands of her blesser. In this study, participants revealed that in some cases, blessees lack power to say no against their blesser. For example:

But she cannot say no to the blesser because she has already spent the money. She already got the expensive hair extensions, and her accommodation has been paid (Nurse Khaya).

That is why many girls feel that they have been raped because they didn't consent to have sex with a blesser, but they had to show gratitude through sexual intercourse (Nurse Eunice).

Consequently, these participants show that blessees are left with no choice but agree to have sex because the blesser has already bought expensive things. Moreover, Phindile asserts:

They also want that lifestyle not knowing the consequences. The advice that I can give to young girls is that they should not involve with a blesser because it is nice when it comes to him giving and other expensive material. But it also puts you in a very risky situation. You can end up having HIV, STDs, or maybe unwanted pregnancy. Most painfully, they can deny the baby.

But with my situation, I was lucky. I did not experience health issues the man was healthy. But I know that these things happen because when you have sexual encounter with many men, they might want to hurt you because in most cases, men don't want to share (Nsovo).

The statements evidence the fact that female university students in this study sugar-coated their experiences in blesser-blessee relationships. On the other hand, this finding correlates favourably with the literature and the theory (i.e., the Health Belief Model). Orji (2012) concurs that people tend to be in denial or not open enough about their health issues. However, Health Belief Model intends to promote health behaviours and educate the audience on how to apply these behaviours. For example, Sekudu (2017) emphasises that a blesser-blessee relationship has a social stigma. Therefore, if young women want to be blessed, they should consider praying to God for blessings because blessers are not just about wasting a lavish lifestyle over these young women. It is evident that although blessees experience challenges they remain in transactional relationship because they want to benefit. For example, some participants highlighted that *'Being a blessee comes with many sexual dilemmas because one can be a victim of gang rape or human trafficking'* (Khomotso & Dineo). Thus, it is evident that a blesser-blessee relationship has a more behavioural effect even though blessees conceal their bad experiences.

The researcher found that once a female university student engages in this phenomenon, it becomes hard for her to talk about negative behavioural experience; therefore, sugar-coating the experience just to avoid being threatened by their blessers since they are wealthy and influential in the province. According to the Health Belief Model, a person's health, and the likelihood that she or he will accept a behavioural change is predicted by the person's belief about a particular phenomenon (Stretcher & Rosenstock, 1997). In other words, in this study, participants showed that a blesser-blessee relationship is linked with sexual and physical exploitation therefore, it was important to develop a BCC plan to advocate for young girls against this phenomenon. This means that this strategic communication campaign can be used by individuals to adopt healthy behaviours. For example, Lutendo, *'Being a blessee sometimes it is good and bad. You can be affected by many bad behaviours in such a way that your life can be destroyed'*. As a result, this utterance shows very well that there is a need to develop BCC, which satisfied the third objective of this study, which was to develop a BCC strategy that can be used as a communication campaign to educate young girls about a blesser-blessee relationship.

Seven participants in this study showed that there are problems associated with a blesser-blessee relationship. For example, the Health Belief Model component (i.e., self-efficacy) indicates that a person has his or her capacity to conduct appropriate and uphold a behaviour with little or more assistance from others (Stretcher & Rosenstock, 1997). This means that the experience revealed by female university students in blesser-blessee relationships can pave a vital role for young girls to adopt healthy behaviours and not engage in transactional relationship. El-Rahman (2014) concurs that adoption of a BCC aids young girls to practice effective actions to live healthy and it will reduce health risks. Moreover, this will close the gap because the literature recommended that the upcoming research study must develop a BCC strategy.

7.3.3 Sexual objectification

Sexual objectification refers to an act of treating a person, especially women as a mere object of sexual desire, rather than treating an individual with inherent dignity and worth (Gervais, Vescio & Allen, 2021). It involves reducing someone to their physical attributes or sexual function, and disregarding their thoughts, feelings, and agency.

Most of the participants in this study showed that a blesser-blessee relationship is embedded with sex-for-money in nature. As these relationships are based on transaction, the participants were asked what their challenges as blessees in a transactional relationship were. Nine participants raised an issue of sexual objectification:

I mean, the guy forced us to have three-some to amuse him at this other hotel (Mahlatse).

He would be telling me that he gives me money. So, when he wants me, I must come. So, sexually he would demand unprotected sex and he would bring a negative HIV test kit (Thando).

These two participants explained that as blessees in a transactional relationship, they had no power. However, a blesser had power to turn them into sex objects. This is because as young women, they engaged in a blesser-blessee relationship to access a luxurious lifestyle and a blesser wanted sexual satisfaction. Therefore, they had no choice, but did as he wanted (Mahlatse). Consequently, these participants concurred that this phenomenon was sexually exploitative in nature and young women failed to negotiate for no sexual meet-ups with their old rich blesser. This revealed that these old men enjoyed having sexual intercourse with these young women; hence, they went out to spend more money on them. Moreover, Mahlatse concurred, as she explained her experience:

He had power to start controlling me because I wanted his money. He started controlling my movements, friends, and the way I live. Most importantly, he controlled my sexual performance. He would remind me that he bought the little freedom that I have. I was forced to have sex with him whenever he wanted. He did not care about what I wanted... I know, I was just vulnerable.

According to this participant, in the latter stage, she realised she was trapped in a phenomenon of being sexually objectified because the blesser had provided her with luxurious materials such as clothes, and hair extensions. Thus, the participant incurred the wrath of wanting to access luxurious lifestyle through being sexually objectified. The researcher found out that blesser-blessee phenomenon gives old rich men a

pedestal power to exploit blessees (female university students) and they further groom blessees to normalise sexual exploitation. Another thing is that sexual objectification makes young women to be victims of male gratification.

The common findings of sex-for-money in blesser-blessee relationships further emphasised that female university students tend to continue to transact even though they are sexual objectified. It proves that blessees in this study had normalised sexual objectification as they only wanted money. This statement echoes the third objective of this study, which was to develop a BCC strategy that can be used as a communication campaign to educate young girls about a blesser-blessee relationship. The participants in this study further indicate their experience relating to sexual objectification.

The rich guy offered to take me to school and buy me a car. I mean, he would do anything that I want, but only if I sexually satisfy him when he wants sexual pleasure (Pimani).

Some old men when they are done using you, they can decide to end your life [manipulate you to believe that you are nothing] because to them you are no longer important. You see, you are forced to do something because you want something (Dikeledi).

The statements above show that the phenomenon of sexual objectification is incapable of producing sexual freedom for young women who are in a blesser-blessee relationship. This is supported by WHO (2004) in Phamotse (2017) as the book emphasises that a blesser-blessee relationship is troublesome because a substantial proportion of adolescent girls have male sexual partners who are 5 to 10 years older than themselves. Therefore, the age gap between young female university students and their blessers hold them vulnerable to sexual objectification. As a result, they are found to be afraid to say no to their blessers because they materially provide for them.

Ntsieni (2017) also agreed that blessers think that they have authority over the bodies of the young women in a transactional relationship (i.e., female university students). It is evident that old men objectify and negatively stereotype young women as objects of their sexual desire (Mpofu, 2021). To make sense of Mpofu's (2021) argument, one of the participants similarly reported the effect of stereotypes used by blessers:

Most importantly, if you agree to be a house girlfriend, it means you are agreeing not to have kids and date other guys. It is that thing of saying your body got you here and it must keep you. The fact that you must be available every time the blesser wants sex it is demanding much of your time and patience (Thatong).

Moreover:

So, this can be a problem because you will have to sexually outperform each time you have sex and do as he instruct you (Tlharhani).

In this study, sexual objectification relates to the culture of sexual harassment and violence against female university students in a blesser-lessee relationship. For example, see how health practitioners who work directly with university students assert that sexual objectification negatively affects lessees at the expense of their dignity and autonomy.

Remember, if a person is giving you money, buying you expensive gifts, and doing everything for you. It becomes difficult for the lessee to say no and find out that the student is not on contraceptives. She has no clue of what contraceptives are. He'll think that the young girl is his property and he bought her to be a sexual object (Nurse Khaya).

The health effects of having a blesser in a transactional relationship is that you are objectified to be a sex slave (Nurse Eunice).

The utterances highlight the need to recognise and address sexual objectification as a harmful form of sexism and gender inequality in a blesser-lessee relationship. Moreover, this sub-theme is consistent with some current literature. Ntsieni (2017) explored the sexual problems that arise from transactional relationships such as a blesser-lessee relationship and transactional sex. Thus, Ntsieni (2017) called for intervention, which is to develop a BCC strategy that may contribute to combating this phenomenon. Additionally, the researcher found that lessees no longer reason to meet healthy behaviours, however, they only chase the likes of money and lavish lifestyle. This is because under this sub-theme, they highlighted sexual objectification

experience they encountered in blesser-blessee relationship and still willing to continue and transact.

7.3.4 High chances of being derailed academically

In this study, nine participants identified the issue of being derailed academically as one of the problems that arise from engaging in a blesser-blessee relationship. These participants were repeating or carrying over some modules to the following year, which means that they failed and had to add another year to the duration of their studies. The comments below are from blessees who failed their modules:

You can drop out of school because you will fail to focus. I mean, once you taste the fun of having money, you will not have time to study (Dineo).

This participant revealed that once one is a blessee and is well-sponsored by the blesser, it results in a poor zeal for reading and studying hard because as a blessee already receives money to live the lifestyle she desired, such as buying expensive clothes and going to hotels. As a result, it shows that this female university student prioritised spending more time with her blessee instead of studying because she wanted to access monetary gifts. The other participants highlighted the following *“It made me lazy. I was no longer willing to focus”* (Phindile). Another participant concurred:

My academic performance dropped because I had to focus on being a house girlfriend and it was hard to do my schoolwork at the same time. The possibility of losing focus on your studies is high. So, you see, when you come back at res [student residence]. For example, your body is tired, and you need to study (Thatong).

The statements above indicate that some female university students interviewed in this study lost academic focus due to the nature of sexual exchange for monetary benefit and other expensive goods. It is evident that this phenomenon occurs at the expense of their academic achievements. Thus, the participants in this study revealed that a blesser-blessee relationship results in poor time management because engaging in this relationship consumes a significant amount of time, and blessees have little time for studying, attending classes, and completing assignments.

Moreover, some participants showed that emotional distress can impact their ability to focus:

I developed feelings for him, and that situation made me loose myself and focus (Nsovo).

You are expected to concentrate on him, and it can cause you to lose concertation as a student (Thando).

The participants reported that emotional stress significantly affected their academic performance. Thus, the fact that blessees focus more on pleasing their blessers, they sometimes develop strong feelings for them and when they find out that their blessers are committed to their wives and do not see blessees as a good candidate to start a home with but merely for sexual meet-ups. This leads these young women to experience emotional stress and fail to focus on their studies. Consequently, it is absurd that female university students tend to focus on money than on completing their degrees.

Health practitioners showed concerned about this phenomenon and highlighted some important information. For example:

We will continue highlighting the impact because some of them might not complete their studies. The reason being that, for example, a blessee is coming from a poor family or underprivileged household, and then that young girl falls pregnant. She must drop out because there will be no one to take care of that baby because let's say the mother is struggling and now academic wise, the blessee drops out (Nurse Caroline).

Health practitioners in this study highlighted that that pregnancy could make these young women in blesser-blessee relationships to drop out of school due to circumstances such as not having a helping hand to provide for the baby (i.e., giving out enough money to buy baby formulas and other important material to raise a child). Dikeledi said *"he wanted to trap me with a baby so that he can run away.*

This sub-theme of being derailed academically has been found in previous studies. For example, Ntsieni (2017) emphasised that female university students engage in

blessor-blessee relationships with their lecturers to enhance their grades. Moreover, Clark et al. (2017) reinforced that when young women engage in blessor-blessee relationships, they experience a shift in attitudes and behaviours that underpin poor academic performance.

7.3.5 Vulnerable to social and health issues

In this study, participants revealed that engaging in blessor-blessee relationships leads to problems such as being vulnerable to social, spiritual and health issues. Thus, people who are vulnerable to social, spiritual, and health issues are those who are more likely to experience unhealthy behaviours as consequences of engaging in a transactional relationship. During the individual in-depth interviews, the participants stated their experienced barriers to healthy behaviours, spiritual effects, and psychological effects. Thus, this theme is categorised into three: health effects, psychological effects, and spiritual effects.

Health effects

For this study, health effects refer to the causation, promotion, facilitation, and exacerbation of a structural abnormality with the implication that the phenomenon produced had the potential of lowering the quality of life and contribute to the disabling illness or leading to a premature death (Edward & Murphy, 2014). The three participants revealed that blessor-blessee relationships affected their health, some have experienced the surge of unwanted pregnancy, forced abortion, and sexually transmitted diseases. For example, Khomotso noted:

Health issues, because you may find that the sexual partner is HIV positive and not willing to use protection.

Unwanted pregnancy and STIs are the major challenges. Unwanted pregnancy results to abortion because you know, the blessor is already settled with his wife and children. Also, you don't know his HIV status so sometimes they have unprotected sex with other young women (Dineo).

I was once having the other health issue, but I cannot talk about it. You can contract many diseases and you will be ashamed to share with your close friends (Pimani).

These participants similarly reinforce that STIs are the major concern in this phenomenon. This shows that blessees are exposed to many negative behaviours that make them to contract different diseases. Moreover, one participant highlighted the effect of unwanted pregnancy, which led to unplanned abortion. Thus, it is evident that these blessees are not ready to have babies; however, they find themselves falling pregnant because their blessers demand unprotected sex. Another identified issue is that these young women do not visit health centres to consult about healthy behaviours that they can practice in blesser-blessee relationships. For example, since they know that these blessers are not willing to start a family with them, they should consider using contraceptives and other treatment to abstain from contracting HIV such as drinking PrEp pills. Another participant reinforced that health issues are a major concern in blesser-blessee relationships. Phindile postulates that:

The health issues linked with having a blesser is that your life is in danger, especially your health. It is in danger because you do not know how many transactional girlfriends he has. Sometimes the blesser do not want to use protection and since you're getting something from him, you must sacrifice sleeping with him without protection. You do not know his HIV status and that puts you in a very compromising situation because now you will be prioritising the lavish lifestyle, he is providing for you, not your health.

The health issues, I can say that the person can demand unprotected sex that means you can be contaminated with STIs. That means when you have sex with him then go back to your boyfriend, you will spread the viruses. It is possible to catch viruses from the new guy and transfer them back to the old guy you have been with (Lutendo).

It is evident that the issue of unprotected sex and multiple partners has a growing statistic in this phenomenon. Another issue similarly highlighted is sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV. Thus, it is evident that what stands out in blesser-blessee relationship is the dominance of sexually transmitted diseases and other health viruses due to having multiple sexual partners. Moreover, the most striking result that emerged from the data is that the participants were knowledgeable about the health issues;

however, they still engaged in transactional relationships. To support this finding, the following statements concurs.

The health issue can be that of contracting STIs. See, if you are forced to have unprotected sex you might have vaginal problems because he will forcefully penetrate. In terms of safety, it is hard to report rape when a blesser provides for you. This means that he has power to demand sex even when you are at your lowest (Tlharihani).

The statements above are partly attributed to unequal power dynamics of blesser-blessee relationships in which young women are not allowed to negotiate for safe sex with their blessers because they are regarded as economic dependent and passive. These statements correlate favourably with the study conducted by Frieslaar (2019), which emphasises that a blesser-blessee relationship contributes to the spread of HIV/AIDs prevalence since blessers have multiple sexual partners. Wamoyi et al. (2016) reinforce that the issue of HIV/AIDs relates to the blesser phenomenon because the factor of power dynamics holds young women vulnerable to sexual issues such as unprotected sex. The health practitioners noted:

Another problem that they face STIs. Yeah. Since you know as I mentioned before, if a person has bought things usually for blessers, they will think that they bought you. You are belonging to them. You are their property. So, they won't use condom. And then these blessees they end up having infections, then they come here, they must be treated. Unfortunately, some of the STIs are not treated are permanently. For example, HIV there is nothing we can do about it. If you got HIV, that means who must live with it and start taking ARVs for the rest of your life (Nurse Khaya).

In that case, we find that our poor young girls (blessees) end up having sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. Others they find out that they are having genital warts infection, hepatitis B, and they end up engaging in unprotected sex. Some they end up having unplanned pregnancy. I think the main reason why we classify HIV under sexual transmitted infection is because, principally, yes, it is transmitted through unprotected sexual intercourse. And HIV, is one of the

sexually transmitted infections that is not curable. The only thing we can do is to manage it by giving you ARV drugs. But the HIV will always be in your blood system (Nurse Caroline).

And the other thing also is they can get exposed to sexually transmitted infections or diseases, e.g., HIV, if they may be the older person will say that I don't feel like using protection when we have sexual intercourse, because are you benefiting from me. Why should we use protection? The sexually transmitted disease is the HIV. So, that one, we don't have a cure yet. So, you'll just be on treatment for the rest of your life until they develop a cure. And then with STIS is sexually transmitted infections. It's, e.g., your safety, is your vaginal discharge syndrome, or gonorrhoea (Nurse Eunice).

The researcher found that these diseases negatively affect blessees. For example, nurse Caroline said:

There are other opportunistic infections that are normally we associate them with HIV, especially stage four of it. This is hypothermia it can be cured externally. But all other STIs such as gonorrhoea, syphilis, genital warts, pubic lies, low abdominal pains, and the vaginal discharge syndrome can be cured with the right medication. However, with hypothermia, we discovered that even if you can be treated, each time when it is cold it will attack the nerve.

This statement highlights that there are other diseases that should be addressed other than largely focusing on HIV/AIDs. As a result, this participant revealed that hypothermia disease attacks the nerve, therefore, even if a patient is prescribed for medication, she will still suffer each time when it is cold. Moreover, this can affect the conceiving process. In other words, at a later stage, when the blessee decides to have children, it might be impossible or challenging because her nerves will not be strong enough to bare the process of birth contraction (Douglas, Brown, Herman-Brugger, Boyd & Paal, 2012). It is evident that early sexual debut and unprotected sex have negative impact toward blessees. On the other hand, participants who are in a blesser-blessee relationship highlighted forced abortion as a form of a health issue linked with blesser-blessee relationship. For example:

If you fall pregnant for a blesser, he will force you to abort because he does not see you as someone good enough to raise a baby with (Thando).

So, even pregnancy, yeah, I think it also becomes an issue because without the condom, you can be pregnant. The blesser will dump you when you fall pregnant. They are not willing to have kids with their sexual partner (Lutendo).

According to the participants, it seems that in blesser-blessee relationships, female university students are forced to abort because blesser are not willing to raise children with their transactional partner (Phamotse, 2017). This is because these men are already married but looking for young women to entertain them. Nine participants in this study revealed that this phenomenon of forced abortion happened in various ways, such as coercion, threats, and physical force. Therefore, forced abortion is a serious health violation to women's right and can have physical and psychological consequences for these female university students. It is important to note that forced abortion is illegal and it is a form of abuse. For example, one of the health practitioners highlighted some effects:

At the end of the day, the blessee is pregnant, and she will come here wanting to abort because she is not ready to be a mother. Now, her physical and psychological status of the person is now affected because remember, if a person doing abortion, her emotional aspect is involved. Because number one, it's possible that student does not even believe in abortion. Now, she must do abortion because what will they say at home? (Nurse Khaya).

Considerable attention must be paid to how blessees are negatively affected by the phenomenon of forced abortion. For example, seven participants highlighted the issue of health effects such as sexual transmitted infections, one of the participants raised an issue of poor sexual satisfaction.

Sometimes, I was not sexually satisfied because when a man gets old, his private part shrinks. So, I was still young and fresh. So, he

would be satisfied but after sex I would feel that I still want more but he would not because he gets tired easily (Dikeledi).

The statement above highlights how blessees suffer when it comes to sexual satisfaction. As a result, this shows that the difference of sexual drive between a blesser and a lessee relates with health issues. For example, the health practitioners in this study said that sex aids a woman to experience lower blood pressure, better immune system, better heart health, and possibly including lower risk for heart disease. However, in the context of poor satisfaction, the abovementioned cannot be experienced. Additionally, poor sexual satisfaction fails to establish happy companionship between the blesser and the lessee. It is found that blessees demand more sexual gratification and the blesser fails to fulfil the requirements; hence, these young women secretly date young men same as their age.

