

**The Intersection of Culture and Gender-Based Violence in the Practice of
Mamalo within Vhavenda Communities of Vhembe District, in the Limpopo
Province of South Africa**

by

NESANE NDAMULELO PUTCO

Student number: 18001381

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SUPERVISOR

Prof T.J Mudau

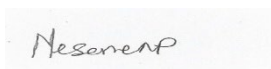
CO-SUPERVISOR

Dr. K.E Amaechi

Signatures

Date

Student :



04/08/2025

Supervisor :

Co-supervisor:

ABSTRACT

While there is a subtle agreement within the recent South African Gender-Based Violence (GBV) literature that traditional cultural practices are important mediums through which patriarchal hegemonic structures are maintained in most African communities, the analyses of how such practices perpetuate gender inequalities and contribute to GBV have only received cursory analysis. This study addresses this gap, by examining the significant material elements of culture and tradition of the Vhavenda people, within the *Mamalo* practice. Drawing on how the *Mamalo* is practice within Vhavenda communities in the Vhembe district of Limpopo Province South Africa, the study pursues three main objectives. Firstly, an identification of specific belief systems and the tangible traditional practices upon which the *Mamalo* traditional system is based within the Vhavenda culture. Secondly, a sociological appraisal of the relationship between traditional patriarchal hegemony and the identified elements of *Mamalo*. Finally, a development of sociologically based strategies that help communities within the Vhavenda communities, deal with GBV. Given these objectives, the study employed a qualitative research approach, which is based on an exploratory design. Data was collected using a detailed semi-structured one-on-one interviews of stake holders with good knowledge of *Mamalo* in the Vhavenda culture. These include traditional leaders, village heads and men and women (old and young) who got married through the cultural practice of *Mamalo*. These individuals are judged to be knowledgeable about the cultural practice of *Mamalo* within the Vhavenda communities. Two non-probability sampling techniques, purposive and snowball were adopted to selected participants for the study. The study used thematic analysis conducted on Microsoft word to analyse the data. The findings of the study conclude that the intended rationale behind *mamalo* is to provide dignity, value, and respect for women. However, its current interpretation has evolved to reflect dynamics of male dominance, entitlement, commodification of women and oppression, hence requires refinement, to prevent it from serving as a potent motivation for GBV.

Key words: Culture, Marriage, Violence, Women, Patriarchy, Beliefs, Oppression.

DECLARATION

I, **NESANE NDAMULELO PUTCO**, hereby declare that the thesis titled - **Appraising the Intersection of Culture and Gender-Based Violence in the Practice of *Mamalo* within Vhavenda Communities of Vhembe District, in the Limpopo Province of South Africa** - submitted by me to the University of Venda for the degree in Masters in Gender Studies, has never been submitted previously for a degree at this University or any other university. This is my own work in design and execution and literature and reference materials contained therein have been acknowledged.

Nesane N.P

SIGNATURE: 

DATE:04/08/2025

DEDICATION

This degree is dedicated to all Vhavenda people from the Vhembe district in the Limpopo Province of South Africa and all and victims of GBV within the region.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

GBV	: Gender-based violence
NGO	: Non-governmental organizations
IVP	: Intimate partner violence
SAPS	: South Africa police service

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Title	Page
Table 1	Steps of thematic analysis	55
Table 2	Biographical information of adult participants	62
Table 3	Biographical information of youth participants	63

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CONTENTS PAGE

ABSTRACT.....	i
DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
LIST OF ACRONYMS.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY.....	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	8
1.3 Aim of the Study	9
1.4 Research Objectives.....	9
1.5 Research Questions	9
1.6 Significance of the Study.....	10
1.7 Definition of the Key Terms	10
1.8 Outline of the Study.....	12
1.8.1 Introduction and Background of the study.....	12
1.8.2 Literature review and theoretical framework	12
1.8.3 Research Methodology	13
1.8.5 Interpretation of data and Conclusion.....	13
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	14
2.1 Introduction	14
2.2 The African Belief System on Marriage (the importance of marriage in African societies)	14
2.3 The Practice of <i>Mamalo</i> in Various African Ethnic Groups.....	23
2.4 <i>Mamalo</i> : A contributory factor to GBV or a Tool to fight GBV.....	32
2.5 Sociologically based strategies and measures that can be implemented to help communities reduce the occurrence of GBV.....	39
a) Cultural programmes based on gender-based violence and change	39
b) Gender-based violence programmes for men and boys in communities	40
c) Support groups for women	41
d) Integration of gender-based violence within the education curriculum of learners at primary and secondary level.	41
e) Inclusion of women in community leadership.....	42