It is evident that due to the materialism, young women who are still in a better state of physical health (young and inexperienced in sexual intercourse) engage in sexual intercourse with old men who are no longer in good health, and it leads to poor sexual satisfaction. Thus, the phrase of *'their private parts shrinks'* above (Dikeledi) implies that these young women engage in transactional relationship with old men.

Spiritual effects

A study conducted by Tombaugh, Mayfield and Durand (2011) reveals spiritual effects as a dynamic aspect of health issues in a blesser-lessee relationship. This refers to an influence of personal belief on a companionship's behaviour. Moreover, spirituality can have a significant impact on a relationship as it can bring couples together and help them navigate life challenges. Given the nature of a blesser-lessee relationship, both transactional partners (blesser and lessee) work together toward common goal, which refers to a blesser getting sexual satisfaction while the lessee receives monetary gifts. This indicates that these two are not couples; therefore, they will not be able to create spiritual intimacy that will aid them to navigate life challenges. For example, one of the participants during an individual in-depth interview highlighted that *'sex is spiritual'* (Lutendo). In other words, this female university student reveals that when a young woman sleeps with an older man or any transactional partner, they establish spiritual tie (i.e., although they do not create emotional bond, once they have sexual encounter, they create spiritual bond that transfers mood from one person to

another). For example, the statement below emphasis her spiritual experience in a blesser-blessee relationship.

Being a blessee, sometimes, it is good and bad. You can be affected spiritually in such a way that your life can be destroyed. Remember, sex is spiritual. So, your spirit becomes contaminated by the blesser's spirit through sexual intercourse in exchange for money. Isichitho [a traditional African belief of bad luck] is very dangerous (Lutendo).

This participant highlights the most important aspect of transactional sex that many blessees ignore due to the love of money. This reveals that a spiritual bond is established through sex and having many sexual partners affects one's spiritual being because he or she will have to adapt a certain spiritual sense from the person he or she had sex with. This participant said that she dated someone who was married. Therefore, she contracted '*Isichitho*' because the wife of the blesser went to visit a traditional healer and seek traditional herbs to give her husband who was found cheating with young girls. Previous studies failed to explore the link between '*Isichitho*' and transactional relationship. Therefore, this study reveals the participant's experience towards the spiritual attack of '*Isichitho*' [a traditional African belief of bad luck].

Although Lutendo revealed the effects of '*Isichitho*' as a spiritual concern, another participant emphasises the issue of blood change between and old man and young woman who engage in transactional sex. For example, this participant reveals that in blesser-blessee relationship, the reason why the blesser demands unprotected sex is because he wants to access blood exchange from the blessee. Thus, the statement below indicated that the result of unprotected sex is not only contracting HIV/AIDs but blood exchange.

Another problem is that when you have unprotected sex with an old man, your blood changes. As a young person, you will take his blood and he will take your blood to look young and sexually active while it negatively affects you as a blessee. I mean, older men engage in transactional sex not necessarily for sexual pleasure, but they want to use young women's blood to maintain their sexual performance with their wives. Being a blessee, you can end up having health problems

such as having cold blood during sex and may experience other bad influences in life (Dikeledi).

The participants in this study, have revealed various problems associated with blessing-blessee relationship and it is evident that these young women engage in transactional relationship knowing very well that this phenomenon is embedded with many challenges. However, they still decide to engage to flourish their desire for lavish lifestyle.

Psychological effects

The phenomenon of psychological effects refers to changes that occur in an individual's mental state, emotions, behaviour, and cognition due to internal and external factors that influence their psychological well-being (Clarke, Spencer, Shrestha, Ferguson, Oakes & Gupta, 2017). Whilst there are various causes of psychological effects, the researcher resonated more with the nature of a blessing-blessee relationship toward blessees.

In this study, the participants showed that the cause of psychological effects was underpinned by the ideology of blessers being powerful and obligated to control how blessees behave in a transactional relationship. Moreover, they indicated that a blessing-blessee relationship has psychological consequences such as stress, trauma, and anxiety:

You know, if you are raised in a religious family, it is going to take your mental set down and that is why as a blessee I ended up drinking too much. The shift mentally, well, there is a shift in terms of how you see the world. So, your mental health takes a knock as well (Thatong).

The phrase 'take your mental set down' refers to a negative psychological consequence, which vehemently reveals that blessees experience impaired mental problems such stress and anxiety. Also, the participant highlighted that she drank too much alcohol because she failed to cope with psychological challenges of being blessing-blessee phenomenon. As a result, several scholars reported that if an individual engaged in unhealthy behaviour, they tended to adapt to substance abuse as an escape from psychological anxiety (Dongre, 2021; Varinder, 2022). It needs to be pointed out that in transactional relationship in most cases, young women

experience psychological effects, which later decreased their mental productivity as students. This extends to impairing their ability to focus on their studies and have a negative attitude toward their self-esteem. Dineo said, '*You cannot really think straight because it will always come back to your mind when you are alone*'.

According to the statement, it is evident that Dineo did not engage in transactional relationships with a sober mind. This is because she forced herself to abide by the need to exchange money through sex. Moreover, this participant revealed that when blessees are alone, they suffer due to overthinking, and it may result in suicidal thoughts. Frieslaar (2019) indicates that a blesser-blessee relationship is characterised by negative stereotypes, which means that female university students engage in transactional relationships knowing very well that it is an unhealthy behaviour.

On the other hand, health practitioners in this study revealed that consequences of psychological effects arise from the practice of unprotected sex. As a result, they reveal that in most cases, female university students start to show psychological challenges when a blesser forces a young woman to abort because he is not willing to raise a child out of wedlock; however, they only want to have sexual pleasure. Thus, the statement below highlights forced abortion as the dilemma that result to psychological effect.

At the end of the day, the blessee is pregnant and she will come here wanting to abort because she is not ready or the blesser does not want to be part of the baby. Now, her psychological status is affected because she must abort not because she believes in abortion, but because the situation forces her to do so (Nurse Khaya).

This becomes even more painfully evident in the case of experiencing psychological effect as a blessee. For example, the participant above shows that if an individual is forced to do abortion, it leads to psychological dilemma because she might not be ready to do abortion. Moreover, her emotions and her cognitive instincts are involved in that if she does not believe in this process she might be depressed. In an interview, one of the participants shared with the researcher that she once contracted sexually transmitted disease, however, she was not able to share with her friends but had to go through the process of healing alone (Khomotso). This is evident that these blessees

are psychologically challenged because they lack psychological support from their close friends or health practitioners. Another practitioner similarly reports the phenomenon of mental shift.

That alone damages the blessee's psychological health because they are somehow trained to use their bodies to get what they want (Nurse Eunice).

The statement above highlights that in blesser-blessee relationships, these young women are psychologically tortured to an extent where they start viewing the world a give and take practice. This means that they practice in sex-for-money with older rich men who sponsor them to live lavish lifestyle. For example, Lee and Shek (2013) indicate that in transactional relationship, old rich men use money to attract young women while expecting sex in return. By far, the most dilemma of psychological effects in this phenomenon is embedded with challenging consequences and it damages the cognitive sense of these young women because they prioritise the fact of being beneficial although they are psychological challenged by the circumstances. This echoes Thatong's statement. This participant revealed that the nature of being beneficial puts the blessee's mind into a most challenging context.

You struggle to ask for help, which is free, because the idea of being in blesser-blessee relationship shift your mentality on how the world operates. So, if you were once a blessee it will be hard to believe that one can be kind enough to help you without expecting payoffs. Blesser-blessee relationship made me believe that I am living in the world of the dog eats dog (Thatong).

The statement reflects the psychological effect where young women are often seen as possession to be used by older rich men. As a result, young women embrace the commodification of their bodies. With reference to the statements made by the participants, the researcher found that the gender inequality between the blesser and the blessee destruct the freedom of engaging in transactional sex without psychological effects. Thus, they all showed that enticing old rich men with sex result into many challenges and in most cases, they succumb to depression, social anxiety, and lack of psychological help.

Consequently, this sub-theme reveals that the participants in this study mostly engaged in blesser-blessee relationship with older rich men who are sexiest. For example, in most cases, participants similarly indicated that they experienced negative stereotypes such as believing that blessees should be owned and discriminated due to the ideology of body commodification. Thus, the consequences of psychological effects toward blessees resulted in poor critical period. The terminology of 'poor critical period' refers to a phenomenon where an individual experiences lack of exposure to critical experience and environmental stimuli during the relevant stage (American Psychology Association, 2020). In other words, these young women lacked exposure of being educated against a blesser-blessee relationship, which then led them to face psychological challenges. This has affected their psychological empowerment because even though they experience social and psychological problems, they still consider dating old rich men for luxurious lifestyles.

It is evident that the lack of exposure to BCC during their critical period led them to establish relationships with men who were thrice their age. Moreover, they failed to resist sexual prejudice in transactional relationships because they were groomed to believe that they needed to use their bodies to get what they wanted. This phenomenon advocates for the development of BCC, which will assist in bringing exposure of necessary knowledge about the psychological problems that arise from blesser-blessee relationship. If young women are exposed to this information early, it may contribute to combat this phenomenon.

7.4 Code words

The study found that female university students who are involved in the blesser-blessee phenomena frequently express the nature of their experiences in these kinds of relationships using specific language. Determining the meaning of the terms that blessees use to describe the blesser-blessee occurrence was the objective of this section.

7.4.1 Jackpot and ATM

A self-service banking location is meant by this linguistic code, where a person can check their balance, withdraw money, and transfer money. These phrases have a different connotation in the blesser-blessee phenomenon. These phrases are used to denote a blesser who makes financial sacrifices to please the blessee. This

demonstrates that the blesser-blessee phenomenon is rooted in the love of money, which is why female university students compare blessers to jackpots or ATMs. Additionally, these caustic code terms are employed by those who exploit others for money gain without regard to whether they have financial plans or issues. This code word is consistent with Rangathanan et al.'s (2017) argument that indicates that the blesser-blessee phenomenon occurs due to economic inequality between men and women.

7.4.2 Dog eats dog world

The phenomenon of the blesser-blessee relationship is transactional in nature. The expression “dog eats the dog world” (Thatong) simply alludes to a circumstance in which a blesser prefers sleeping with a young woman who needs or wants his money. In other words, you must give up on yourself to get what you want. Furthermore, the adjective “beneficial” is crucial because a blesser seeks sexual benefit, whereas a blessee is required to engage in sexual activity to receive the requested financial assistance. This echoes Ntsieni's (2017) argument who emphasised that blessees claim to be beneficial while they also provide sexual intercourse to their blessers.

7.4.2 Isichitho

This is a South African Nguni belief. It is perceived as a curse aimed at disrupting the victim's life. There are numerous ways to spread this curse, but the blesser-blessee phenomenon is primarily spread through sexual contact. For instance, when these blessers have wives, those wives may decide to seek out traditional herbs from *sangomas* (witchdoctors) to use against their cheating husbands. For example, Lutendo disclosed that this code fell under health-related issues. She explained that because every woman who marries a wealthy man is aware of the blesser-blessee phenomenon, she uses traditional herbs to curse the blessee when she has sex with the blesser to get her husband to stop spending all the money on young women. Additionally, this emphasises the fact that a blessee faces a variety of problems since she will suffer a spiritual setback if she gets “*Isichitho*.” For example, she might not be able to get a job, pass at school, and many people may fail to like her or welcome her every time when they meet her. To conclude, this is a witchcraft spell used by wicked people to make a victim less attractive to their sexual partners and to destroy everything they want to achieve for personal growth.

7.5 Conclusion

It was found that a blesser-blessee relationship has dire consequences for female university students in this study. For example, the findings of the theme blessee's emotional experience in blesser-blessee revealed that blessees face lack of love, self-confidence, and happiness. Moreover, the second major theme, which was problems that arise from a blesser-blessee relationship found out that blessees experience health, safety, and physical challenges, which consequently affect them dismally. For example, they revealed that they were derailed academically, and some experienced sexual objectification. Therefore, it is important to develop a BCC strategy to educate young girls against blesser-blessee relationship to curb having more young women experience the negative consequences of such a transactional relationship, which also has effect on their academic activities. In the next chapter, the final chapter of this study, the researcher proposed a BCC model to address this issue. In the same chapter, the researcher summarised the entire research study, showing how the objectives of the study were met, and recommendations were also offered in the chapter.

CHAPTER 8: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

This is the final chapter of this research. The study's aim was to explore the experiences of female university students in blesser-blessee relationships and to develop a communication strategy that can be used to educate young girls towards a behavioural change that may contribute to combating this phenomenon. This study concludes that transactional relationships have tendencies that are like direct prostitution in some cases and way far from traditional relationships. A blesser-blessee relationship in this group does not radically occur in the context of poverty, lack of funding to pay tertiary fees, and the dominance of wanting to survive. Moreover, it is indicated that there are hidden dynamics such as a family's influence as the cause of blesser-blessee relationships' prevalence. The study found that blesser-blessee relationships have direct physical, emotional, and health problems and therefore, the researcher developed a communication strategy, presented below, to educate young girls about behavioural change towards blesser-blessee phenomenon. This chapter presents conclusions and recommendations toward the phenomenon of blesser-blessee relationships.

8.2 Summary and discussion of the study

As a way of summarising this entire research study, it is important to recall the objectives of the study as stated at the beginning of this research. The key objectives of the study were to:

- To explore the experiences of female university students in blesser-blessee relationships.
- To examine the motivations for female students in engaging in blesser-blessee relationships, while exploring the problems that arise from these relationships.
- To develop a BCC strategy that can be used as a communication campaign to educate young girls about blesser-blessee relationships.

Consequently, to respond to these objectives, the researcher applied a qualitative research methodology accompanied by the adoption of interpretivism research paradigm, applied research approach, and exploratory research design. Additionally, the study adopted individual in-depth interviews to collect data amongst fifteen female

university students in blesser-blessee relationship in Limpopo Province. The following section summarises the findings that address each objective of the study:

❖ **Objective 1: To explore the experiences of female university students in blesser-blessee relationships**

The experiences of female university students in blesser-blessee relationships were found within the dynamics such as sex having a strong symbol of currency to access money, as blessers are seen as Automated Teller Machines who spend money over young girls and transacting with older men to lead opulent lifestyle. Oyero et al. (2018) note that young women engage in blesser-blessee relationships because they see older men as rich and affording to pay for everything.

The findings in fulfilment of this objective are as follows; in Chapter 7, it was found that 15 participants experienced dire health consequences such as forced abortion, forced sex or unprotected sex, body commodification, and sexual objectification. Consequently, these participants revealed that their blessers viewed them as vulnerable and objects of entertainments. Moreover, it was found that the common experience they had was that they had to use their bodies to get what they want; in other words, they agreed to engage in body commodification. Thompson (2016) states that a blesser-blessee relationship generated a meaning such as young women establish sexual pursuit with older rich men who can afford to sponsor everything that the blessee demands.

With reference to dire health consequences, it was found that participants experienced lack of emotional support due to social stigma such as being judged for engaging in blesser-blessee relationships. Thus, nine participants were emotionally challenged because they revealed that in the context of bad experience, they never had a chance to share their bad experiences in blesser-blessee relationships because their peers and parents judged them. For example, six of them unconsciously showed that whenever they were alone, the reality of social judgement would make them restless. An article by Williamson, Masti and Ntabanyane (2017) notes that although blessees look fashionable and place their happiness in material possession, their emotional and psychological well-being is challenged because they lack support.

Moreover, it was found that once young women engage in transactional relationships with old rich men, they tend to prefer old men through their lifetime. The literature

supports this; for example, Douglas, Kenrick, Gabrielids and Cornelius (1996) reveal that a tendency of young females to prefer older partners has been explained in terms of socialisation to sex roles and norms specifying that a men must be older and more powerful than their female partners. Moreover, a recent article reveals that in the context of a blesser-blessee relationship, when young women engage in transactional sex with older rich men, they tend to develop a tendency to prefer older rich men because they see them as caring and affording (Frieslaar, 2019). This means that they are likely to prefer dating old men rather than their age mates.

There are several causes of this factor, however, they are not limited to thinking that young men cannot afford to support their material goal and not old enough to compete with their way of thinking. This finding is imperative because it reveals that although blessees engage in blesser-blessee relationships and act as if they do not care what the public say, they still have emotions like others and they may find it difficult to live because they have no one to turn to. Consequently, in the context of the Health Belief Model (Becker, 1974), it is referred as perceived severity, which indicates the person's opinion whether the specific behaviour is severe, for instance, can it cause permanent damage? Thus, if there are no problems around to motivate the individual to focus on perceived severity, the individual will continually engage in risky behaviour and face radical consequences later in life.

To conclude, this objective was fulfilled because the experiences of female university students in blesser-blessee relationships were explored. Surprisingly, although the participants showed that they experienced dire health consequences and social judgements, they ignored social stigma and continued to engage in blesser-blessee relationships.

❖ To examine the motivations for female university students in engaging in blesser-blessee relationships, while exploring the problems that arise from these relationships

In this study, the participants revealed that a blesser-blessee relationship is embedded with multiple sexual partners who finance young women to live lavish lifestyle. Moreover, they emphasised that in nature, the blesser-blessee phenomenon is

reciprocal. This means that it is embedded with excessive love of money and materialism rather than establishing emotional bond, it is distinct to traditional relationships. Ntsieni (2017) concurs that transactional sex is a new modern term for *sex-for-money* in which women engage in sex partnerships for money and regular gifts such as clothes. With reference to Ntsienis's (2017) study, the specific key finding of this study is that the culture of materialism and family's influence are a major cause that motivates female university students to engage in blesser-blessee relationships. Thus, in the context of materialism, all participants shared the trait of placing an excessive amount of emphasis on material gratification. For example, to them, owning expensive materials such as iPhones, glue-less opulent wigs (known as frontal wigs), and clothes brand like Louis Vuitton made them believe that they were more important and intelligent. A study conducted by Sinethemba (2017) supported the key finding of this study by revealing that young women engage in transactional relationships to look good. The emphases of looking good was directly found during data analysis; for example, female university students in this study vehemently agreed that it was imperative to fulfil the desire of owning expensive clothes and to fasten the process, they dated blessers. The negative side of this finding is that it revealed that female university students who cannot afford or engaged in blesser-blessee relationships were not respected. In the current lifestyle, materialism conditioned some of young women to believe that people are labelled and respected by what they have (i.e., the expensive material they own) rather than who they are.

Limpopo has one of the highest levels of poverty in South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2013) therefore, in this study, the culture of materialism was used as a defensive mechanism from social shame (i.e., avoiding being identified as poor). On the other hand, the participants revealed that their family members influenced them to resort into blesser-blessee relationship. For example, their families instilled a belief that a man must economically provide to express his love to his partner. Consequently, the family chides young women for dating men who are poor or stingy. This was referred as '*mavuso*.' It is evident that in some parts of the Limpopo Province, families embrace transactional relationships to fulfil their economic needs and family value.

This specific finding is imperative because it overtly shows that a blesser-lessee relationship amongst students does not occur because of poverty or lack of tuition fees. However, there are other aspects that people who are not in a blesser-lessee relationship need to know that they contribute to the prevalence of a blesser-lessee relationship. For example, in this study, no participants showed that they engaged in transactional relationships to pay tuition fees because most of them (11 participants) showed that they are not interested in school like they used to do before engaging in blesser-lessee relationships. Hence, they were not really affected when they were repeating tertiary modules. Moreover, it is important to know that the influence of global materialism consumed young women to conform to being lessees in transactional relationships with men that are much older. Thus, their obsession with fashion and receiving compliments might have made them to not mind the significance of age in their relationship. To be realistic, age does, however, play a vital role in a relationship because, in nature, this transaction emerges between a young woman who may be 23 years old and a wealthy man who is three times her age. That makes the dynamics of love to be questioned as to how they find these men attractive?

The study concludes that a blesser-lessee relationship has tendencies that are like direct prostitution in some cases. This is because participants indicated that they consciously engaged in transactional sex with multiple sexual partners to gain monetary gifts in return. Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationships Theory by Scull (2019) supports this study's conclusion as it indicates that in a blesser-lessee relationship, partners sell sex within a framework of sugar prostitution. Moreover, the theory reports that a blesser-lessee relationship is marked by frequent sexual encounters and little activities such as traveling to expensive hotels. Due to the key findings under this objective. It was further found that in a blesser-lessee relationship, there are dire consequences toward lessees.

In this study, being blessed is not only the factor of getting money or being spoiled every time, but there are also problems found related to this phenomenon. Thus, these lessees pay back and it is not in the form of money, but it includes body commodification, forced abortion, sexual partner violence, and spiritual attack such as *isichitho*. Focusing on the context of body commodification, the researcher found out

that these blessers are most likely to be old enough to be blessee's father, which gives them power to force these young women to conform to commoditise their bodies. Consequently, the phenomenon of body commodification in this study, initially revealed that being a blessee comes with costs and it may have dismally disadvantaged their mental health. For example, among the female university students interviewed in this study, all of them never believed there is no man who can help a woman without demanding sex in return. The theory of Health Belief Model asserts that the assumption of vulnerability postulates that there are circumstances that force people to be exposed to possibilities of being harmed either physically or emotionally (Harrison et al., 1992).

Thus, blesser-blessee relationship conditioned these young women to view the world as the 'dog eats the dog' world. This refers to a phenomenon of doing something to someone only if it is sexual beneficial other than that, the blesser will not shower the blessee with money. Sekudu (2017) asserts that if blessees need to be blessed, they might deliberately pray to God for a blessing, because blessers are not just about scattering a lavish lifestyle without paying a price. This became more painfully evident when the participants in this study, agreed to use their bodies to get what they want since they engage in a win-win situation with much older rich men. The study conducted by Phamotse (2017), which emphasises that blessers likely claim that they pay for blessees joy, and they have power to own them.

Additionally, blessers tend to demand unprotected sex and this leads to high chances of a blessee falling pregnant. After the blesser demanded unprotected sex, he became aggressive when the young lady told him that she was pregnant and forced her to abort because he did not want to have a child with her or maybe because he was married. Moreover, it was found that blessers did not find their blessees as compatible to have children with or at least be married to them. With reference to this argument, Health Belief Model similarly showed that there are costs in every behaviour, which may include tangible or intangible such as the pain of suffering (Harrison et al., 1992). It is evident that a blesser-blessee relationship is nothing serious but merely getting what sexual partners want, which makes the dynamic of love and self-respect change due to dire circumstances experienced in this phenomenon.

To conclude, the key findings discussed above have fully satisfied the second objective, which was to examine the motivations for female university students engaging in a blesser-blessee relationship, while exploring the problems that arise from a blesser-blessee relationship. Thus, the objective was met because the study's key findings provided all the necessary information that was intended to be achieved and thus, these key findings make it clear that poverty is not the major reason for engaging in a blesser-blessee relationship and being a blessee does not mean to be showered with money only, there are dire circumstances that accompany the phenomenon of being blessed.

❖ **To develop a BCC strategy that can be used as a communication campaign to educate young girls about a blesser-blessee relationship**

The last objective of this research was to propose a BCC strategy to educate young women on the blesser-blessee relationship. Based on the causes of the blesser-blessee relationship, the experiences of young women in this form of relationship and the challenges that arise from this sort of relationship are discussed below.

BCC strategy

In developing a campaign model for BCC, some key steps need to be identified and addressed. These steps are defining the identified dilemma, the theory used to frame the development of BCC plan, the target audience, and the objectives of the developed BCC plan (Heesup, 2021).

Steps to develop BCC

Step 1: Define the identified problem

The first step is to define the exact problem. A blesser-blessee relationship is a new style of modern transactional relationship where young women engage in sex-for-money with old rich men (Ntsieni, 2017). The dilemma arises when young women vehemently resort to these relationships for personal gain and later experience dire consequences, such as HIV/AIDS, forced abortion, and emotional damage. Moreover, the health issues embedded in blesser-blessee relationships radically disadvantage young women and reduce their life-expectancy because the blesser tend to exert

their economic power and masculinity by forcing blessees to be passive and use violence such as intimate partner violence, body commodification, and physical violence.

The dilemma identified for the development of this BCC is that female university students equated materialism to happiness, and they do not have enough money to fulfil their desire of owning opulent materials; hence, they resorted into blesser-blessee relationships without thinking of the dire consequences that they may experience while transacting with these men who are old enough to be their fathers. Moreover, a social tradition of family's influence was identified as a major contributor of blesser-blessee relationships' prevalence.

Step 2: The theory used to frame the development of BCC plan

To develop this BCC plan, the researcher adopted Health Belief Model developed by Becker (1974). Thus, this model reveals that health behaviour is taken by a person who believes himself or herself to be exposed to health problems and there is a need to detect health problems in an asymptomatic stage (Birch, 1945). The use of Health Belief Model will enable the target audience to see a need to engage in healthy behaviours since they are more likely to experience health issues. The following Health Belief Model components were used in this BCC plan:

- Perceived susceptibility: refers to individual's perception of whether he or she is at risk. With reference to Sekudu (2017), blessees are at a risk due to power dynamics that give blesser more power to sexually abuse these young women in blesser-blessee phenomenon. Thus, this BCC plan can be used to make the target audience see a need not to engage in this transactional relationship.
- Perceived severity: this is the subjective feeling whether a specific health issue is severe. With reference to Ntsieni (2017), blesser-blessee relationship is a severe because blessees are exposed to early sexual debut and unprotected sex. Thus, they will be able to know that being a blessee is costly and there is a need to vehemently adopt healthy behaviours.
- Perceived barrier: encompasses individual's estimation of the level of personal challenges. Thus, the dilemma of material obsession is a dominant challenge, therefore, it is imperative to make the target audience aware that this personal challenge is the reason they find themselves in dire health consequences.

- Perceived benefits: person's belief on weighing the benefits for adopting a healthy behaviour. For example, in blesser-blessee relationship, a female university student can compare the benefits of being blessed and the benefits of being safe, emotionally, and mentally. Everyone wants to be healthy or at least attempt to practice a healthy behaviour. Thus, this BCC plan will enable the target audience to apply healthy behaviours such as not engaging in transactional relationships.
- Cues to actions: social occurrences can indicate to act. Thus, since blesser-blessee relationship is identified as unhealthy, many people amongst the target audience will be encouraged to act against blesser-blessee phenomenon. There will be supportive members who will assist to make the target audience to act and make valuable decisions such as prioritising their health instead of chasing materialism.
- Self-efficacy: individual's ability to uphold the behaviour. Thus, BCC will educate the target audience to be empowered to prioritise their health instead of the things that make them resort in blesser-blessee relationship.

Step 3: Define the target audience

The third step is to define the target audience. The influence of global materialism has a radically influence the lifestyle of young women because they adopted excessive love for money and opulent trendy clothes as a sign of self-presentation and self-esteem. Moreover, African families tend to instil a belief of valuing a rich man as the *messiah* of the family because he will economically provide for blessee's family. Consequently, this BCC targets both adolescent girls who are about to go to tertiary educational institution and their female parents.

Step 4: Objectives of the BCC plan based on research findings

The last step is to identify the objective of the communication plan. Based on the findings of this study, it was discovered that a blesser-blessee relationship prevalence has nothing to do with poverty or at least the issue of female university students failing to pay tuition fees (Mavhandu-Mudzusi, 2019). It was further found that the participants in this study were obsessed with materialism. Moreover, it was found that there are family members who influenced these female university students to engage in blesser-

blessee relationship to access lavish lifestyle (*mavuso*) and provide for the family members because they chide a woman who dates poor men.

From the above guideline, the researcher now proposes a behavioural change campaign model to address the issue of a blesser-blessee relationship.

YOU FIRST!

An anti-materialism and blessee campaign

It is hard for a BCC to address all the issues. However, 'You first, anti-materialism and blessee campaign' aims to discourage adolescent girls toward materialism and resorting to blesser-blessee relationship to access opulent lifestyle that they desire. Thus, placing sense of belonging (wanting to fit in) and self-identity with materialism lead to many problems that make young women end up experiencing dire health circumstances such as being infected by opportunistic diseases (gonorrhoea, syphilis, and HIV/AIDS), unwanted pregnancy, and forced abortion. It is imperative to empower and educate adolescent girls to shift their focus from materialism and blesser-blessee relationship to important things such as furthering their studies or consider entrepreneurship to maintain the kind of lifestyle that they wish to lead.

Moreover, it is imperative to advise parents to stop influencing their children to resort in blesser-blessee relationship to satisfy the belief that a man must show his love through providing monetary gifts for both his sexual partner and the family. Thus, 'You first, anti-materialism and blessee campaign' want to educate parents about blesser-blessee relationship and their dire consequences so that they can influence their children to adopt healthy behaviours and stop establishing sexual relationships with older rich men. Below, is the graphic model of how 'You first, anti-materialism and blessee campaign' will operate.

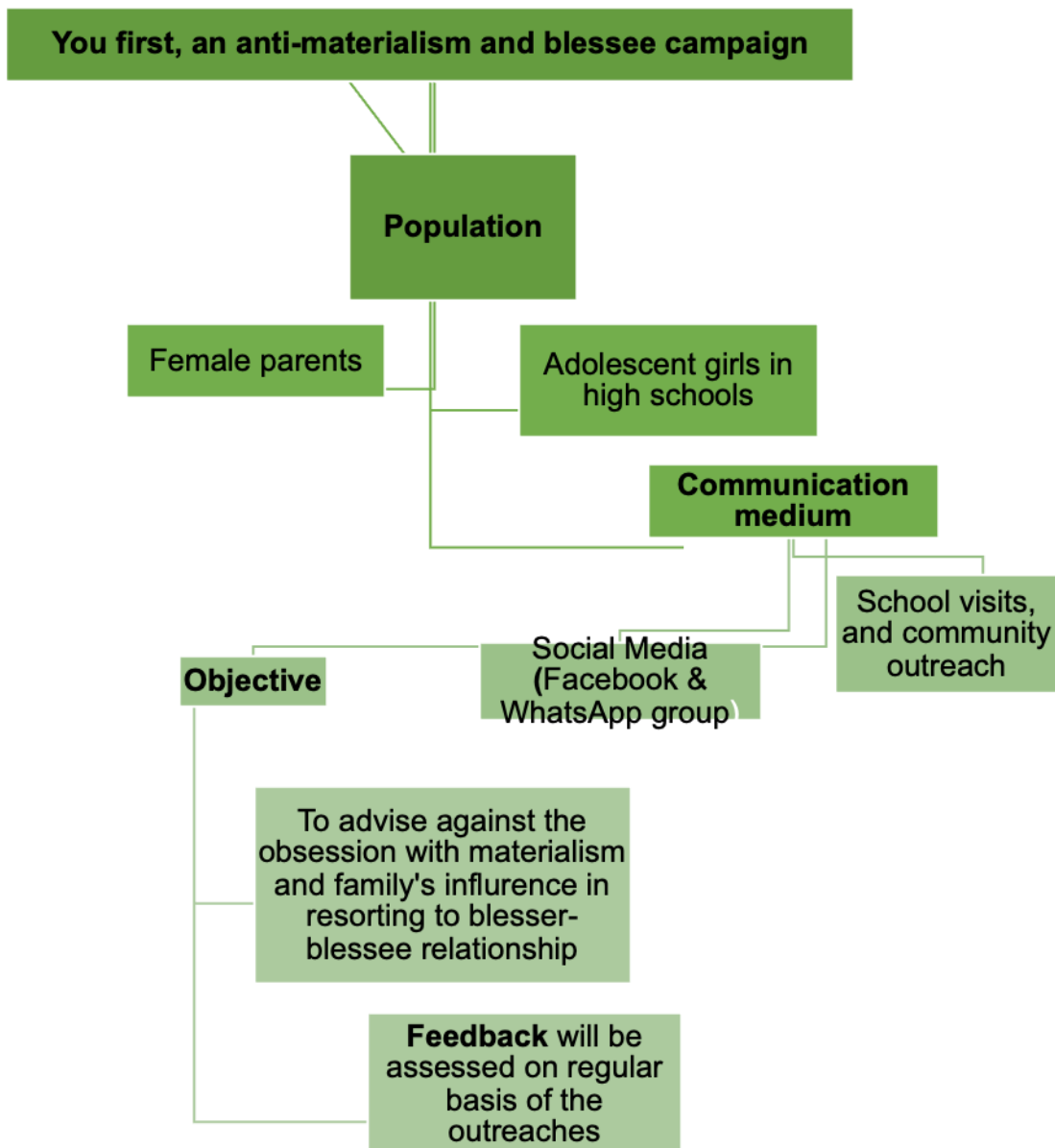


Figure 8.1: *You first, anti-materialism and blessee campaign*

- Population: ‘You first, an anti-materialism and blessee campaign’ targets both adolescent girls in Limpopo high schools and female parents. This is because the findings of the study revealed that parents tend to motivate their female children to date rich men who can provide for them and the family. Moreover, adolescent, especially those who are in grade 12, they are likely pressured to engage in blessee relationship when they enrol at universities.

- Objective: This campaign is developed to educate young girls against a blesser-lessee relationship, and it may contribute to combating this phenomenon. Moreover, this campaign will further educate young girls against the obsession of materialism. Parents will also be educated about the dire health consequences embedded with transactional relationships aiming to stop them from influencing their female children in resorting to blesser-lessee relationships.
- Communication medium: To reach the target audience, this campaign will make use of social media such as WhatsApp and Facebook. On the other hand, it will encompass school outreaches for female learners and community outreaches for parents.
- Feedback: will be assessed on regular basis of the outreach.

8.3 Contribution of the Research

Several studies have revealed that a blesser-lessee relationship is common in South Africa (Leclerc-Madlala, 2003; Masenya, 2017; Moodley & Ebrahim, 2019; Ntsieni, 2017), and there are circumstances that contribute to the prevalence of this phenomenon. However, most of these studies focus on understanding transactional relationships. The study conducted by Ntsieni (2017) revealed the nature of transactional relationships as meeting mutual benefits and recommends that future research studies should implement social and BCC to empower young girls since this phenomenon of transactional sex is widespread. With reference to the recommendation made by Ntsieni (2017), this study developed a BCC (You first, an anti-materialism and lessee campaign) against materialism and blesser-lessee relationship and it will be used to advocate adolescent girls who are about to go to tertiary institutions of learning and their parents to be aware of the problems that arise in this phenomenon. Thus, this may contribute to combating this phenomenon in Limpopo Province. Moreover, in the context of communication, there are limited sources that used health communication or BCC to investigate a blesser-lessee relationship. Consequently, this study has contributed to the use of both health communication and BCC as it revealed how these two can be used to promote healthy behaviours amongst young women in a blesser-lessee relationship.

Ntsieni (2017) developed a study that aimed to understand the perceptions of university students toward transactional relationships in University of Venda, Limpopo

Province. Thus, the findings showed that in University of Venda, Limpopo Province, South Africa, young female adults engaged in transactional sex. In view of the prevalence of transactional relationships, Ntsieni (2017) recommended future researchers to focus on developing health campaigns that may contribute to combating this phenomenon in Limpopo Province. As consequence, this research study serves a contribution to the concern raised by Ntsieni (2017).

With reference to the population of the research toward a blesser-blessee relationship (young girls), this study provided full information on the dire health consequences that fifteen female university students in Limpopo Province experienced in transactional relationships. Therefore, it will educate young girls to be fully aware that being a blessee does not mean that an individual will just receive money only, there are bad circumstances that come along with being blessed.

It was found that many scholars such as Lerclec-Madlala (2003), Ranganathan et al. (2017), and Sinethemba (2017) framed poverty as the primary influence for young women to resort to a blesser-blessee relationship. However, this study contributes to new knowledge, which vehemently disagrees that poverty is the initial motivation among young women in a blesser-blessee relationship. This study found that the influence of global materialism among young women had a major impact and their family members had instilled the belief that a young woman must see love through monetary gifts. Thus, this is the hidden nature of a blesser-blessee relationship that this study revealed.

8.4 Limitation of the Research

The phenomenon of a blesser-blessee relationship is very personal and it needs individual experience for one to understand the nature of this transactional relationship. The researcher had to adopt the qualitative research methodology with the use of in-depth interviews, thus, it was very challenging to recruit participants who are willing to answer the questions related to their lifestyle. Moreover, the researcher found it a bit difficult, if not near impossible, not to unconsciously trigger the emotions of participants because they had to answer some questions, which were related to the dire consequences that they experienced in blesser-blessee relationships. However, the researcher suggested that they should see a psychologist, only if they were willing

and the researcher offered the contact details of psychologists who work directly with students.

Thus, the methodology applied in this study was suitable in exploring the experiences, however, it was difficult during in-depth interviews to convince the participants that their data would not be published with their names, even after all ethical guidelines of privacy and informed consent were followed. Qualitative research methodology forces the researcher to leave out contextual sensitivities and focus more on meanings (Rahman, 2017). Thus, this means that during data collection, the researcher is forced to neglect questions that may invade participant's privacy. Additionally, the researcher found out that this methodology is appropriate for small sample size. Consequently, Platt, Grenfell, Meiksin, Elmes, Sherman and Ganders (2018) concur that the dilemma of a small sample size may lead to generalisation to the whole population of the research. Another challenge of qualitative methodology is that it takes a considerable amount of time because, for example, the researcher had to interview eighteen participants, transcribe recorded interviews into a word document, proofread the data and did a spelling check, coded the data using NVIVO software application, analysed the codes into categories and then converted categories into themes and sub-themes. Thus, this took two to three months.

Although the methodology itself was challenging, the researcher further found that the research itself was challenging in general. For example, recruiting participants who did not mind discussing other opportunistic diseases that emerge in blesser-blessee relationships other than HIV/AIDS was not easy. It was more challenging for the researcher to find academic sources to support the arguments raised while doing the literature review of the study.

8.5 Recommendation

There is limited knowledge on the link between blesser-blessee relationships and a family's influence. It has become a norm for society to frame poverty as a motivation of blesser-blessee relationships' prevalence. Reports from this study suggest that scholars should focus on African family values in South Africa and how these values influence young women to resort to blesser-blessee relationships. For example, it is normal for Black families to motivate a man to pay lobola and economically provide for

the extended families. Hence, these days young women prefer dating a man for money, not love.

This study recommends that parents and high schools should provide educational information about blesser-blessee relationships to empower these young girls not to resort into this phenomenon. A study conducted by Ntsieni (2017) vehemently revealed that BCC is lacking; hence, young women largely engage in blesser-blessee relationship. Thus, if these young girls are empowered, they will see that it is not good to establish sexual relationships to accomplish personal goals, rather, it is health challenging because there are sexual activities that are embedded with this phenomenon. For example, a blesser may feel entitled and demand unsafe sex because he is economically providing for a blessee to lead opulent lifestyle. It is also important for future research to focus on the effects of influencers and social media in blesser-blessee relationships toward health communication.

The study further recommends that future research should focus of the phenomenon of *Izkhothane* and why older rich men date young girls as the contributors to prevalence of transactional relationships among university students. This will establish more knowledge on how the influence of global materialism affect the boy child in South Africa. To address this, all stakeholders, including organisations and the society as a whole need to work together in finding new strategies to empower young men and deal with blesser-blessee relationship problems such as intimate partner violence.

Since the methodology the researcher used was a bit challenging, it is recommended that future researchers use a quantitative research methodology. It may enable them to recruit more participants and have more data without spending time going around trying to recruit participants for in-depth interviews. Moreover, the researcher recommends that they adopt a survey because it is relatively simple to administrate (can be developed in less time compared to other data-collection methods), it can be done remotely, and it reduces geographical dependence. On the other hand, a questionnaire survey may also give respondents more confidence about their privacy and anonymity, and be able to provide more information

8.6 Conclusion

This study was about exploring the experiences of female university students in blesser-blessee relationships in Limpopo Province and to develop a BCC to educate young girls against blesser-blessee relationships. The study explored the literature drawn on blesser-blessee relationship in two different contexts. This first part was in Chapter 2, which focused on transactional sex and blesser-blessee phenomenon. Thus, the study explored the literature drawn on blesser-blessee relationships and most scholars show that this phenomenon emerged due to poverty (Sinethemba, 2017) and university students wanting to pay tuition fees due to lack of funding (Sherfer et al., 2012). In Chapter 3, the researcher explored the use of BCC in different contexts. Most scholars revealed that a BCC strategy is imperative to advocate the audience to adopt healthy behaviours (Lewis et al., 2021).