f) Campaigns for women's independence in communities	43
2.5.1 The social learning theory	43
2.5.2 The Theory of Liberty	47
2.5.3 Liberal Feminist Theory	47
2.6 Summary of the Chapter	48
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	49
3.1 Introduction	49
3.2 Research Paradigm	49
3.3 Research Approach	50
3.4 Research Design	50
3.5 The Population and Location of the Study	51
3.6 Sampling Method and Sampling Procedure	52
3.6.1 Inclusion Criteria:	53
3.6.2 Exclusion Criteria	54
3.7 Data Collection Strategies	54
3.8 Analysis of Data	55
3.9 Measures of Quality Control	56
3.9.1 Trustworthiness and Authenticity of the Data	57
3.9.2 Credibility and Transferability	57
3.9.3 Dependability and Confirmability	58
3.11 Ethical Considerations	58
3.11.1 Informed Consent	59
3.11.2 Confidentiality	59
3.11.3 Anonymity	59
3.11.4 No Harm to Participants	60
3.11.5 Voluntary Participation	60
3.11.6 Deception of Respondents	61
3.12 Summary of the Chapter	61
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS	62
4.1 Introduction	62
4.2 Biographical Information of the Participants	62
4.3 Presentation of Data	64
4.3.1 The foundation of marriage	64
Sub-theme 1: The importance of marriage	65
Sub-theme 2: Family and Unity	66

Sub-theme 3: Social Expectations.....	67
Sub-theme 4: Age.....	69
4.3.2 The Process of <i>Mamalo</i>	71
4.3.3 Old vs New Understanding of <i>Mamalo</i>	77
4.3.4 The Payment of <i>Mamalo</i>	78
4.3.5 The Misconception of <i>Mamalo</i>	80
Sub-theme 1: Media	81
Sub-theme 2: Peers.....	82
4.3.6 Providers and Nurturers.....	83
4.3.7 Family Involvement.....	86
4.3.8 Reinterpretation of <i>Mamalo</i>	87
4.3.9 Cultural knowledge in Education	88
4.3.10 Community Engagement	89
4.4 Summary of the Chapter.....	90
CHAPTER FIVE: OVERVIEW, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	92
5.1 Introduction	92
5.2 Overview of the Study.....	92
5.2.1 Marriage Belief System Within the Vhavenda People	92
A) The Foundation of Marriage/ Factors Guiding the Marriage Belief System	93
B) Desire to Marry and the Process of <i>Mamalo</i>	96
3.2.2 The Association of <i>Mamalo</i> with GBV	99
A) Commercialization of <i>Mamalo</i>	99
B) Generational Change in the Understanding of Marriage	102
C) <i>Mamalo</i> and Gender Roles	104
3.2.3 Socio-Cultural Strategies and Measures to Address GBV in Communities	106
A) Family Involvement in Marital Disputes.....	107
B) Reinterpretation of <i>Mamalo</i> Through Mass Village Meetings.....	108
C) Integration of Cultural Knowledge in Education Curriculum.....	109
D) Collaborative Village Professional Sessions.....	110
5.3 Contributions of The Study to Literature	111
5.4 Limitations of the Study	112
5.5 Recommendations:	112
5.7 Final Thoughts/Conclusion.....	114
LIST OF REFERENCES	116
APPENDIX A: INFORMATION SHEET.....	124

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT	125
APPENDIX C: DATA COLLECTION TOOL.....	127
APPENDIX D: TURNITIN REPORT	131
APPENDIX E: LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE	132
APPENDIX F: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	133

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The idea that culture-based traditional practices contribute to gender-based violence is not new within the GBV literature (Luvo & Saunders, 2022). Previous studies on GBV show how culture and traditional practices can impact the understanding of gender roles and violence against women and girls (Mensah, 2024). Yesufu's (2022) study, for example explains how culture impacts the different belief systems that exist in Africa. In this scholar's view, these systems shape people's perception about gender, as well as how they correspondingly relate with them. In other words, gender roles are products of cultures and traditional belief systems. To support this argument, Yesufu (2022) also gave a Christian religious-based example, where the biblical story of Adam and Eve is believed to have, shaped the idea of what is expected from a woman and a man. According to this article, the biblical story, which portrays women as weak and dependent on men is traditionally used to support male hegemony and dominance over women in the cultures that have imbibed the Judeo-Christian traditions and belief systems.