The study adopted theories that enabled the researcher to fulfil the study's objectives. Thus, the first theory is Health Belief Model coined by Becker (1974) which postulates that it is imperative for the audience to adopt healthy behaviours. Thus, Health Belief Model contributed to developing BCC to advocate young girls against blesser-blessee relationship. The second theory is Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationship Theory coined by Scull (2019). Thus, the theory was developed to identify forms of sugar relationships and it has enabled this study to identify different forms of blesser-blessee relationships. For example, the study identified two additional forms of blesser-blessee relationship, which are sweet ring prostitution and triangle love.

The study relied on qualitative research methodology. The researcher sampled 15 university students in blesser-blessee relationships and 3 health practitioners who worked directly with female students in Limpopo Province. Thus, the data were collected using in-depth interviews scheduled according to participants' availability schedule. The study further used snowball sampling in selecting eight postgraduate students. The information was received from two undergraduate students who were already interviewed. With the data received from the participants, the study used NVIVO application to code data into categories. The researcher later converted categories into five major themes with its sub-themes.

The study found two different findings on blesser-blessee relationships, and the researcher divided the findings into two chapters. The first finding in Chapter 6 was female students' understanding and experience of blesser-blessee relationships. It was found that female university students did not engage in blesser-blessee relationships because of poverty, but they resorted to this phenomenon to fulfil their goals of materialism obsession and leading lavish lifestyles on campus. Moreover, it was further found that most participants asserted that their family members chided them for dating a man who failed to economically provide for them and their family members. It was further proved that these family members thought that if a man fails to provide monetary gifts after sex, he did not love his partner (*mavuso*). It is evident that there are other influences that make female university students to establish sex-for-money relationships with older rich men. Additionally, the behaviour of wanting to fit in vehemently influenced these participants to engage in transactional relationships because they did not want their peers to disregard them. For example, peer pressure was found problematic because fourteen participants revealed that their friends influenced them to see a need to own expensive trendy clothes, unfortunately they could not afford hence they engaged in blesser-blessee relationship to access the money quickly.

The second part of the research findings is Chapter 7 was on the challenges of blesser-blessee relationships. The study found that the phenomenon of being blessed does not necessarily means that blessees fully enjoy, however, there are dire consequences that come as a price for being sexually involved with much older rich men for monetary gain. Thus, it was found that these participants experienced body commodification because they used sex as currency to access lavish lifestyle.

This study concludes that transactional relationships have tendencies that are like direct prostitution in some cases because the participants indicated that if a blesser is not sexually satisfied, a blessee will not be able to receive money. The health practitioners interviewed in this study, revealed that there are opportunistic diseases such as gonorrhoea, syphilis, HIV/AIDS, and hypothermia, which commonly infect these young women. They further indicated that power dynamics in transactional relationships make blesser to exercise their power both physically and economically

and it negatively impact blessees because they are obsessed with materialism, and they are forced to remain in harsh conditions. All the study's objectives were met and the aim of the study, which was to explore the experiences of female university students in blesser-blessee relationships whilst developing a communication strategy that can be used to educate young girls towards a behavioural change that may contribute to combating this phenomenon successfully.

REFERENCES

- Abraham, C., and Michie, S. 2008. A taxonomy of behaviour changes techniques used in interventions. *A Journal of Health Psychology*, 27: 379-387.
- Abrahams, E. 2005. Effects of South African men's having witnessed abuse of their mothers during childhood on their level of violence in adulthood. *American Journal of Republic Health*, 5: 345-355.
- Ackerman, B.P., Brown, E.D., D'Eramo, K. S., and Izard, C.E. 2002. Maternal relationship instability and the school behaviour of children from disadvantaged families. *A Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 38(5), 694–704. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.38.5.694>
- Ad Hoc Committee on Health Literacy for the American Council on Scientific Affairs, American Council on Scientific Affairs, and American Medical Association. 1999. Health Literacy: Report of the Council on Scientific Affairs. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 15(3): 552-557.
- Adam, M., and M. Mutongi. 2007. Sexual behaviour among Kenyan University Students. *Journal of Arizona-Nevada Academy of Science*, 39(2): 91 – 8.
- Adeola, A.M., Botai, J., Rautenbach, H., Adisa, O.M., Ncongwane, K.P., Botai, C., and Adebayo-Ojo, T.C. 2017. Climate Variable and Malaria Morbidity in Mutale Local Municipality, South Africa: A 19-year Data Analysis. *International Journal of Environment Research and Public Health*, 14(11): 1360.
- Adiche, C.N. 2009. 'The danger of a single story'. TED Global Speech.
- Adjei, J.A., and Kyereme, A.K. 2014. Transactional sex among female university students in Ghana: Implications for HIV education. *Journal of Health Education*, 114(6): 1-14.
- AIDS.org. 2012. *Opportunistic infections*. Available at <http://www.aids.org/topics/aids-factsheet/aids-background->

[information/what-is-aids/hiv-testing/cd4-t-cellests/opportunistic-infections/Retrieved on 23 September 2012](https://www.aids.gov/hiv-aids-topics/hiv-testing/cd4-t-cells/opportunistic-infections/)

- Ajzen, I. 1991. The theory of planned behaviour. *Organizational Behaviour and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2):179-211.
- Akuiyibo, S., Anyanti, J., and Amoo, B. 2022. Effects of behaviour change communication on hypertension and diabetes-related knowledge, attitude and practices in Imo and Kaduna States: a quasi-experimental study. *Journal of BMC Public Health*, 22:715.
- Albert, A. 2001. *Brothel: Mustang Ranch and its women*. New York: Random House.
- Alexandra, M., Peter, F.M., and Bilo, J.G. 1997. Shifts in doctor-patient communication during a series of outpatient consultations in non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus. *Journal of Patient Education and Counselling*, 30(3): 227-237.
- Alharasheh, H.H., and Pius, A. 2020. A review of key paradigms: positivism vs Interpretivism. *Global Academic Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(3): 39-43.
- Alkire, S., and Foster, J. 2011. Counting and multidimensional poverty measurement. *Journal of Public Economics*, 95(70):476-487.
- American Psychology Association. 2020. *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7:1-5.
- Andrea, M.W, Edward, A.F., Phuong, H.N., and Nguyen, P.M. 2020. Nutrition intervention using behavioural change communication without additional material inputs increased expenditures on key food in Bangladesh. *Journal of Nutrition*, 164-84.10.1093/in/nxz339.
- Andreasen, R. 1995. *Marketing social change: changing behaviour to promote health, social development, and the environment*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Andrew P.O., Bhuiyan, A.R., Sung, J.H., Mawson, A., and Shahbazi, M. 2020. Association between HIV/AIDS knowledge and attitudes among African American undergraduate students in Jackson, Mississippi. *Asian Journal of Resource Infectious Dis*: 29-40.
- Ankomah A. 1992. Premarital sexual relationships in Ghana in the era of AIDS. *Journal of Health Policy Plan*, 7(2):135–143.
- Anurandha, J., Kangave, J., and Van den Boogaard, V. 2020. International Centre for Tax and development, *Journal Institute of Development Studies*.
- Arnot M, Chege F.N and Casely-Hayford L. 2012. Schooling, rights, and urban poverty: young people’s narratives of citizenship in two sub-Saharan cities. In: C Colclough (ed). *Journal of Educational Outcomes and Poverty: a reassessment*, pp. 36-54. London: Routledge.
- Artemis, J.P., Taylor, J.C.L. and Mkandawire, M.C.C. 2015. Commonwealth magistrate’s and judges’ association. *Commonwealth Judicial Journal*, 15(3).
- Aruguete, M.S., Register, J.D., and Katrevich, A.V. 2014. *The effects of negative body talk in an ethnically diverse sample of college students*. Research Article, 1-12.
- Asp, G., Odberg, P.K., Sandberg, J.K., and Agardth, A. 2014. Associations between mass media exposure and birth preparedness among women in Southwestern Uganda: a communication-based survey. *Journal of Health Action*, 7(2): 904-22.
- Aubrey, J.S., and Frisby, C.M. 2011. Race and genre in the use of sexual objectification in female artists’ video. *Howard Journal of Communications*, 23(1): 66-87.
- Bamberg, S., Masson, T., Brewitt, K., and Nemetschek, N. 2017. The threat, coping, and flood prevention: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 54(1): 116-126.

- Baral, S.D., Fay, H., and Trapence, G. 2011. Stigma, health care access, and HIV knowledge among men who have sex with men in Malawi, Namibia, and Botswana. *Journal of AIDS Behaviour* 15, 1088–1097 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-010-9861-2>
- Barnes, B. 2014. Behavioural change, indoor air pollution and child respiratory health in developing countries. A review. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health*, 11(5): 4607-4618.
- Bashir, H., Nangoli, S., Ayibo, C., and Menon, P. 2022. Information adequacy and strategic behavioural change communication as a pandemic management tool: the mediating role of intern resonance. *Journal of Nutrition*, 10.1093/in/nxz339.
- Basow, S, A., and Campanile, F. 1990. Attitudes toward prostitution as a function of an exploratory study, *Journal of Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 14(1):135-141. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1990.tb00009.x>.
- Becker, M.H. 1974. The health belief model and sick role behaviour. In Becker, M.H. (Ed.), *The Health Belief Model and Personal Health Behaviour*, Charles S. Black, Thorofare, NJ, pp. 409-419, available at: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/109019817400200407>.
- Becker, M.H., Haefner, P., and Merriam, M. 1977. The Health Belief Model and prediction of dietary compliance: a field experiment. *Journal of Health and Social Behaviour*, 18(4): 348-366.
- Becker, M.H., Nancy, K., and Janz, R. 1984. The Health Belief Model: a decade later. *Journal of Health Education & Behaviour*, 11(1): 1-12.
- Bekker L-G, Alleyne G, Baral S, et al. 2021. Advancing global health and knowledge of students regarding HIV/AIDS. *The Open AIDS Journal*, 15 (51): 1-8.

- Bene, C., and Merten, S. 2008. *Women and fish-for-sex: transactional sex, HIV/AIDS, and gender in African fisheries*. *World Development*, 36 (5), 875-899.
- Bennel, K.L., Marshall, C.J., Dobson, F., Kasza, J., Lonsdale, C.B., and Hinman, R.S. 2017. Does a web-based programming system improve home exercise adherence for people with musculoskeletal conditions? *American Journal of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation*, 98(10): 850-858.
- Bentley, M.E., Wasser, H.M., and Creed-Kanashiro, H.M. 2011. Responsive feeding and childhood undernutrition in low-and middle-income countries. *Journal of Nutrition*, 141: 502-507.
- Berger, P.L., and Luckmann, T. 2010. *The social construction of reality. A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. London: Penguin Books.
- Bernard, H.R. 2002. *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative approaches*, (3rd ed). Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press.
- Bernstein, E. 2001. "The Meaning of the Purchase: Desire, Demand and the Commerce of Sex." *Ethnography* 2(3):389–420. doi:10.1177/14661380122230975.
- Bhana, D. and Pattman, R. 2011. "Girls Want Money, Boys Want Virgins: The Materiality of Love amongst South African Township Youth in the Context of HIV and AIDS." *Journal of Culture, Health & Sexuality* 13(8):961–72. doi:10.1080/13691058.2011.576770.
- Bhui, K., and Bhugara, D. 2018. Explanatory models for mental distress: Implications for clinical practice and research. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 181(1): 6-7.
- Birch, H.G. 1945. The relation of previous experience to insightful problem-solving. *Journal of Comparative Psychology*, 38(6): 367-383.
- Birks, Y., Gridley, K., Glanville, J., and Parker, G. 2020. Using systematic review to uncover theory and outcomes for a complex intervention in

- health and social care: a worked example using life story work for people who are HIV positive. *Journal of Health Services Research & Policy*, 24(4): 98-108.
- Bjorklund, D.F., and Shackelford, T.K. 1999. Differences in parental investment contribute to important differences between men and women. *Journal of Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 8 (3): 36-38. doi:10.1111/1467-8720-00020.
- Bongazana, H. 2014. *Social influence as a determinant of conspicuous consumption among South African urban township youth*. Acta Universitatis Danubius. Administratio, 6(1): 59-70.
- Bosch, T. 2011. *Young women and technologies of the self: social networking and sexualities agenda*, 25 (4): 75-86.
- Boshoff, P. 2021. The women of Sunland narratives on non-complaint women in South Africa's Daily Sun. *Journal of Communication in Print*.
- Boskey, E. 2022. What is the Health Belief Model? *Journal of Behavioural Psychology*, 2 (1):1-12.
- Botma, Y., Greef, L., and Mulaudzi, A. 2010. 2nd ed of *Research in Health Sciences*: 1-13.
- Braithwaite, S., and Holt-Lunstad, J. 2017. Romantic relationships and mental health. *Journal in Psychology*, 13(1): 120-125.
- Brawn, K.M., and Roe-Sepowitz, D. 2008. Female Juvenile prostitutes: exploring the relationships to substance use. *Journal of Child Youth Service*, 30: 1395.
- Brewis, J., and Linstead, S. 2000. "The Worst Thing Is the Screwing' (1): Consumption and the Management of Identity in Sex Work." *Journal of Gender, Work & Organization* 7(2):84–97. doi:10.1111/1468-0432.00096.

- Brink, H, Walt, C., and Rensburg, G. 2012. *Fundamentals of Research Methodology for Healthcare Professionals 3rd edition*. Cape Town: Juta
- Briscoe, C., and Abound, F. 2012. Behaviour change communication targeting four health behaviours in developing countries: A review of change technique. *Journal of Social Science & Medicine*, 75(4): 612-621.
- Brooks, V. 2009. Gold-digger. [https://www.barrypopk.com/index.php/new-york-city/entry/gold-digger/October 25,2009](https://www.barrypopk.com/index.php/new-york-city/entry/gold-digger/October%2025,2009).
- Bryan, E., Jennifer, W., and DuBois, J. 2019. Knowing versus doing: The value of behavioural change communication models for emotional communication in oncology. *Journal of Patient Education and Counselling*, 10.1016/j.pec.2019.07.023.
- Bryant, F.B. 2019. Savouring Beliefs Inventory (SBI): A scale of measuring beliefs about savouring. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 20(3): 879-891.
- Bubeck, H., Kreibich, E., Penning-Rowsell, W.J.W, Botzen, H., De Moel, F., and Klijn, P. 2012. *Explaining differences in flood management approaches in Europe and the USA-A comparative analysis* F. Klijn, T. Schweckendiek (Eds.), *Comprehensive flood risk management: Research for policy and practice*. Proceedings of the FLOODrisk2012 conference.
- Bubeck, P., and Polit, S. 2014. Understanding the implementation gap: policymakers' perceptions or ecosystem-based adaptation in Central Vietnam. *Journal of Climate and Development*, 13(1): 81-94.
- Burke, M. 2010. *Social network activity and social well-being*. Research Article: 1909-1912. <https://doi.org/10.1145/1753326.1753613>.
- Burns, N., & Grove, S. K. 2009. *Understanding nursing research: Building an evidence-based practice*. Elsevier Health Sciences, 1-13.
- Burroughs, J. E. & Rindfleisch, A. 2011. *What welfare? On the definition and domain of Consumer research and the foundational role of materialism*. In D. G. Mick, S. Pettigrew, C.

- Buss, D.M. 1989. "Sex difference in human mate preferences: Evolutionary hypothesis tested in 37 cultures. *Journal of Behavioural and Brain Science*, 12 91):1-14.
- Buss, D.M., and Barnes, M. 1986. 'Preferences in human mate selection'. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 50 (3): 559.
- Caldwell, J.C. 1999. Reasons for limited sexual behavioural change in the sub-Saharan African Aids epidemic, and possible future intervention strategies. *Journal of Resistances to Behavioural Change to Reduce HIV/AIDS infection*: 241-256.
- Career Guide. 2023. Basic Research vs Applied Research: What's the Difference? Accessed in www.indeed.com. Updated in August 1 2023.
- Carlson, J., Allen, C.T., Leek, C., Storer, H., Casey, E., & Tolman, R.M. 2017. *Participants' perceptions of the nature of events aimed at engaging men to eliminate gender-based violence. Global Social Welfare*, 4, 91-103.
- Carol, S.C., and Zachary, A.K. 2013. Jaboya vs Jakambi: Status, negotiation, and HIV risks among female migrants in the "Sex for Fish" economy in Nyanza province, Kenya. *Journal of AIDS Education Prevention*, 25 (3): 216-231. Doi: 10.1521/aeap.2013.25.3.216.
- Carpenter, C.J. 2010. A meta-analysis of the effectiveness of health belief model variables in predicting behaviour. *Journal of Health Communication*, 25(8): 661-9.
- Cave, B., and Curtis, V. 1999. *Effectiveness of promotional techniques in environmental health*. 1-12, pp://www.lboro.ac.uk/well/.
- Chabalala, J. 2016. 'Bad blesser' jailed for killing girlfriend. News24 Accessed from: <https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/bad-blesser-jailed-for-killing-girlfriend20160914> Date: 15 September 2018.
- Chae, J. 2014. *Interest in celebrities' post-baby bodies and Korean women's body image disturbance after childbirth*. *Sex Role*, 419-435. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-014-0421-5>

- Chamberlain, K., Schumaker, C.J., and Madiha, T. 2019. Health Belief Model. *Exploring Cultural Factors Influencing Iraqi Immigrant's views of Michigan*, 1-12.
- Champion, V. L., and Skinner, C. S. 2008. *The health belief model*. In K. Glanz, et al. (Eds.), *Health behaviour and health education: Theory, research, and practice*: 45-65. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Charles, A.V. 1986. Physically abused parents. *Journal of Family Violence*, 1(2): 343-355.
- Charterji, M., Murray, N., London, D., and Anglewicz, P. 2005. The factors influencing transactional sex among young men and women in 12 sub-Saharan African countries. *Journal of Social biology*, 52 (12), 56-72.
- Chauke, C. 2019. Taking the sting out of Black Tax. In: Mhlongo, N (ed.). *Black Tax: burden or ubuntu*. South Africa: Jonathan Ball Publishers, PP. 196-201.
- Cheung, J.C.K., Lee, T.J., and Li, J.C.M. (2016). Family-cantered prevention of adolescent girls and boy's prostitution. *Final report submitted to the Central Policy Unit, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Department of Social Studies (City University of Hong Kong) and Hong Kong Social capital and Impact Assessment Research Unit*, 1-49.
- Chick, R. 2000. *Coercive sexual practices and gender-based violence on a university*, 1-12.
- Chireshe, R., Jadezweni, J.M.M., Cekiso, M., and Maphosa, C. 2010. Poverty: Narratives and experiences of street children in Mthatha, Eastern Cape, South Africa. *Journal of 204 Psychology in Africa*, 20(2): 199-202.
- Chishlom, A., Hart, J., Karen, M., and Peters, S. 2014. Development of a behaviour change communication tool for medical students: The 'Tent Pegs' booklet. *Journal of Patient Education and Counselling*, 94(1): 50-60.

- Choudry, V. 2015. *Trading in sexual currency: Transactional Sex, Sexual Coercion, and Sexual Behaviours among young people in Uganda*. Department of Clinical Sciences, Lund University, 34: 1-12.
- Christens, B.D. 2013. The Psychology and Practice of Youth-Adult Partnership: Bridging Generations for Youth Development and Community Change. *A Journal of Community Psyche* 51: 385–397. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-012-9558-y>
- Christina, I., Jones, J.D., Jensen, J., and Jeremy, W. 2016. The Health Belief Model as an Explanatory Framework in Communication Research: Exploring Parallel, Serial, and Moderated Mediation. *Journal of Health Communication*, 30(6): 566-576.
- Christopher, S., Swader, I., and Vorobeva, D. 2015. Revisiting Gifts for Sex in Moscow, Kyiv, and Minsk: A compensated dating survey. *Journal of Sexuality & Culture*, 19: 321-348.
- Chu, L.L., and Laidler, R.L. 2016. The health promotion lifestyle of metabolic syndrome individuals with a diet and exercise programme. *International Journal of Nursing Practice*, 20(2): 142-148.
- Clark, C., Spencer, R.A., Shrestha, B., Ferguson, G., Oakes, J.M, and Gupta, J. 2017. Evaluating a multicomponent social behaviour change communication strategy to reduce intimate partner violence among married couples: study protocol for a cluster randomised trial in Nepal. *Journal of Public Health*. 17;570-21.
- Coleman, M.H., Butler, E.O., Long, A.M., and Fisher, F.D. 2016. In and out of love with hip-hop: Saliency of sexual scripts for young adult African American women in hip-hop and Black oriented television. *Journal of Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 18 (10): 1165-1179.
- Collier, C.N., and Raney, R. 2017. Regulating sexual harassment in the House: A gendered analysis of Canada's member-to-member code of conduct on sexual harassment. *Paper presented at the Canadian Political*

Science Association annual meeting, Ryerson University, Toronto, ON, May 30 to June 1, 2017.

- Conard, N.J. 2005. An overview of the patterns of behavioural change in Africa and Eurasia during the middle and late Pleistocene. *Journal of Cultural Evolution in Africa and Eurasia During the Middle and Late Pleistocene*, 1-40.
- Cresswel, J.W. 2013. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Cross, S.O., and Hughes, A. 2011. A Systematic Review of Responsive Feeding and Child Obesity in High-Income Countries, *Journal of Nutrition*, Volume 141(3): 495–501, <https://doi.org/10.3945/jn.110.130047>
- Cwynar-Horta, J. 2016. The commodification of the body positive movement on Instagram. *Journal of Communication and Culture program*, 8(2): 36-56.
- Darko, R. 2007. Health urban Ghanaian women as identified by Women's Healthy Study of Accra. *International Journal of Gynaecology & Obstetrics*, 99(2): 150-156.
- Davidhizar, R. 1983. *Critique of the health-belief model*. *Journal of Advance Nursing*, 8(6): 467-472.
- Davidson, K.W., Goldstein, M., Kaplan, R.M., Kaufman, P.G., Knatterud, G.L., and Orleans, C.T. 2003. Evidence-based behavioural medicine: what is it and how do we achieve it? *Journal of Annals of Behavioural Medicine*, 26: 161-171.
- Davinson, N., and Sillence, E. 2014. Using the health belief model to explore users' perceptions of being safe and secure in the world of technology-mediated financial transactions. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 72(2): 154-168.

- Dawes, R. M. 1998. Behavioural decision-making and judgment. In D. T. Gilbert, S. T. Fiske, & G. Lindzey (Eds.), *The handbook of social psychology* (pp. 497–548). McGraw-Hill.
- De Beauvoir, W. 1982. *Blaming the Victim*. Vintage Books, New York.
- De Zaldondo, B., and Bernard, J.M. 1995. Meanings and consequences of sexual-economic exchange: gender, poverty, and sexual risk behaviour in Urban Haiti. *Journal of Sex and Gender*, 2(1):1-39.
- Deech, R. 2009. *What's a woman worth?* *Family Law*, 39 (12): 1140-1145.
- Dekeseredy, W.S., & Schwartz, M.D. 1996. Exploring equality between men and women. *Journal of Contemporary Criminology*, 2(1):1-14.
- Denson, T.F., Grisham, J.R., and Moulds, M.L. 2014. *Cognitive reappraisal increases heart rate variability in response to an acute stressor*. *Emotion*, 14(3): 522-530.
- Denzin, N.K., and Lincoln, Y.S. 2004. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oak: Sage.
- Digithum, A. 2008. "On academic plagiarism in Europe. *An analytical approach based on four studies*". *Num.* 10, <https://raco.cat/index.php/Digithum/article/view/394992>.
- Diorkin, S.L. 2021. Sample Size Policy for Qualitative Studies Using In-Depth Interviews. *Journal of Sex Behaviour*, 41: 1319-1320
- Disrosiers, A., Betancourt, T., and Kergaot, Y. 2020. A systematic review of sexual and reproductive health interventions for young people in humanitarian and lower-and-middle-income country settings. *Journal of Public Health* 20(1):61-66. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-020-08818-y>
- Dixey, R., and Njai, M. 2013. *The call to action: health promotion in the Gambia-closing the implementation gap?* *Global Health Promotion*, 20(2): 1-17.
- Domegan, C. 2021. Social marketing and behavioural change in a system setting. *Journal of Opinion in Environmental Science & Health*, 23: 1-12.

- Don, N. 2000. Health literacy as a public health goal: a challenge for contemporary health education and communication strategies into the 21st century. *Journal of Health Communication*,15(3): 1-12.
- Dongre A.R. 2021. Behaviour change communication: Past, present, and future. *Indian Journal of Community Med*, 46:186-90.
- Donovan, B. 2020. American Gold Digger: Marriage, Monet, and the Law from the Ziegfeld follies to Anna Nicole Smith. *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 52 (1): 142-144
- Douglas, J.A., Brown, M.D., Herman-Brugger, M.D., Boyd, M.D., and Paal, M.D. 2012. Accidental Hypothermia. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 1: 1-8
- Douglas, T., Kenrick, R.K., Gabrielids, J., and Cornelius, S. 1996. Adolescent Age Preferences for Dating Partners: Support for an Evolutionary Model of Life-History Strategies. *A Journal of Child Development*, 67(4): 1499-1511.
- Doyisa, N.P. 2019. *Blesser-Blessee Relationships and experiences of students at Howard College, University of KwaZulu-Natal*. Research Paper: 1-110.
- Du Plessis, J.G.G. 2015. Sugar daddy: the student attraction. *Journal of Gender & Behaviour*, 13 (2): 1-12.
- Du Plooy-Cilliers, F, Davis, C and Bezuidenhout, R. 2014. *Journal of Research Matters* (2nd ed). Edition Cape Town: Juta.
- Dunkle, K.L., Jewkes, R., Nduna, M., Jama, N., Levin, J., Sikweyiya, Y., and Koss, M.P. 2002. *Transactional sex with casual and main partners among students*, 1-6.
- Dunkle, K.L., Wingood, G, M., and Diclement, R, J. 2010. Economically Motivated Relationships and Transactional Sex Among Unmarried African American and White Women: Results from a U.S. National Telephone Survey. *Journal of Public Health Reports*. 4(2):90-91.

Dutta, M.J. (2018). *Communicating health: A culture-centred approach*. Books. Google.com

Edward, L., and Murphy, H.S. 2014. The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Recipient Epidemiology and Donor Evaluation Study (REDS-III): a research program striving to improve blood donor and transfusion recipient outcomes. *The Journal of AABB Transfusion*, 54(3): 942-955.

El-Rahman, M. 2014. Contemporary incident and mortality rates of kidney cancer in the United States. *Journal of National Library of Medicine*, 8(8): 247-252.

Ergene, T., Cok, F., Tumer, A., and Unal, S. 2005. A controlled-study of preventive effects of peer education and single-session lectures on HIV/AIDS knowledge and attributes among university students in Turkey. *Journal of AIDS Education and Prevention*, 17(3): 268-78.

Etikan, I., Musa, S.A., and Alkassim, R.S. 2016. Comparison of Convenience Sampling and Purposive Sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1): 1-4.

Falahati, L., and Paim, H.L. 2021. "Experiencing financial problems among university student: An empirical study on the moderating effect of gender", *Journal of Gender Management*, 25 (5): 315-330. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17542411211252633>.

Falco, S.D., and Bulte, E. 2011. A Dark Side of Social Capital? Kinship, Consumption, and Savings. *Journal of Development Studies*, 47(8): 1128-1151.

Family Health International. 2006. *The standard for curriculum-based reproductive health and HIV education programs*, 1-12.

Fasselt, R. 2018. Chick lit politics in a post-truth era: tricksters, blessees, and postfeminist girl power in Angela Makholwa's. 'The Blessed Girl'. *The Journal of South African and American Studies*, 19 (4): 375-397.

- Fielding-Miller, R., & Dunkle, K.L. 2017. Constrained relationship agency as the risk model of transactional sex, *African Journal of AIDS Research*, 1-12.
- Fielding-Miller, R., Dunkle, K.L., Cooper, H., Windle, M. & Hadley, C. 2016. *Cultural consensus modelling to measure transactional sex in Swaziland: Scale building and validation. Journal of Social Science & Medicine*, 158, 24-33. <http://doi.org/10.1016/;.socscimed.2016.04.005>.
- Finkelhor, D., and Browne, A. 1985. The traumatic impact of child sexual abuse: A conceptualisation. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 55(4): 530-541.
- Finweek, E.F 2008. *We're a nation of gold-diggers*: 22-23.
- Fishman, J., Yang, C., and Mandell, D. 2021. *Attitude theory and measurement in implementation science: a secondary review of empirical studies and opportunities for advancement*. *Implementation Science*, 16(87): 1-15.
- Floyd, D.L., Prentice-Dunn, S., and Rogers, R.W. 2000. A meta-analysis of research on protection motivation theory. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 30 (2): 407-429.
- Fouche, P., and Delport, P. 2005. *Experiences of students regarding clinical supervision in an applied psychology programme in South Africa*. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 22(1): 30-43.
- Fredrickson, B.L. 2013. Positive emotions broaden and build. *Journal of Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 47: 1-53.
- Freedman, J., Rakotoarindrasta, M., Dieu Randriansolorivo, J. 2020. *Analysing the economies of transactional sex amongst young people: Case study of Madagascar*. *Word Development*, 138: 2-3.
- Frieslaar, B.V. 2019. *The blesser-blessee relationships: A pastoral challenge*. *Dissertation in Theology*, 1-205.
- Frieslaar, B.V., and Masango, M. 2021. *Blessings or curses? The contribution of the blesser phenomenon to gender-based violence*. *HTS Theologies*

Studies/Theological Studies, 77(4), a6.
242.https://doi.org/10.41102/hts.v77i4.6242.

Gablin, A. 2014. *An introduction to social construction*. Social Research Reports, 26, 82-92.

Garcia, J. R., Reiber, C., Massey, S. G., & Merriwether, A. M. 2012. Sexual hookup culture: *A Journal of General Psychology*, 16(2), 161–176. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0027911>.

Garsd, J. and Crossan, A. 2017. *What it means in South Africa when you are #blessed. Across Women's Lives*. PRI's the world. Accessed from: <https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-08-10/what-it-means-south-africa-when-you-are-blessed> date; 22 August 2018.

Gatobu, A.K. 2017. *'Conjunction of gender violence and HIV/AIDS with implications for assessment and intervention in pastoral care'*, in T.N. Mucherera & E.Y. Lartey (eds.), *Pastoral care, health, healing, and wholeness in African contexts: Methodology, context, and issues*, Wipf & Stock, Eugene, OR.

Gbaguidi, C., and Koumagnon, A.D. 2018. The Syndrome of Sugar-Daddy and Sugar-Mummy: An Exploration in Amma Darko's *Not Without Flowers*. *International Journal Gender & Sex*, 2 (6): 134-148.

Geary R.S., Gómez-Olivé F.X., Kahn K, Tollman S, and Norris S.A. 2014. *Barriers to and facilitators of the provision of a youth-friendly health services programme in rural South Africa*, 14(1): 259. [<http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/1472-6963-14-259>] [PMID: 24934095].

Geldenhuys, K. 2016. *#Blessed-By whom? Servamus Community-based Safety and Security Magazine*, 109(11), 10-14. Accessed from: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s35658-016-0032-8> Date: 17 September 2019.

Gelfrand, D.M. 1981. Sex differences in children's altruistic behaviour and reputations for helpfulness. *Development Psychology*, 17(4), 434-437.

- Gervais, S.J. Vescio, T.K., and Allen, J. 2021. Objectifying media: A comprehensive meta-analysis. *Journal of Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 45(3): 395-418
- Ghosh, A., and Ghosh, R. 2020. Maternal health care in India: A reflection of 10 years of National Health Mission on the India maternal health scenario. *A Journal of Sexual & Reproduction Healthcare*, 25(1): 100-120.
- Glanz, K., and Bishop, D.B. 2010. The role of behavioural science theory in the development and implementation of public health interventions. *A Journal of Public Health*, 31: 399-418.
- Glanz, K. 2015. *Health Belief Theory, research, and practice*. Rimer, Barbara K. Viswanath K. (Kasisomayajula, firth ed.) San Francisco, CA.
- Gloss, C.M., and Harper, G.W. 2004. When street sex workers are mothers. *A Journal of Sexual Behaviour*, 33, 329-341. <https://doi.org/10.1023/6aseb.00000288886.95868.26>.
- Godson, P.O. 2019. *When dating becomes dangerous: Parents guide to preventing relationship abuse*. USA: Hazelden Publishing
- Goffman, E. 1959. *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York, NY: Anchor.
- Gouws, A. 2016. Women's activism around gender-based violence in South Africa: recognition, redistribution, and representation. *A Journal of African Political Economy*, 43(149): 400-415.
- Gouws, E., Kruger, N., and Burger, S. 2008. *The adolescent*. Heinemann, Johannesburg.
- Graaff, K., and Heineken, L. 2017. Masculinities and gender-based violence in South Africa: A study of a masculinities-focused intervention programme. *Journal of Development Southern Africa*, 34(5): 622-634.

- Gray, J. 2014. Sugar daddy: The student attraction. *A Journal of Gender and Behaviour*, 13(2), pp. 6720-6729
- Green, C.A., Palinkas, L.A., and Horwitz, S.M. 2015. Purposeful Sampling for Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis in Mixed Method Implementation Research. *Journal of Mental Health* 42: 533–544. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>
- Groess-Green, K. 2014. *Students with Sugar Daddies*. “Inside South Africa”. May 17. Retrieved 2013 (www.insidehighered.com).
- Gronlund, A., and Pettie, S. 2014. “Threesomes, Degenerates, and Love Triangle. IEEE 55th Annual Symposium on Foundation of Computer Science, Philadelphia, PA, USA pp.621-630.
- Gross, K.A., Schellenberg, J.K., Mayumana, I., and Obrist, B. 2013. The combined effect of determinants on coverage of intermittent preventative treatment of malaria during pregnancy in the Kilombero Valley. *Tanzania Malaria Journal*, 10(1): 140-30.
- Guion, L.A., Diehl, D.C., and McDonald, D. 2001. *Conducting an In-depth Interview*, 1-3
- Gunnarsson, L. 2022. Sugar dating in neoliberal times of precious love. *Journal of Gender Studies*. Presented as the Sociologidagarna, Uppsala, Sweden, March 16-16.
- Gynther, I., Mikkonen, I., and Smiths, A. 2012. Evaluation of European energy behavioural change programmes. *Energy Efficient*, 5: 67-82.
- Handy, B. 1999. *The transition region and coronal explorer*. *Sol. Phys.*, 187: 229-260.
- Hansard, *HL Deb*. 2014. 757.
- Hansen, M.A., and Johansson, I. 2021. Predictings Attitudes Towards Transactional Sex: The Interactive Relationship Between Gender and

- Attitude on Sexual Behaviour. *Journal of Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 19:91-104 <https://doi.org/10.1007/313178-020-00527-w>.
- Hargie, O., and Dickson, D. 2004. Communicating social identity: A study of Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland. *Journal of Communication Research*, 35(6): 1-12.
- Harrison, J.A., Mullen, P.D., Green L.W. 1992. A meta-analysis of studies of the Health Belief Model with adults. *Journal of Health Education Res*, 7(1):107-16. DOI: 10.1093/her/7.1.107. PMID: 10148735.
- Hassin, R.R., Abir, Y., Marvin, C.B., van Geen, C. 2022. An energizing role for motivation in information-seeking during the early phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Native Communication* 13, 2310. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-022-30011-5>
- Hawkins, K., Prince, N., and Mussa, F. 2009. Milking the cow: young women's construction of identity and risk in age-disparate transactional sexual relationships in Maputo, Mozambique. *Journal of Public Health*, 4(2): 169-182.
- Hayden, S. 2014. Using Health Belief Model to understand and Evaluate Behaviour in Women. *Journal of Health Communication*, 65(1); 217-32.
- HEAIDS. 2012. *Policy and Strategies Framework on HIV/AIDS for Higher Education Pretoria*: HEAIDS. Available from: http://www.heaid.ac.za/site/assets/files/1246/policy_and_strategic_framework_on_hiv_and_aids_for_higher_education.pdf.
- Heesup, H. 2021. Consumer behaviour and environmental sustainability in tourism and hospitality: A review of theories, concepts, and latest research. *A Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 29(7): 1021-1042.
- Hinyard, L.J., and Kruater, M.W. 2007. Using narrative communication as a tool for health behaviour change: A conceptual, theoretical, and empirical overview. *Journal of Health Education Behaviour*, 34(5): 777-792.

- Hiroko, O., and Yamaoka, Y. 2021. Discussion of citizen behavioural change using the nudge effect: a perspective based on social policy interventions. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 28(1): 1-15.
- Ho, J. 2003. From spice girls to enjo-kosai: formations of teenage girl's sexualities in Taiwan. *Journal of Inter-Asia Culture Studies*, 4: 325.
- Hoss, J. & Blokland, L., 2018. Sugar Daddies and Blessers: A Contextual Study of Transactional Sexual Interactions among Young Girls and Older Men. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 28(5), pp. 306-317.
- Howell, S., and Vincent, L. 2014. 'Licking the snake' – *The Izkhothane and contemporary township youth identities in South Africa*'. *South African Review of Sociology*, 42(2): 60- 208 77.
- Hulko, W. 2009. The time-and context-contingent nature of intersectionality and interlocking.
- Hsiu-Hua, S. 2005. 'The first Taiwanese wives' and 'the Chinese mistress': the international division of labour in familial and intimate relations across the Taiwan Strait. *A Journal of Transactional Affairs*, 45(14): 1-12.
- Huchard, E., King, A.J, Seur, C., and Suy, C. 2011. Social competition and selection in males and females. *Journal of Human Behaviour*, 82(6): 1337-1345.
- Hunter M. 2007. The changing political economy of sex in South Africa: the significance of unemployment and inequalities to the scale of the AIDS pandemic. *Journal of Medicine*, 64(3):689–700. 15.
- Hunter, M. 2002. The materiality of everyday sex: Thinking beyond 'prostitution'. *Journal of African Studies*, 61(1): 99-120.
- Hyman, R.B., Backer, S., Ephraim, R., Moadel, A., and Philip, J. 1994. *Health Belief Model Variable as Predictors of Screening Mammography Utilization*, doi:0160-7715/94/0800-0391507.00/0.
- Illeris, K. 2014. Transformative learning and identity. *The Journal of Transformative Education*, 18(2): 1-12.

- Izugbara, C., Ikamari, L., and Ochako, R. 2013. Prevalence and determinants of unintended pregnancy among women in Nairobi, Kenya. *Journal of Pregnancy & Childbirth* 13:1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2393-13-6969>.
- James, S., Reddy, S.P., Taylor, M., and Jinabhai, C.C. 2007. Young people, HIV/AIDS/STIs and Sexuality in South Africa: the gap between awareness and behaviour. *Journal of Paediatric Nurturing the Child*, 93(2): 264-269.
- Jana, M., Letsela, L., Scheepers, E., and Weiner, R. 2015. Understanding the role of the One-Love Campaign in Facilitating drives of social and behavioural change in South Africa: A Qualitative Evaluation. *Journal of Health Communication*, 20(3): 252-258.
- Jansen, A., M. Moses, S. Mujuta, and Yu, D+. 2015. "Measurements and Determinants of Multifaceted Poverty in South Africa." *A Journal of Development Southern Africa* 32 (2): 151–169.
- Jansen, C.P., Snijers, C.P., and Willemsen, M.C. 2021. Determinants of Domestic Risk Prevention Behaviour: The Importance of Separating Effects Within Person and Between Persons. *Risk Analysis: An International Journal*, 41(6): 929-943.
- Janz, N. K., and Becker, M. H. 1984. The Health Belief Model: A Decade Later. *Journal of Health Education Quarterly*, 11(1)1–47.
- Jeawon, R. 2023. Masculine Norms, Sugar Daddies and Violence Against Women in South Africa: Empowering the Interconnections. *Southern African Journal of Social Work & Social Development*: 35(1): 1-18.
- Jewkes R, Morrell R, Sikweyiya Y, Dunkle K, Penn-Kekana L. 2012. Transactional relationships and sex with a woman in prostitution: prevalence and patterns in a representative sample of South African men. *Journal of Public Health*, 12:325.