In African communities similarly, people draw strengths from religious and belief systems within their culture and traditions to oppress women (Nduka & Ozioma, 2019). Being culturally rooted, they have many traditions belief systems that does not necessarily glorify women. Notable examples of such practices are included in some African cultures such as the Igbo tribe of Nigeria (Nduka & Ozioma, 2019).

The current study is an attempt to further deepen the above understanding: how culture impacts GBV. Below is a discussion of the empirical and theoretical background, within which the study is based upon. This discussion will be followed by a statement of the problem, highlighting the main problem of the study; the aim of the study; the research objectives; the research questions; the significance of the study; definition of the key terms and the outline of the study.

1.2 Background of the Study

Other than the analysis of the role of Indigenous practices in GBV, recent studies have also begun to examine inherent intents and rationales for human equality and the fight

against violence against women laden within Indigenous traditional practices in rural communities (Amaechi & Thobejane, 2021). Drawing on engagement with traditional knowledge holders within rural communities, studies have explained the value of traditional practices in developing community interceptions of GBV. Central to these kinds of analyses is the emphasis that traditional practices are built on ideas such as ubuntu, collective responsibility, and involvement of people within their communities. By focusing on such elements, communities can revitalize Indigenous cultures. They can also develop community-based interventions and Indigenous support systems that prioritize gender equality and holistic support for survivors of GBV. Moreover, engaging respectfully with Indigenous elders and knowledge keepers leverages their wisdom and traditional teachings to effectively inform policies and community initiatives.

In the South African context, efforts to preserve and revitalize Indigenous traditional practices can play a crucial role, as they bolster cultural identity and provide a foundation for addressing violence against women within the broader context of colonialism and oppression. They can also offer intersectional approaches, which ensure that the oppressions faced by Indigenous women are addressed with contextual and tailored interventions that meet their diverse needs.

Although culture and African traditional beliefs have an impact on gender roles and GBV, they also play a significant role in addressing this pandemic of GBV. Most African cultures are not shaped to promote equality between men and women. However, respect and value for women are highly supported (Hodzi, 2024). In African societies, GBV is addressed through the traditional courts. Traditional leaders or village heads play a multifaced role in responding to GBV at these courts. These traditional courts provide counselling to women and girls who are victims of GBV and speak against harmful traditional practices such as child marriage. Mediation is used to settle the conflict if a case is brought to these courts. After hearing both sides of the parties in dispute, the village committee and the community members decide on a judgment (Hodzi, 2024).

GBV is commonly characterized by rape, murder, and physical violence. Such cases in African villages are directed to law enforcement officials. This shows that traditional

intervention in addressing GBV is limited. However, some GBV-related issues are returned to the traditional courts for intervention (Hodzi, 2024).

When cases of violence against women are reported, the majority of the perpetrators are men. African villages are rare and provide cultural resocialization for African men and boys. This approach includes knowledge of what manhood meant in precolonial Africa. Cultural societies provide such knowledge through traditional leaders and heads of villages, and this reveals that in the olden days, there was great respect for women, and power was not abused by women and girls or maintained male dominance (Hodzi, 2024).

Within the above-described theoretical background, a study of the *Mamalo* practice within the context of Vhavenda communities in the Vhembe district of the Limpopo region in South Africa will be carried out. Drawing on Social-learning theory, the theory of liberty and the liberal feminist theory. The study provides insight into how cultural practices are learned behaviour and how learned behaviours can also become an essential tool for progressive strategies over time. Any learned behaviour can be unlearned. Although cultural and traditional practices have been misinterpreted and misunderstood, which led to women and girls being subjected to inferiority, the social learning theory provides insight into how this belief can be altered so that a new behaviour that is culturally friendly and characterized by positive masculinity can be adopted. Learning behaviours that lead to women being victims of GBV act as the base from which progressive strategies are adopted and implemented. This creates a new generation with a new set of beliefs and perceptions about a woman. The theory of liberty provides insight into the study through the dissemination of knowledge on the recognition of human rights to individuals who support harmful traditional practices, where these practices lead to GBV, with women and girls being victims.

Integrating these indigenous perspectives into anti-violence efforts demonstrates the understanding of cultural diversity and the importance of including the complex historical and systemic factors in the knowledge of how to gender-based violence in post-apartheid South Africa.

According to Mpako and Ndoma (2023) GBV remains one of the biggest social problems bedevilling women and young girls in South African socio-political space.