- Jewkes, R. and Morrell, R., 2012. 'Sexuality and the limits of agency among South African teenage women: *Theorising femininities and their connections to HIV risk practices*', *Journal of Social Science and Medicine* 74(11), 1729–1737. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2011.05.020>.
- Jimenez, D. 2015. *Meet and marry the rich*. Bank Rate.com. Archived from original on 15 December 2015. Retrieved 8 December 2022.
- Jochelson, G.B. 2001. HIV/AIDS and 'other' in South Africa: the blame goes on. *Journal of Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 8(1): 67-77.
- Joel, A.H., Patricia, D.M., and Lawrence, W.S. 1992. A meta-analysis of studies of the Health Belief Model with adults. *Journal of Health Education Research*, 7(1): 107-116.
- Kambarami, J. 2006. *Lobola: The perceptions of Great Zimbabwe University Students*. Research Article, 1-12.
- Katende, E. 1993. A new constrained self-turning controller. *The Canadian Journal of Humanities*, 71(4): 625-633.
- Kaufman, M.R., Harman, J.J., Marina, S., Orkis, J., and Robert, A. 2017. "Love me, parents": impact evaluation of a national social and behavioural change communication campaign on maternal health outcomes in Tanzania. *Journal of Pregnancy & Childbirth*, 17: 305-306.
- Kaufman, R.M., Grilo, G., Williams, A., Marea, X.C., Fentaye, F.W., Gebrestadik, A., and Yedeneka, A.S. ((2020). The intersection of gender-based violence and risky in Ethiopia: a qualitative study. *Journal of Psychology & Sexuality*, 11(3):198-211.
- Kawulich, B.B., 2004. Data analysis techniques in qualitative research. *Journal of Research in Education*, 14(1), pp.96-113
- Kekana, P. 2017. *The narrated social and sexual experiences of black gay university students who have sex in the closet*. Master's dissertation (Social and Psychological Research), University of Witwatersrand.

- Keller, K.M., and Lehman, N.M. 2008. Health communication is an influential tool for health problems in South Africa. *Journal of Health Research Quarterly*, 12(2); 15-2.
- Kelli, S.H. 2011. The Health Belief Model can guide modern contraceptive behaviour research and practice. *Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health*, 57(1): 78-81.
- Khue, N. 2013. "Gold-Digger: Reading the Marital and National Romance in Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine*". MELUS, 38 (3): 144-59. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42001243>
- Kieren, D., Cumming, C.E., and Cumming, D.C. 1992. Preventing Sexually Transmitted Diseases. *Journal of National Library of Medicine*, 38: 2641-2645.
- Kiger, A. (2004). *Teaching for health*. Books.google.com
- Kinsella, S. 2014. *Schoolgirls, Money, and Rebellion in Japan*. Routledge: Milton Park Book Company, 125-130.
- Kirkwood, D. 2018. *Gender in South Africa World Bank*, Washington, DC. World Bank, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/30025>. License: CC BY 3.0IGO.
- Knotler, J.V., and Wouter, M. 2005. *Straat prostitutes en verborgen prostitutie in Amsterdam*. Research Article, 1-147.
- Koenker, H., Keating, J., and Alilio, M. 2014. Strategic roles for behaviour change communication in a changing malaria landscape. *Journal of Malaria* 13, (1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/1475-2875-13-1>
- Koga, V.R.A. 2014. *Media framing of sexual and gender-based violence in Kenya: Reporting of Justice for Liz*. School of Journalism, 1-113.
- Kong, M.H. 2003. Material girls: sexual perceptions of Korean teenage girls who have experienced compensated dates. *Asian Journal of Women's Study*, 9: 67.

- Kuate-Defo, B. 2004. "Young Peoples' Relationships with Sugar Daddies and Sugar Mummies: What We Know and What We Need to Know." *Journal of Women's Health*, 8(2): 13–37.
- Kurlychek, K.M. 2021. *Perceptions of Agency and Sugar Culture on TikTok*. 1-35.
- Kurtycz, A. 2005. Understanding environmental behavioural change through communication: a new perspective of environmental education. *International Journal of Environment & Sustainable Development*, 4(1): 1-12.
- Kwakwa, M.M., Makhubele, J.C., Mabasa, M.A., Rabotata, N.E., Matlakala, F.K., Mafa, P., and Masilo, D.T. 2021. Factors influencing gender-based violence against young women migrants in selected provinces of South Africa. *A Journal of Gender & Behaviour*, 19(1): 15-25.
- Lacroix, J.G., and Tremblal, G. 1997. The initializations of cultural commodification: logistics and strategies. *Journal of Sociology*, 45(4): 39-69.
- Lam, O.W. 2003. Why did enjo-kossai anchor in Taiwan but not in Hong Kong? Or the convergence of enjo and Kosai in teenage sex work. *Journal of Inter-Asia Culture Studies*, 4: 353.
- Lasswell, H.D. 1948. The structure and function of communication in society. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 34(4): 451-454.
- Lawton, Z., and Callister, P. 2010. *Older Women-Younger Men Relationships: The Social Phenomenon of 'cougars.'* A Research Note, Institute of Policy Studies Working Paper, 1-12.
- Leach, F., Dunne, M., and Salvi, F. 2014. *School-related gender-based violence: A global review of current issues and approaches in policy, programming, and implementation responses to school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) for education sector.*

- Leclerc-Madlala, S. 2003. Transactional sex and Pursuit of Modernity, Social Dynamics. *A Journal of African Studies*, 29(2): 213-233.
- Lee, T.Y., and Shek, L.T. 2013. Compensated Dating in Hong Kong: Prevalence, Psychological Correlates, and Relationships with other Risky Behaviours. *Journal of Department of Applied Social Science*. 1-14.
- Leedy, P., and Ormrod, J.E. 2005. *Practical Research*. Planning and Designing 8th Edition.
- Lekekela, M. 2018. *An evaluation of the impact of Health Communication Campaigns at the University of Limpopo*. MA dissertation: University of Limpopo.
- Levy, J., and Jakobsson, P. 2014. Sweden's abolitionist discourse and law: Effects on the dynamics of Swedish sex work and on the lives of Sweden's sex workers. *Journal of Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 14(5), 593-607. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748895814528926>.
- Lewin, K. 1947. *Field theory in social science*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Lewis, J., Ridehalgh, C., Moore, A., and Hall, K. 2021. *This is the day your life must surely change, prioritising behavioural change in musculoskeletal practice*. *Physiotherapist*, 112: 158-162.
- Limpopo Provincial Government. *Vhembe District Health Plan*. 2019. Available from: http://www.health.gov.za/DHP/docs/DHP2018-21/Limpopo/Vhembe_District.pdf
- Linker, H. 2010. 'Buying into the Hype: Trophy Antiques and Collectibles', 1-14.
- Lubbungu, L. 2021. *The blesser and the blessee phenomenon: Women empowerment or sexual predatory antics*, 1-6.
- Luft, J., and Igham, H. 1955. The Johari Window. *A Graphic Model of Awareness in Interpersonal Relations*, 1-2.

- Luke, N., and Kurz, K.M. 2002. *Cross generational and transactional sex relations in sub-Saharan Africa: Prevalence of behaviour and implications for negotiating safer sex practices*. ICRW. http://www.icrw.org/docs/crossgensex_report_902.pdf
- Mabunda J, Lebesse R, Maputle M, Chauke P. 2015. Perceived risk behaviours related to teenage pregnancy among university students in Limpopo province, South Africa. *Journal of Human Ecology* 51(1-2): 66-72.
- Machisa, M.T., Chirwa, E., Mahlangu, P., Nunze, N., Sikweyiya, Y., Dartnall, E., Pillay, M., and Jewkes, R. 2022. Suicidal thoughts, depression, post-traumatic stress, and harmful alcohol use associated with intimate partner violence, and rape exposure among female students in South Africa. *International Journal of Environment & Public Health*, 19 (13), 7913. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19137913>.
- Maddux, J., and Roger, R.W. 1983. Protection motivation and self-efficacy: A revised theory of fear appeals and attitude change. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 19(5): 469-479.
- Madyibi, S. 2017. *The relationship between conspicuous consumption and poverty in developing countries: Evidence from South Africa*. Master's dissertation (Economics), University of the Western Cape: Cape Town
- Maganja, R.K., S. Maman, A. Groves, and J.K. Mbwambo. 2009. *Skinning the goat and pulling the load: Transactional sex among the youth in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania*. *AIDS Care* 19, no. 8: 974–81
- Magubane, N.N. 2016. Black tax: The emerging middle-class reality, *master's dissertation (Business Administration)*, University of Pretoria: Pretoria.
- Mahlori, X.F. 2016. *Social work students' perceived preparedness for practice*. (Unpublished masters' thesis, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg). Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10210/235253>.
- Maibach, E., and Holtgrave, D.R. 1995. Advances in public health communication. *A Journal of Public Health*, 16: 219-38.

- Majola S. 2014. *Love, money, and HIV: becoming a modern African woman in the age of AIDS*. Oakland, California: University of California Press.
- Makhubele, J., and Masilo, D. 2017. Reviewing factors which predispose learners to indulge in sexual activities against the risk of pregnancy and sexual diseases: Implications for social work intervention. *Journal of Gender and Behaviour*, 15(3): 9627-9638.
- Mampane, J. N. 2019. *Exploring the “blesser and blessee” phenomenon: young women, transactional sex, and HIV in rural South Africa*. SAGE, pp. 1
- Mampane, J.N. 2016. Factors influencing the vulnerability of women to the risk of HIV infection in rural villages in Northwest province, South Africa. *A Journal of Gender & Behaviour*, 14,7338-7346.
- Manase, K, C. 2016. Wives at the Market Place: Commercialisation of Lobola and Commodification of Women’s bodies in Zimbabwe. *The Journal of Oriental Anthropologist*, vol 16(2): 229-243.
- Mangoma, A., and Wilson-Prangley, A. 2019. Black Tax: Understanding the financial transfers of the emerging black middle class. *Journal of Development in Southern Africa*, 36(4): 443-460.
- Marais, H. 2011. *South Africa pushed to the limit. The political economy of change*. London: Zed Books.
- Marx, K. 2010. *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. In: Sitton, J.F. (eds) *Marx Today*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230117457_5
- Masango, M. 2016. *Blessings or cursed? The contribution of the blesser phenomenon to gender-based violence and intimate partner violence*. Research Articles, 1-150.
- Masenya, M. 2017. *Reading Proverbs 7 in the context of female ‘blessers’ and sugar mamas in South Africa*. Scriptura, 120-132.

- Masvawure, T.B. 2010. "I just need to be Flashy on Campus": Transactional sex at the University of Zimbabwe. *Journal of Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 12, (8):857-70.
- Masvawure, T.B., Sandfort, T'G., Vasu, R.K., Collier, L., and Tim, L. 2015. 'They think that guys have money': gender identity and transactional sex among Black men who have sex with men in four South African townships. *A Journal of Culture & Sexuality*, 17 (7): 891-905.
- Masweneng, K. 2022. *Cele does it again: 'I can't imagine a beautiful woman with a zama-zama*. Sunday Times, 07 August 2022.
- Matsue, N., Daw, T., and Garret, L. 2014. Women Fish Trade on the Kenyan Coast: Livelihoods, bargain power and participation in management. *Coastal Management*, 42, 531-554.
- Mavhandu-Mudzusi, A.H. 2019. Are "Blessers" a refuge for refugee girls in Tshwane, the capital city of South Africa? A phonomyography study. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 20(2), 257-270.
- Mbelle, N., Setswe, G., Sifunda, S., Mabaso, M., and Maduna V. 2014. *HIV and AIDS related knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of students and staff at South African technical and vocational education and training colleges in South Africa*, 1.110.
- Mbongwe, B.B. 2012. *Power-sharing partnerships: Teachers' experiences of*
- McLellan, G. 2013. An Examination of the causes and consequences of compensated dating (enjo-Kosai) in Contemporary Japanese Society. *Journal of Human Environmental Studies, Electronic Edition*, 6: 1-13.
- McLuhan, M. 1964. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, pp 127-221.
- McMahon, S.H. 2021. American Gold Digger: in Marriage, Money, and the Law from the Ziegfeld Follies to Anna Nicole. *Journal of Law & Society Review*, 55 (2): 365-366. DOI:10.1111/lasr.12544.

- McMillan, K., Worth, H, and Rawstone, P. 2018. Usage of the term's prostitution, sex work, transactional sex, and survival sex: their utility in HIV prevention research. *A Journal of Sexual Behaviour*, 47 (5), 1517-1527.
- Menon, U., and Szalacha, L. 2008. *The International Encyclopaedia of Communication*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405186407.wbiecho006>.
- Mensah, E.O. 2020. When you open your legs, you eat: The discourse of transactional sex among female youth in Nigeria. *Journal of Sexuality and Culture*, 24(3): 543-560.
- Meyiwa, T., Williamson, C., Masti, T., and Ntabanyane, G.M. 2017. A twenty-year review of a policy landscape for gender-based violence in South Africa. *Journal of Gender & Behaviour*, 1596-9231.
- Mhlongo, N (ed.). 2019. *Black Tax: Burden or Ubuntu*. South Africa: Jonathan Ball Publishers.
- Milaine, A., and Carmichael, J.T. 2015. The 'Cougar' Phenomenon: An examination of the factors that influence age-hypogamies sexual relationships among middle-aged women. *A Journal of Marriage & family*, 77 (5): 1250-1265.
- Milne, S., Sheeran, P., and Orbell, S. 2000. Prediction and intervention in health-related behaviour: A meta-analytic review of protection motivation theory. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 30 (1): 106-143.
- Ministry of Health. 2011. *Uganda Malaria Program review report*.
- Mizinga, F.M. 2000. Marriage and bride wealth in a matrilineal society: The case of the Tonga of Southern Zambia: 1900-1996. *Journal of African Economic History*;28: 53-87
- Mnisi, J. 2015. Burning to consume? Izkhothane in Daveyton as aspirational consumers. *A Journal of Communication*, 41(3): 340-353.

- Moagi. C. 2017. We won't forget. Daily Sun. Accessed from: <https://www.mysubs.co.za/pdf/897540/true?hash=I9Kf4WghkiL9d0bgjcs8NEY7uFMxQ2Kcv7OjW1qXt41> Date: 15 September 2018.
- Moffett, H. 2016. *Feminism and the South African polity – A failed marriage*. In P. Vale, L. Hamilton, Lawrence and E. Prinsloo, Traditions in South Africa. Ideas, individuals, and institutions. Durban: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press
- Moodley P, Ebrahim S. 2019. # Blesser: A critical evaluation of conceptual antecedents and the allure of a transactional relationship. *Acta Academica* 2019, 51(2):21–40.
- Moore, A., A.E. Biddlecom, and E. Zulu. 2007. Prevalence and meanings of exchange of money or gifts for sex in unmarried adolescents' sexual relationships in sub-Saharan Africa. *African Journal of Reproductive Health* 11(3): 44–61.
- Moorhead SA, Hazlett DE, Harrison L, Carroll JK, Irwin A, Hoving C. 2013. A New Dimension of Health Care: Systematic Review of the Uses, Benefits, and Limitations of social media for Health Communication. *Journal of Medicine Internet Res*: 15(4): e85 Doi: [10.2196/jmir.1933](https://doi.org/10.2196/jmir.1933)
- Morgan, M.G. 2014. *Use (and abuse) of expert elicitation in support of decision-making for public policy*. PNAS, 111(20): 7176-7184.
- Motseki, M., and Oyedemi, T. 2017. Social media and the cultural ideology of beauty among black women in South Africa. *Journal of Communication*, 22: 136-148. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.18820/24150525/Comm.v22.11> ISSN 2415-0525
- Motyl, J. 2013. "Trading Sex for College Tuition: How Sugar Daddy 'Dating' Sites May Be Sugar-coating Prostitution." *Journal of State Law Review* 117(3):927–57.
- Mphatso, K., Vearey, J., Thomas, L., Kabiru, L., and Kazembe, L.N. (2015). The role of material deprivation and consumerism in decisions to engage

- in the urban slums of Blantyre, Malawi. *An International Journal for Research, Policy, & Practices*, 11 (3): 295-308.
- Mpofu, S. 2021. Booty Power Politics: The Social-mediated Consumption of Black female Bodies in Popular Culture, *Journal of African Studies*, DOI:10.1080/13696815.2021.1989286.
- Mthiyane, A. 2022. *Siyadavazana only, there are no strings attached #Ezocansi.GagasiFMTalkshow*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TS-VE-C4>
- Mugisa, M., and Muzoora, A. 2012. Behavioural change communication strategy is vital in malaria prevention interventions in rural communities: Nakasongola District, Uganda. *Journal of National Library of Medicine*, 13(1): 1-12.
- Mulaudzi, R.Z. 2017. Factors leading to “blesser-blessee” relationships amongst students: the case of a rural university in Thulamela municipality, Limpopo province, South Africa. *Journal of Gender and Behaviour*, 15(2), ISN: 1596-9231.
- Mushwana, I., Monareng, L., Richter, S., and Muller, H. 2015. Factors influencing the adolescent pregnancy rate in the Greater Giyani Municipality, Limpopo Province- South Africa. *International Journal of Africa Nursing Sciences*, 2: 10-18.
- Mutshinya, M. 2019. *Chronicles of a slay queen*. In: Zazzy, N (ed). Gemini Queen Wake Pray Slay. [Books.google.co.za>books](https://books.google.co.za/books).
- Mutti, V.A. 2014. *Et les garçons? Reflections on Unicef Program for girls' post-primary education in Madagascar*. In *African Dynamics in a Multipolar World: 5th European Conference on African Studies-Conference Proceedings* (pp.1484-1499). Centro de Estudos Internacionais do Instituto Universitario de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL).

- Mwale, M. 2008. Behavioural change vis-à-vis HIV/AIDS knowledge mismatch among adolescents: The case of some selected schools in Zomba. *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 17(4): 1-17.
- Mwandiambira, G. 2015, June 29. *The Money Show* (B. Whitfield, Interviewer).
- Naess, P. 2018. Validating explanatory qualitative research: enhancing the interpretation of interviews in urban planning and transportation research. *Journal of Applied Mobilities*, 5(2): 186-205.
- Nancy S, and Dongre A.R. 2021. Behaviour change communication: Past, present, and future. *Indian J Community Med*, 46:186-90.
- Nasimiyu-Wasike, A. 2013, 'Domestic violence against women: A cry for life in wholeness', in D.W. Waruta & H.W. Kinoti (eds.), *Pastoral care in African Christianity: Challenging essays in pastoral theology*, 120–136, Acton Publishers, Nairobi.
- Nayer, Kavita Llona. 2017. "Sweetening the Deal: Dating for Compensation in the Digital Age." *Journal of Gender Studies* 26(3):335–46. doi:10.1080/09589236.2016.1273101.
- Newell, S. 1996. "Constructions of Nigerian Women in Popular Literatures by Men." *Journal of African Languages and Cultures* 9 (2): 169–188.
- News24.<https://news24.com>. Accessed, 26 May 2023.
- Ngigi, S., and Busolo, D.N. 2018. Behavioural change communication in health promotion: Approach practices and promising approaches. *International Journal of Innovative Research & Development*, 7(9): 1-11.
- Nilyufer, H.T., Zoonen, L., and Kuipers, G. 2013. 'I Dumped My Husband for a Turkish Toy boy'. *Journal of Feminist Media Studies*, 14 (5): 806-821.
- Njeri, W., and Negussie, T. 2013. Socio-economic inequality and HIV in South Africa. *Journal of Public Health*, 13 (1037): 1-12.
- Njie, B., and Asimiram, S. 2014. Case Study as a Choice in Qualitative Methodology. *Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 4(3): 35-40.

- Ntshangase, N. 2018. Sociocultural influences on teenage pregnancy in KwaZulu- Natal, South Africa. *Journal of Maternal & Child Nutrition*, 1(1): 2-10.
- Ntsieni, M. W. 2017. *Perception of students regarding transactional sex and its effect on health at a selected university in South Africa*, 1-64.
- Nwankwo, C. A., & Unachukwu, G. O. 2012. Teachers' awareness of the causes and effects of climate change and their classroom management strategies in the climate change era. *Research Journal in Organizational Psychology & Educational Studies (RJOPES)*, 1(3): 161-167.
- Nyathi, S. 2019. The burden of black tax can only be alleviated by generational wealth. In: Mhlongo, N (ed). *Black Tax: burden or ubuntu*. South Africa: Jonathan Ball Publishers, PP. 238-249.
- Oduro, G.Y. 2012. 'Children of the street': Sexual citizenship and the unprotected lives of Ghanaian Street youth. *Journal of Comparative Education* 48(1): 41-56.
- Olujimi, K., Taiwo, N.T., and Hassan, A.O. 2020. *The mass media and behavioural change: Lessons from family planning and health communication campaigns in Nigeria*. Department of Journalism School of Communication Lagos State University, 4(1): 2663-1045.
- Omondi, N.S., and Pamela, E.O. 2020. Semiotic Analysis of Gender Constructions among Facebook Users in Kenya. *Journal Article School of Arts and Social Sciences*, 77.
- Omonijo, D. O., Uche, O.C.O., N'wadiafor, K.L., & Rotimi, O.A. 2013. *A study of sexual harassment in three selected private faith-based universities, Ogun-state, South-West Nigeria*. *Open Journal of Social Science Research*, 1(9),250-263.
- Oni T, Prinsloo E, Nortje J, Joubert G. 2005. High school students' attitudes, practices and knowledge of contraception in Jozini, KwaZulu-Natal.

Journal of South African Family Practical; 47(6): 54-7.
[<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/20786204.2005.10873247>].

Orenstein, P. 2016. Schoolgirls: Young women, Self-esteem, and Confidence Gap. *Research Article*: 1-12.

Orji, R., Vassileva, J., & Mandryk, R. 2012. Towards an Effective Health Interventions Design: An Extension of the Health Belief Model. *Online Journal of Public Health Informatics*, 4(3).
<https://doi.org/10.5210/ojphi.v4i3.4321>.

Ostergen, P. 2020. *From zero-tolerance to full integration. Rethinking prostitution policies*. In Z. Davy, A. C. Santos, C. Bertone, R. Thoreson, S.E. Wieringa (Eds). *The SAGE handbook of global sexualities* (569-599). London: SAGE Publication Ltd.
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529714364.n27>.

Osuna-Rodriguez, M., Rodriguez-Osuna, L.M., Dies, I., and Amor, M.I. 2020. Perception of gender-based violence and sexual harassment in university students: Analysis of the information sources and risk within a relationship. *International Journal of Environmental Public Health*, 17:2-14.

Ott, M. Q., Bärnighausen, T., Tanser, F., Lurie, M. N., & Newell, M. L. (2011). Age-gaps in sexual partnerships: seeing beyond 'sugar daddies'. *Journal of AIDS (London, England)*, 25(6), 861–863.
<https://doi.org/10.1097/QAD.0b013e32834344c9>

Oxlund, B. 2009. Love in Limpopo: Becoming a man in a South African university. *Thesis*, 1-209.

Oyediran, K., Odutolu, O., and Atobatele, A. O. 2011. Intergenerational sexual relationship in Nigeria: Implications for negotiating safe sexual practices. *Journal of Social, Psychological Aspects of HIV/AIDS & Their Ramifications*, 49–62. <https://doi.org/10.5772/19518>

- Oyero, O., Oyesomi, K., Abioye, T., Abioye, E., and Kayode-Adedeji, L. 2018. Strategic communication for climate change awareness and behavioural change in Ota Local Government of Ogun State. *Journal of African Population Studies*, 32(1): 1-12.
- Palfreman, B. 2020. *Everything You Need to Know About Love Triangle Online Podcast* (in Movies & TV).
- Panther, D. 2016. *What does panther mean?* Internetslang.com. Archived from original on 5 May 2023.
- Park, K. 2019. *Textbook of Preventive and Social Medicine*. 25th ed. Jabalpur: Banarasidas Bhanot. [Ref list]. Participatory Methodology (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pretoria).
- Patel, L. 2011. *Successful social protection floor experiences*. Centre for Social development in Africa, University of Johannesburg, 1-14.
- Patton, T. O. 2006. Hey Girl, Am I More than My Hair? African American Women and Their Struggles with Beauty, Body Image, and Hair. *NWSA Journal*, 18(2), 24–51. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4317206>
- Peacock, J. 2012. Mental health implication of human attachment and sexual relationships. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 68(3): 292-303.
- Pechmann, C. 2001. A comparison of health communication models: Risk Learning versus Stereotype Priming. *Journal of Media Psychology*, 3(2): 189-210.
- Pettifor, A.E., Rees, H.V., Steffenson, A., Hlongwa-Madikizela, L., MacPhail, C., Vermaak, K. & Kleinschmidt, I. 2004. *HIV and sexual behaviour among young South Africans: a national survey of 15–24-year-olds*. Johannesburg: Reproductive Health Research Unit, University of Witwatersrand.
- Petty, R.E., and Cacioppo, J.T. 1986. *Communication and Persuasion: Central and peripheral routes to attitude change*. New York: Springer-Verlag.

- Phamotse, J. 2017. *BARE* (The blesser's Game: The breeding of an underdog). Maluleka, C. Johannesburg: Porcupine Press, 13-281.
- Pitpitan, E.V., Kalichman, S.C., Garcia, L.R., Cain, D., Eaton, L.A., and Simbayi, L. 2015. Mediators of behaviour change resulting from a sexual risk reduction intervention for STI patients, Cape Town, South Africa. *Journal of Behavioural Medicine*, 38(1): 194-203.
- Platt, L., Grenfell, P., Meiksin, R., Elmes, J., Sherman, S.G., Ganders, T. 2018. Associations between sex work laws and sex workers' health: A systematic review and meta-analysis of quantitative and qualitative studies. *PLOS Med*, 15(12), e1002680. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1002680>.
- Pompey, J. 2022. *How to Deal with a Love Triangle*. Expert Interview of Relationship Issues, and Commitment Issues. Accessed on 21 June 2022.
- Poulin, M. 2007. Sex, money and pre-marital partnerships in Southern Africa. *Journal of Social Science & Medicine* 65: 2383–93.
- Pringle, R.M. 2005. *The origins of the Nile Perch*. *Bioscience*, 55 (5): 780-787.
- Publishers Weekly. 2019. *Gold Digger: The Remarkable Baby Doe Tabor*, 266 (43): 745-756.
- Qakisa, M.E. 2003. Theories, models, and strategies in developing an effective HIV/AIDS campaign in South Africa: research article. *Journal for Communication Studies in Africa*, 22(2): 1-15.
- Rabbow, M. 2001. From awareness to behavioural change challenges in HIV/AIDS control in Southern Africa/Namibia. *Journal of Afrika Spectrum*, 36(1): 17-34.
- Rahman, M.S. 2017. The Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches and Methods in Language "Testing and Assessment" Research: A Literature Review. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 6(1): 102-109.

- Rajiv, N.R., and Maria, L. 2009. *Why health communication is important in public communication*. Bull World Health Organ, 87: 247.doi:10.2471/BLT.08.056713.
- Ramjee, M., and Daniel, G. 2013. *Prevalence of HIV-1 Drug Resistance among Women Screening for HIV Prevention Trials in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa*. (MTn-009).
- Ranganathan, M., MacPhail, C., Pttifor, A., Kathleen, K., Khoza, N., Twine, R., Watts, C., and Heise, L. 2017. "Young Women's Perceptions of Transactional Sex and Sexual Agency: A Qualitative Study in the Context of Rural South Africa." *Journal of Public Health* 17:666. doi:10.1186/s12889-017-4636-6.
- Ranjee, G., and Daniels, B. 2013. *Women and HIV in sub-Saharan Africa*. AIDS Research and Therapy, 10, Article 30.
- Ravhuhali, F., Netshirembe, I., Nendauni, L., Lavhelani, P.N., and Mboweni, H.F. 2020. The pervasiveness of materialism sensation and its effects on youth behaviour in a small comprehensive South African university. *A Journal of Gender & Behaviour*, 18 (2): 1582-15292. ISSN: 1596-9231.
- Rawstone, P. 2018. Usage of the Terms Prostitution, Sex Work, Transactional Sex, and Survival Sex: Their Utility in HIV Prevention Research. *Journal of Sexual Behaviour*: 47, 1517–1527 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-017-1140-0>
- Rex-Beach, R. 1911. *The Neér-do-well*. Kirk, C.A (ed). Elizaveta Publication, New York.
- Riba, M.I., and Saunderson, P.I. 2022. Stigma and insensitive communication in mental illness discourse as experienced by adolescents in Polokwane, South Africa: A Foucauldian lens. *The Journal of Mental Health Training, Education & Practice*. ISSN: 1755-6228.

- Richards, J.G., and Langa, M. 2018. Izkothane: Class and Masculinities of Black Male Youths in Katlehong Township, South Africa. *Journal of South African Review of Sociology*, 49 (2): 84-104.
- Richins, M.L. 2017. Materialism pathways: The processes that create and perpetuate materialism. *A Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 27(4): 480-499.
- Robert, W., Charles, P., Willy, B., and Arnoud, V. 2021. Young Dutch People's Experiences of Trading sex: A Qualitative Study. *Journal of Sex Research*, 49 (6): 547-557.
- Roberts, R., Jones, A., & Sanders, T. 2013. Students and sex work in the UK: Providers and purchasers. *Journal of Sex Education*, 13(3), 349–363. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2012.744304>
- Rodriguez, P.L., and Spirling, A. 2020. Word Embeddings: What Works, What Doesn't, and How to Tell the Difference for Applied Research. *The Journal of Politics*, 84(1): 18-23.
- Rogers, R. W. 1974. "A Protection Motivation Theory of Fear Appeals and Attitude Change." *Journal of Psychology*. 91, 93–114.
- Rosen, JE & Conly, SR. 1998. *Africa's population challenge: accelerating progress in reproductive health*. Country Studies Series, No 4. Washington, DC: Population Action International.
- Rosenstock, I. M. 1974. "The Health Belief Model and Personal Health Behaviour." *Journal of Health Education Monographs*, 2, 470–473.
- Rosenstock, I.M. 1996. *The Health Belief Model and HIV Risk Behaviour Change*. 1st ed. New York: Plenum Press.
- Rosenstock, I.M., Stretcher, V.J., and Becker, M.H. 1988 Social Learning Theory, and the Health Belief Model. *Journal of Health Education Quality*. Summer, 15(2): 175-83.

- Ruark, A., Dlamini, L., and Mazibuko, N. 2014. Love, lust and the emotional context of multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships among young Swazi adults. *Journal of Gender & Behaviour*, 20(6): 170-176.
- Russell, B. 2017. "Sharing," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36 (February), 715-34.
- Ruvimbo, M. 2020. "He Told Me He Was Going to Get What He Paid For": Sugar Baby. *Journal of Gender and Behaviour*, 6(3): 1-12.
- Sabine, K. 2016. Multilingual Practices and Language Scaling in Behavioural Change Communication on HIV/AIDS in Lesotho: The case of Phela Health and Development Communication. *African Journal*, 41(1): 1-12.
- SaferSpace. 2017. *Gender-based violence in South Africa*. Retrieved from <http://www.saferspaces.org.za/understand/entry/gender-based-violence-in-South-Africa>.
- Sanders, T. 2008. "Male Sexual Scripts: Intimacy, Sexuality, and Pleasure in the Purchase of Commercial Sex." *Sociology* 42(3):400–17.
- Sandlin, J.H. 2011. 'Now I Ain't Saying' She a Gold Digger: Wal-Mart Shoppers. Types of Poor Women in the Big Curriculum of Consumption. *Journal of Cultural Studies*, 11 (5): 464-469.
- Sandy, P.R. 1990. *Fraternity gang rape*. New York: New York University Press.
- Sandy, P.R. 1996. Rape-prone versus rape-free campus cultures. *Journal of Violence Against Women*, 2: 191-208.
- Saunderson, I.P. 2013. *HIV/AIDS at a South African University: Investigating the role of Walter Sisulu University's prevention role players and student behaviour at the Institute for advanced Tooling*. PHD Thesis, University of Glasgow.
- Schoub, BD. 1999. *AIDS and HIV in perspective: a guide to understanding the virus and its consequences*, 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Schwarz, S., and Hassebrauck, M. 2012. 'Sex and age differences in mate-selection preferences.' *Journal of Human Nature*, 23 (4): 447-449.
- Scull, M.T. 2019. "Its Own Thing": A Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationship Scripts. *Interpersonal Relationships and Social Networks Formation*, 63(1): 135-158.
- Seekings J., and Nicoli, N. 2002. *Class, distribution, and redistribution in postapartheid South Africa*. Transformation: critical perspectives on southern Africa, 50(1):1–30. 37.
- Sekudu, B. 2017. *Blessee bares it all*. News24. [Online] Available at: <https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/ex-blessee-bares-it-all20170920> [Accessed 5 June 2018].
- Selikow, T., and Mbulaheni, T. 2013. "I Do Love Him but at the Same Time I Can't Eat Love': Sugar Daddy Relationships for Conspicuous Consumption amongst Urban University Students in South Africa." *Journal of Empowering Women for Gender Equality* 27(2):86–98. doi:10.1080/10130950.2013.809930.
- Shadle, B. 2014. The Politics and Histories of Sexual and Gender Based Violence. *Journal of Women's History*, 26(1):185-194.
- Shaffer, D.R., and Kipp, K. 2007. *Developmental psychology: Childhood and adolescent*. Wadsworth, Belmont, CA.
- Sharrar, J.F. 1989. *Avery Hopwood: his life and plays*. University of Michigan Press, 1-5.
- Sherfer, T., and Strebel, A. 2012. "Deconstructing the 'Sugar Daddy': A Critical Review of the Constructions of Men in Intergenerational Sexual Relationships in South Africa." *Journal of Gender & Sex*, 26 (4): 57–63.
- Sherfer, T., Clowes, L., and Vergnani, T. 2012. Narratives of transactional sex on a university campus. *A Journal of Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 14(4): 435-447.

- Silberschmidt, M., and Rasch, V. 2021. "Adolescent Girls, Illegal Abortions and 'Sugar Daddies' in Dar es Salaam: Vulnerable Victims and Active Social Agents." *Journal of Social Science and Medicine* 52(12): 1815–1826. doi:10.1016/S0277-9536(00)00299-9
- Simon, William and John H. Gagnon. 1973. *Sexual Cond.*
- Sin, W. 2016. *Compensated Dating: An Ethical Analysis*. In: Yang, B., Kam Por, Y. (eds). *Ethical Dilemmas in Public Policy. Government and Citizenship in Asia*. Springer, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-0437-7_4.
- Sinead, M.C.C., and Cameroon, S.T. 2015. Social issues of teenage pregnancy. *Journal of Obstetrics, Gynaecology, and reproductive medicine*, 25 (9): 246-249.
- Sinethemba, S.S. 2017. Livelihoods, Lifestyle Choices, and the Constructions of Young Women's Realities in Ngangelizwe Townships, Mthata. *Research for Humanities*: 1-231.
- Singata, Z. 2020. *An ethical assessment of the structural agency of the blessee in the 'Blesser-Blessee' phenomenon*, 1-12.
- Smart, R.G. 1984. The impact of television advertising on alcohol consumption: an experiment. *Journal on Alcohol*, 43(10): 101-125.
- Smith ML, La Place LL, Menn M, Wilson KL. 2015. HIV-related knowledge and perceptions by academic major: *Implications for university interventions*. *Journal of Public Health*, 2(18):18.
- Snodgrass, L. 2016. The sins of the father: gender-based violence in post-apartheid South Africa. *Journal of Commonwealth Youth and Development*, 14(2): 57-70.
- Solontsi, J. 2016. News24. *The blesser phenomenon: Has it always been around?* Accessed from: www.news24.com/mynews24/the-blesser-phenomenon. Date: 21 June 2023.
- South Africa .2012. *Health Research Quarterly*, 12(2); 15-2.

- Sprague, C., McMahan, L. D., Maqsood, L., & George, G. 2021. 'Eventually I wanted something more': *sexual self-reflections of South African women engaged in transactional sex and sexual relationships with blessers*. *Culture, health & sexuality*, 1-15. Advance online publication.
- Srushti, U. 2021. Sugaring: Understanding the World of Sugar Daddies and Sugar Babies. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 58 (6), 775-784.
- Stake, R.E. 2010. *Qualitative Research: Studying How Things Work*. Guilford Press.
- Statistical Release. 2020. *General Household Survey*. www.statssa.gov.za.
- Statistical Release. 2023. National Poverty Lines. Available at www.satssa.gov.za
- Statistics South Africa. 2013. *Poverty and Lifestyle*. Available at www.statssa.gov.za/ (accessed 28 February 2022).
- Statistics South Africa. 2022. *The population development in Limpopo, South Africa*. Available at www.citypopulation.de/en/southafrica/admin/9_limpopo/
- Steinberg, S. 2007. *An introduction to communication studies*. (First edition). Cape Town: Juta.
- Stern, P. 2000. Toward a coherent theory of environmentally significant behaviour. *Journal of Social Issues*, 56(3): 407-424.
- Stoebenau K, Nixon SA, Rubincam C, Willan S, Zembe YZ, Tshikoane T, Tanga PT, Bello HM, Caceres CF, Townsend L 2011. *More than just talk: the framing of transactional sex and its implications for vulnerability to HIV in Lesotho, Madagascar, and South Africa*. *Globalization and health*, 7(1):1–15.
- Stoebenau, K., Heise, L., Wamoyi, J., & Bobrova, N. 2016. Revisiting the understanding of “transactional sex” in sub-Saharan Africa: *A review and*

synthesis of the literature. Journal of Social Science & Medicine, 168, 186-197. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2016.09.023>.

Stone-MacDonald, A.K. 2002. On the bright side I'm now the Girlfriend of a sex God: further confessions of Georgia Nicolson. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 45(8): 1-10.

Stretcher, V. J., and Rosenstock, I.M. 1997. "The health belief model". In Andrew Baum (ed). *Cambridge handbook of psychology, health, and medicine*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 113-117. ISBN 978-0521430739.

Sulat, J.S., Prabandrai, Y.S., Sanusi, R., Haspari, E.D., and Santoso, B. 2018. The validity of health belief model variable in predicting behavioural change: A scoping review. *Journal of Health Education*, 118(6): 14-25.

Sutton, J., & Austin, Z. (2015). Qualitative Research: Data Collection, Analysis, and Management. *The Canadian journal of hospital pharmacy*, 68(3), 226–231. <https://doi.org/10.4212/cjhp.v68i3.1456>

Swader, C.S., Strelkova, O., Sutormina, A., Syomina, V., Vyotskaya, V., and Fedorova, I. 2013. Love as a fictitious commodity: Gift-for-Sex Barter as Contractual Carriers of Intimacy. *Journal of Sexuality & Culture*, 17: 598-616. DOI: 10.1007/5/2119-012-9162-1.

Swidler, A., and S.C. Watkins. 2006. *Ties of dependence: AIDS and transactional sex in rural Malawi*. California Centre for Population Research. Online Working Paper Series.

Tabet, P. 2012. *Through the Looking-Glass: Sexual Economic Exchange*, in F. Omokaro and F. Reysoo (eds). Chic, cheque, choc. Transactions autour des corps and strategies amoureuses contemporaines (pp. 39-51) Geneva: Graduate Institute Publications.

Tamara, S., Lindsay, C., and Tania, V. 2012. Narratives of transactional sex on a university campus. *Journal of Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 14(4), 435-447.