The state in which South African women are being victims of GBV is alarming. This worsens when a fatality occurs and based on the SAPS (South African Police Service) annual crime statistical report, a woman is murdered every three hours; this equates to about eight women being murdered a day. According to Mpako and Ndoma (2023) the recent second-quarter crime statistics for 2023/2024, reported by the Minister of Police Bheki Cele, revealed that 10, 516 rapes 1, 514 cases of attempted murder, and 14, 401 assaults against female victims were reported in July, August and September 2023. South Africa is ranked number four for the highest rate of violence against women, and the rate at which women are being murdered by their intimate partners in South Africa is five times higher than the global average (Govender, 2023).

The incentive behind this study was from ongoing cases of gender-based violence around Venda, where the perpetrators live untouched while families of victims are left traumatized and shattered. This brought back a reminiscence about COVID-19, where people did not act against the virus because they were not directly affected initially. People should not wait until people they know are affected by an issue to act because the first person you know to be affected by gender-based violence might be a daughter, sister, cousin, or mother.

It is a known fact that the issue of gender-based violence is concerning in today's world. This act recognizes no race, culture, ethnicity, or part of the world an individual is from. It can affect anyone worldwide, both males and females. Where there is gender-based violence, the issue of patriarchy is always present. Patriarchy is generally male dominance. Africa can be considered as a root of patriarchy due to male dominance history amongst African cultures. African patriarchal beliefs are perceived as driving factors towards the act of gender-based violence. Most studies have shown patriarchy as the root of gender-based violence.

This study provides an opportunity to unpack those overlooked and culturally entrenched factors that underpin the prevalence of gender-based violence, as well as a chance to reflect on how belief systems underpinning the *Mamalo* traditional practice can offer strategies to address gender inequality in South African communities.

According to Kapur (2020) culture refers to a way of life for all individuals regardless of gender, religion, occupation, educational level, or socio-economic background and

individual is from, which influences living conditions. Culture is symbolic communication passed from generation to generation while promoting unity. Complex knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, and customs are found within different cultures. This makes it possible to distinguish one group of people from another, and, most importantly, culture is dynamic.

Gender-based violence refers to violence that is directed at an individual because of that individual's gender. This type of violence can be of a man being abused physically by a woman or a woman being abused by a male (Yesufu, 2022). However, this study focuses on gender-based violence where women are victims of the violence, and men are perpetrators of the act.

Ember, Gonzalez, and McCloskey (2021) define marriage as a sexual and economic union that has been approved socially and presumed to be more or less permanent. It usually entails obligations and rights between the married couple and any children they might have. The common name of the traditional practice investigated in this study is Lobola, which is *Mamalo* in Tshivenda. According to Kgadima and Leburu (2022) this practice is the central process of marriage, which is characterized by a gift from the groom's family to the bride's family. The gift was usually cows in the olden days, but due to modernization, money is used in exchange for cows.

Patriarchy is commonly known as a system of society or government where men hold power and women are largely excluded from it (Haslanger, 2020). For example, suppose there is a family which consists of a father, a mother, and two children. In that case, this concept of patriarchy will manifest itself through dominance, where the father will be the ruler and the one to make all significant decisions in the house. In our African culture, this concept of patriarchy is rooted in men and boys. So, these males are born and raised in societies where such a belief of men being superior and women being inferior is the only accepted system. This raises how such males react when a female challenges the belief of male dominance. This leads us to the concept of gender-based violence.

Gender-based violence is a problem that affects many communities around the world. It is an act that recognizes no race, culture, ethnicity, or part of the world an individual is from, as mentioned above. It can affect anyone worldwide, both males and females.

However, in this study, gender-based violence is perceived as influenced by cultural elements within a specific cultural group. Africa can be considered as a root of patriarchy due to male dominance history amongst African cultures. Cultural practices are viewed as driving factors towards the act of gender-based violence. However, since gender-based violence is a world issue, even in developed countries, this act manifests itself differently compared to how it is occurring in African regions.

A study conducted by Wang, Fang and Li (2019) revealed that in China, it is common for women to experience gender-based violence. These scholars found out that about half of the participants who were part of the study reported that they had violated a woman in their lives, either physically or sexually. One in five men is reported to have raped a woman, a partner or a non-partner. This is scary and shocking at the same time. These men feel they have authority or power over women and those they are in a relationship with. This makes it easy for them to act in such unacceptable manners, making it easy to physically or sexually offend a woman without any form of regret, guilt, or shame.