- Tarana, J. 2020. *Women's Body as a Commodity: Has She Ever Owned Her Body?* 1-9
- Terrence, H. 2016. *Mavuso Stokvel: Stokvel for blessers?* Published 13 May 2016.
- Thanh, N.C., and Thanh, T.T. 2015. The Interconnection Between Interpretivist Paradigm and Qualitative Methods in Education. *American Journal of Education Science*, 1(2): 24-27.
- The U.S President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief (PEPFAR), 2015. *Transactional and age disparate sex in hyperendemic countries*, viewed 28 March 2022, from <https://aidsfree.usaid.gov/resources/pkb/behavioral/transactional-and-age-disparate-sex-hyperendemic-countries>.
- Thobejane, T.D., Mulaudzi, T.P., and Zitha, R. 2019. Factors leading to "blesser-blessee" relationships amongst female students: The case of rural university Thulamela Municipality, Limpopo, South Africa. *A Journal of Gender & Behaviour*, 15: 8716-8731.
- Thompson, S. 2016. *In defence of the 'Gold-Digger*. Onati Socio-Legal Series, 6(6): 1-24.
- Tinotenda, V.S. 2021. *A gender analysis of students' perception of entrepreneurship: A Zimbabwean survey*. Thesis, 1-212.
- Tombaugh, J.R., Mayfield, C., and Durand, R. 2011. Spiritual expression at work: exploring the active voice of workplace spirituality. *International Journal of Organisational Analysis*, 19(2): 146-170.
- Tongco, M.D. (nd). Purposive Sampling as a Tool for Informant Selection. *A Journal of Plant, People, and Applied Research Ethnobotany Research and Applications*, 1-12.
- Tregenna, F., and Tsela, M. 2012. Inequality and economic marginalisation: *Journal of Inequality, Unemployment & Poverty in South Africa*, 4(1):1-4.

- Tulloch, J. and Lupton, D., 2003. *Risk and everyday life*. Sage.
- Twenge, J.M, Campbell, W.K., and Foster, C.A. 2003. "Dissatisfaction with life: Changes from the 1970 to the 1990s". *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 85(1): 41-52.
- Ueno, C. 2003. Self-determination on sexuality? Commercialization of sex among teenage girls in Japan 1. *Journal of Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 4(2), 317–324. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1464937032000113060>
- UN Women, March 2011. *Violence Against Women Prevalence Data: Surveys by Country*. Accessed online on 6/20/12 at http://www.uniferm.org/attachements/gender_issues/violence_against_women/vaw-prevalence-matrix-2011.pdf.
- UNAIDS 2004. *Report on the Global AIDS pandemic Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS*. Geneva, Switzerland: UNAIDS, 1-16.
- United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS. 2014. *Unite with women: Unite against violence and HIV*.
- United Nations. 2008. *Millennium development goals report 2008*. Retrieved January 15th, 2022, from Millennium Development Goal Website.
- Upadhay, S. 2021. Sugaring: Understanding the world of sugar daddies and sugar babies. *Journal of Sex Research*, 58 (6): 775-784.
- Urban Dictionary. 2017. *Urban dictionary*. Available from: www.urbandictionary.com. Accessed 15 January 2022.
- Valkengoed, A.M., and Steg, L. 2019. Meta-analysis of factors motivating climate change adaptation behaviour. *Journal of Nature Climate Change*, 9(1): 158-163.
- Valls, R., Oliver, E., Sanchez, M., Ruiz, L., and Melgar, P. 2007. Gender violence also in universities? Research in this regard. *Journal of Investing Sexual Education*, 25: 219-231.

- Van der Straten, K., Grinstead, S, A., and Allen, G. 1998. Sexual coercion, physical violence, and HIV infection among women in steady relationships in Kigali, Rwanda. *AIDS Behaviour*, 2:61-73.
- Van-Boven, L., and Gilovich, T. 2003. To Do or to Have? That Is the Question. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85(6), 1193–1202. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.85.6.1193>
- Vanderheideu, E. 2021. *A matter of age. Love relationships between older women and younger men: The so-called “cougar” phenomenon.* International handbook of love, 369-391.
- Varinder, M. 2022. Consumer decision-making styles, involvement, and the intention to participate in online group buying. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 64(1): 1-12.
- Varjavandi, R. 2017. # *Blessers Must Fall: Youth-led participatory action research and photo story creation on teenage pregnancy, transactional sex, and gender-based violence.* Agenda, 31(2), 87-98.
- Vellai, M. 2021. *Understanding the ‘blesser’ and ‘blessee’ phenomenon.* Cape Town for Capetonians, published 3 June 2021.
- Verheijen, J. 2011. Complexities of the “transactional sex” model: non-providing men, self-providing women, and HIV risk in rural Malawi. 1(35): 116-131. *Journal of Anthropological Practice.*
- Young, A., and Nguyen, H. 2015. The relative influence of maternal nutritional status before and during pregnancy on birth outcomes in Vietnam. *European Journal of Obstetrics & Gynaecology and Reproductive Biology*, 194: 223-227.
- Wagle, K. 2019. Health Belief Model: An Interesting Model for Behaviour Change. *Journal of Health Promotion and Education*, 1-4.
- Wai Sze Lo, M., Sek Ying, C., and Fung, K. 2015. Factors associated with health-promoting behaviour of people with or at high risk of metabolic

- syndrome: Based on the health belief model. *Journal of Applied Nursing Research*, 28(2): 197-201.
- Wakabayashi, T. 2003. 'Énjo-kosai in Japan: Rethinking the dual image of prostitutes in Japanese and American Law. *Journal of Women's Law*, 13: 143.
- Walsh, K., Katherine, M., and Hasin, D. 2015. Lifetime prevalence of gender-based violence in US women: Associations with mood, anxiety, and substance use disorders. *Journal of Psychiatric Research*, 62:7-13.
- Wamoyi J, Stoebanau K, Bobrova N, Abramsky T, Watts C. 2016. Transactional sex and risk for HIV infection in sub-Saharan Africa: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of the international AIDS society*, 19(1):20992.
- Wamoyi, Joyce, Daniel Wight, Mary Plummer, Gery H. Mshana, and David Ross. 2010. "Transactional Sex amongst Young People in Rural Northern Tanzania: An Ethnography of Young Women's Motivations and Negations." *Reproductive Health* 7(2): 1–18. doi:10.1186/1742-4755-7-2.
- Wanka, F., and Rena, R. 2019. The impact of educational attainment on household poverty in South Africa: A case study of Limpopo province. *A Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation, and Development*, 11(5): 597-609.
- Warren, C., Becken, S., and Coghlan, A. 2016. Using persuasive communication to co-create behavioural change-engaging with guests to save resources at tourist accommodation facilities. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 25(7): 935-954.
- Waston, P. 1988. *The intergenerational transmission of dating violence: Social support as a moderator*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0978-0599-70254-7>.

- Watkins, D.C. 2017. Rapid and rigorous qualitative data analysis: The “RADaR” technique for applied research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1): 1-12.
- Waya, S., Mercer, C., Gilbert, V.L., Garnett, E., Sutcliffe, L.J., Weather-burn, P., and Hughes, G. 2017. ‘Side chicks’ and ‘side dicks’: understanding typologies and drivers of concurrent partnerships to prevent STI transmission among people of black Caribbean ethnicity in England. *BMJ Journals*, 93(1): 1-12.
- Wayne, L., and La Morte, M.D. 2019. Boston University School of Public Health. *Journal of Behavioural Change Models*, 1-7.
- Wilkinson, I.D. 2001. Behavioural and functional anatomical correlates of depiction in humans. *Journal of Communication & Neuroscience Research*, 12(13): 2849-2853.
- Willard, M. 2013. “Practicing” women’s agency and the struggle for transformation in South Africa. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 35(4), 525-543.
- Williams, P. 2017. *College students involved in sugar daddy relationships may be at risk for emotional damage*. City Homepage Stories & News. Accessed on July 18, 2023
- Williamson, C., Masti, T., and Ntabanyane, G.M. 2017. A twenty-year review of a policy landscape for gender-based violence in South Africa. *Journal of Gender & Behaviour*, 1596-9231
- Willoughby, B.J., Carroll, J.S., and Busby, D.M. 2018. Love triangles and infidelity: Examining the impact of emotional involvement and betrayal on distress. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 35(7): 945-964. Doi: 10.1177/0265407517717416.
- Wilson, C, M., Wright, P, F., Safrit, J, T., and Rudy, B. 2010. Epidemiology of HIV infection and risk in adolescents and youth. *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome*, 54(1): 55-60.

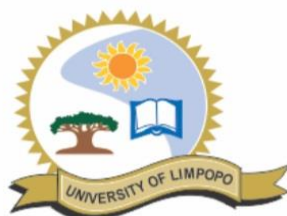
- Wojcicki, J. 2002. She Drank His Money: Survival Sex and the Problem of Violence in Taverns in Gauteng Province, South Africa. *Journal of Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 16:267-293.
- Wojcicki, J. and Malala, J. 2001. Condom Use, Power, and HIV/AIDS Risk: Sex-workers Bargain for Survival in Hillbrow/Joubert Park/Berea, Johannesburg. *Journal of Social Science and Medicine*, 53: 99-121.
- Wojcicki, J.M. 2012. Commercial sex work or Ukuphanda? Sex-for-money exchange in Soweto and Hamaskraal area, South Africa'. *Journal of Culture, Medicine & Psychiatry*, 26: 339-370
- Wolfenden, L., Nathan, N., and Williams, W.C. 2000. Computer-tailored interventions to facilitate health behavioural change. *BMJ Journal*, 49(22): 1-16.
- World Health Organization. 2001. *Education for Health*. World Health Organization, [last accessed on 2022 August 13]. Available from: https://www.who.int/topics/health_education/en/ [Ref list].
- World Health Organization. 2004. *Education for Health*. World Health Organization, [last accessed on 2022 August 13]. Available from: https://www.who.int/topics/health_education/en/ [Ref list].
- Wormeli, R. 2015. The seven habits of highly effective teachers. *Journal of Educational Leadership*, 68(1): 1-12.
- Wusu, D. 2012. *A reassessment of the effects of female education and employment of fertility in Nigeria*. Vienna Yearbook of Population Research, 10, 31-48.
- Xulu-Gama, N. 2017. *Hostels in South Africa: Spaces of perplexity*. Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press
- Yeku, J. 2017. “Thighs Fell Apart’: Online Fiction, and African Writing in a Digital Age.” *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 29 (3): 261–275.

- Yende, S.S. 2021. *Power dynamics that drive blesser-blessee relationships*. City Press. www.news24.com.
- Zembe, Y., Townsend, L., Thorson, A., and Ekstrom, A. M. 2013. "Money talks, bullshit walks" interrogating notions of consumption and survival sex among young women engaging in transactional sex in post-apartheid South Africa: a qualitative enquiry. *Journal of Globalization and Health*, 9:28.
- Zembe, Yanga Z., Loraine Townsend, Anna Thorson, and Anna Mia Ekstrom. 2013. "'Money Talks, Bullshit Walks' Interrogating Notions of Consumption and Survival Sex among Young Women Engaging in Transactional Sex in Post-apartheid South Africa: A Qualitative Enquiry." *Journal of Globalization and Health* 9:28. doi:10.1186/1744-8603-9-28.
- Zhan, L., and He, Y. 2012. Understanding luxury consumption in China: Consumer perceptions of best-known brands. *Journal of Business Research*, 65(10): 1452-1460
- Zhao, X. 2020. Health communication campaigns: A brief introduction and call for dialogue. *International Journal of Nursing Sciences*, 7(1): S11-S15.
- Zikona, S. (2020). *An ethical assessment of the structural agency of the blessee in the 'Blesser-Blessee' phenomenon*, 1-10.
- Ziyane, I.S., and Ehlers, V.J. 2007. Swazi Youths attitudes and perceptions concerning adolescent pregnancies and contraception. *Journal of Health in South Africa Perplexing*, 11 (1): 31-42.
- Zoe, D., Jonas, K., Appollis, T.M., Maruping, K., Lieve, W., Kou, C., and Matthews, C. 2021. From survival to glamour: Motivations for engaging in transactional sex and relationships among adolescent girls and young women in South Africa. *Journal of AIDS & Behaviour*, 25: 3238-3254. <https://doi.org/10.1007/510461-021-03291-2>.

Zoom In: *Blesser-Blessee: Make Things Happen*. 2016. New Era. 3 June.
[https:// www.newera.com.na/2016/06/03/zoom-in-blesser-blessee-happen/](https://www.newera.com.na/2016/06/03/zoom-in-blesser-blessee-happen/) [Accessed on August 13, 2022]

Zuma, K., Shisana, O., Rehle, T.M., Simabyi, L.C., Jooste, S., Zungu, N., Labadarios, D., Onoya, D., Meredith, E., Moyo, S., and Abdullah, F. 2012. New insights into HIV epidemic in South Africa: key findings from the national HIV prevalence, incidence, and behaviour survey. *African Journal of AIDS Research*, 15(1): 67-75.

APPENDIX 1: FACULTY RATIFICATION OF PROPOSAL



University of Limpopo
Faculty of Humanities
Executive Dean

Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 4895, Fax: (015) 268 3425, Email: Satsope.maoto@ul.ac.za

DATE: 31 August 2022

NAME OF STUDENT: NUKERI, ND
STUDENT NUMBER: [201823681]
DEPARTMENT: MA – Communication Studies
SCHOOL: LANGCOM

Dear Student

FACULTY RATIFICATION OF PROPOSAL (PROPOSAL NO. FHDC2022/08/02)

I have pleasure in informing you that your MA proposal and Ethical Clearance application was ratified at the Faculty Higher Degrees Meeting on 24 August 2022.

TITLE: Female university students in blessing-blessee relationships: Toward a social and behavioural change communication strategy

Note the following:

Ethical Clearance	Tick One
In principle the study requires no ethical clearance, but will need a TREC permission letter before proceeding with the study	
Requires ethical clearance (Human) (TREC) (apply online) Proceed with the study only after receipt of ethical clearance certificate	√
Requires ethical clearance (Animal) (AREC) Proceed with the study only after receipt of ethical clearance certificate	

Yours faithfully

Prof RS Maoto,
Executive Dean: Faculty of Humanities
Director: Prof MJ Mogoboya
Supervisor: Prof T Oyedemi

Finding solutions for Africa



APPENDIX 2: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE



University of Limpopo
Department of Research Administration and Development
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 4713, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email: moore.hutamo@ul.ac.za

TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

MEETING: 22 May 2023
PROJECT NUMBER: TREC/531/2022: PG – **Renewed**

PROJECT:

Title: Female university students in blesser-blessee relationships: Toward a social and behavioural change communication strategy.
Researcher: ND Nukeri
Supervisor: Prof IP Saunderson
Co-Supervisor/s: Prof T Oyedemi
School: Languages and Communication Studies
Degree: Master of Arts in communication studies

PROF D MAPOSA
CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

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

Note:

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

Finding solutions for Africa

APPENDIX 3: GATEKEEPER PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



**University of Limpopo
Office of the Registrar**

Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa

Tel: (015) 268 2407, Fax: (015) 268 3048, Email: Kwena.Masha@ul.ac.za/Retha.Balie@ul.ac.za

03 February 2023

Ms. ND Nukeri

Email: 201823682@keyaka.ul.ac.za

Dear Ms. Nukeri,

GATEKEEPER PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

**TITLE: FEMALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN BLESSER-BLESSEE RELATIONSHIPS:
TOWARD A SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE COMMUNICATION
STRATEGY**

Researcher: ND Nukeri
Supervisor/s: Prof. IP Saunderson
Co-supervisor/s: Prof. T Oyedemi
School: Languages and Communication Studies
Degree: Master of Arts in Communication Studies

Kindly be informed that Gatekeeper permission is granted to you to conduct research at the University of Limpopo entitled: **“Female university students in blesser-blessee relationships: Toward a social and behavioural change communication strategy”**.

Regards,

PROF. JK MASHA
UNIVERSITY REGISTRAR

Cc. Prof. RJ Singh: Deputy Vice-Chancellor; Research, Innovation and Partnerships
Prof. RN Madadzhe: Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning
Dr. T Mabila, Director: Research Development and Administration
Prof. D Maposa – Chairperson: Research and Ethics Committee
Ms M Hutamo – Assistant: Ethics Secretariat
Ms A Ngobe – TREC Secretariat



APPENDIX 4: PARTICIPANT'S CONSENT FORM

Female university students in blesser-blessee relationships: Toward a social and behavioural change communication strategy

Purpose of the study: To explore the experiences of female university students in blesser-blessee relationships and transactional sex, and to develop a communication strategy that can be used to educate young girls towards behavioural change communication.

- I _____ willingly consent to take part in this study.
- I am informed that even if I sign up to participate right away, I can drop out at any time or decline to answer any concerns without facing any repercussions.
- I am aware that I have two weeks following my interview to revoke authorisation to use the information, in which respect the data will be erased.
- I was given written explanations of the study's objectives and methodology, as well as the chance to ask any questions I had.
- I am aware that being a participant entails being questioned regarding the experience of participating in blesser-blessee relationships. However, the researcher gives me permission to leave if I don't feel secure enough to open.
- I am informed that taking part in this research will not bring me any financial gain. I'm contributing to help the researcher complete her Master of Arts in Communication research.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded and ask for clarity if needed by the researcher.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by using pseudonym names and disguising any details

of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in this dissertation.
- I am aware that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in NVIVO and the researcher's google drive. Therefore, access to these signed consent forms and audio recordings are limited or restricted to public's access.
- I comprehend that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for 1 year from the date of the interview.
- I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information for instance, Miss Nukeri ND (Masters candidate or a researcher with the University of Limpopo) at 072 094 1444 and Prof TD Oyedemi (Supervisor) at 015 268 4039.

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study.

Signature of research participant _____ Date _____

Signature of researcher _____ Date _____

APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Objectives of the study

- To explore the experiences of female university students in blesser-blessee relationships and transactional sex.
- To examine the motivations for female students in engaging in blesser-blessee relationships and transactional sex, while exploring the problems that arise from blesser-blessee relationships.
- To develop a behavioural change communication strategy that can be used as a communication campaign to educate young girls about blesser-blessee relationships.

Questions for undergraduate female university students

- What do you understand by these terms blesser and blessee in a relationship?
- How would you explain transactional sex?
- If yes, what type of transactional relationship are you involved in?
- What is your motivation to be in a transactional relationship?
- Describe your experience of being in a blesser-blessee relationship
- From your personal experience, what are the benefits of being a blessee?
- What challenges have you encountered as a blessee?
- What's your opinion about the observation that some people believe blessees face a lot of health risks and safety concerns?
- Explain why you would advise women to be involved with a blesser?
- From your experience and challenges, you have mentioned, please share your ideas about how to advise young girls against being involved with a blesser.
- What is the difference between transactional sex and blesser-blessee relationship?

Questions for postgraduate female university students

- What do you understand by these terms blesser and blessee in a relationship?
- How would explain transactional sex?
- Based on your explanation, would you consider yourself a participant in transactional sex?
- Describe your experience of being in a blesser-blessee relationship.
- What type of blesser-blessee relationship?
- What are the manifestations of blesser-blessee relationships you have encountered?

- What are the problems have you encountered from blesser-blessee relationships or transactional sex?
- What problems or challenges do you encounter as a blessee?
- From your personal experience, please explain why and how you get involved in a blesser-blessee relationship.
- Please tell me about your background
- Do you think your background contributed to your involvement in a blesser-blessee relationship? Please explain how?
- From your experience and challenges, you have mentioned, please share your ideas about how to advise young girls against being involved with a blesser.
- What is the difference between transactional sex and blesser-blessee relationship?

Questions for healthcare practitioners

- Why do you think young girls are involved in blesser-blessee relationships and transactional sex?
- What behavioural impact does blesser-blessee have toward female university students in Limpopo Province?
- If yes, what about transactional sex?
- From your experience, explain some of the health issues girls experience from being in a relationship with a blesser.
- What do you think causes female university students to engage in transactional sex?
- What do you think are the health concerns about transactional sex or blesser-blessee relationships?
- What do you think can be done to manage these phenomena?
- Can you suggest ways and how to educate young girls against being involved with a blesser?
- For those already in a blesser-blessee relationship, how would you advise them to change their behaviour and leave such relationship?
- What is the difference between transactional sex and blesser-blessee relationship?
- Do you think there is a link between HIV/AIDS prevalence and blesser-blessee relationship?