According to Scrope (2018) Kenya is one of the African countries with a high level of patriarchy in rural areas. This issue does not start after a man decides to have a family; it is even visible among children. Boys and girls will be assigned different roles, where boys will be given authority over girls. This is also prevalent among men and women, where women are expected to be obedient to their husbands and never disagree or try to challenge any views raised by a man (Husband). Such authority is also prevalent among young men and women still in their dating stage. Such young men will make decisions in the relationship even though some will only affect the female partner (Scroope, 2018).

The issue of culture promoting male dominance leads to gender-based violence. Still, in Kenya, it is said that over 40 percent of women are most likely to face physical and sexual violence, with the perpetrators being their husbands or the man whom they are in a relationship with. Kenya is reviled as a country with the majority of the population being young and only 6.9 percent of people aged 55 or over. This means many youths within the country are being exposed to gender-based violence.

Sadly, some women become victims of gender-based violence and survive, and others lose their lives due to such violence. About 39 and 47 percent of Kenyan women have experienced gender-based violence in their lifetime, and one in three Kenyan females have experienced sexual violence before they are 18 years old (Scroope, 2018).

However, it is heart-warming to find out that there are African countries that are accepting changes in gender norms that contribute towards gender-based violence, and, by so doing, there will be a considerable reduction in terms of male dominance. In Ghana, many men are open and accept such change. Men are allowing their partners to explore in terms of career independence and allowing them to contribute to the role of decision-making. In most African homes, women are expected to be found taking care of the children and doing housework, while men are out in urban areas working so they can provide for the family. This type of oppression through gender roles fuels male dominance, resulting in violence (Ampim, Haukanes, Blystand & Kpoor, 2022).

Ghanaian men are showing positive signs of fighting gender-based violence through the mitigation of gender roles that would influence male dominance. Men express their views on how women should be treated equally and respectably and be able to share domestic responsibilities as men. This shows that although male dominance could still exist in Ghana, some men are open to change and ready to advocate for women. This opens up a door for the justification of gender equality, which promotes the absence of GBV (Ampim et al., 2021).

According to Offiong, Eyo and Offiong, A. (2021) the issue of patriarchy is still prevalent and powerful. Gender roles are still being practiced strictly between men and women. Males have greater power in making decisions than the rest of the family. This is primarily the father, who will be regarded as the head of the family. In the absence of the father, the eldest son will make all the decisions for the family, including decisions for the mother. This shows how severe the issue of male dominance is in Nigeria. Nigerian women are expected to treat their men with respect and should always be there when needed by the man.

According to Siziba, Mapuva, Bowora, Samukange, and Gomo (2022) Zimbabwe is viewed as one of the top countries in Africa with very patriarchal socialites. Although

a few groups or tribes are no longer patriarchal, the majority of the rest still practice this act. In Zimbabwe, men hold more power than women.

Narrowing down the problem to South Africa based on the cases of women murdered and abused, which are heard daily, one would conclude that this country is patriarchal while being influenced by different cultural elements within various groups. If not, then what gives a man the right to lift his hand and place it on a woman whenever his dominance is challenged? Men are murdering, abusing, and oppressing women in this country every day, yet these women fail to get justice. It is without doubt that South African women would stand firmly and say that law enforcement is failing them. This is an issue which needs intervention.

Based on the discussion above, it is evident that culture in most African countries fosters the occurrence of gender-based violence. However, the details of how specific material and non-material elements of cultures contribute to gender-based violence remained under-investigated. In other words, how belief systems within specific cultures enable hegemonic patriarchal disposition, from GBV evolves. It is on such backgrounds that the current study explores the *Mamalo* traditional practice in the Vhavenda communities.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The problem to be investigated in this study is the intersection of Gender-based violence and the cultural/traditional practice of *Mamalo*, in the context of the Vhavenda culture within the Vhembe district of Limpopo province in South Africa. The study's initial assumption (following recent literature) is that while traditional cultural practices can reinforce hierarchical structures, which perpetuate harmful gender norms and gender inequalities, such as women being subjected to practices within *mamalo* that men are not subjected to, they are laden with ideologies and belief systems, that may be positive values such as communal cohesion, love, appreciation, respect for authorities and women. Despite their shortcomings, traditional cultural practices and the concomitant belief systems and philosophies within them can be essential for addressing the GBV epidemic, bedevilling the traditional Vhavenda communities in South Africa. The identification of specific belief systems and the tangible traditional practices upon which the *Mamalo* traditional system is based within the Vhavenda culture, and a comprehensive sociological analysis of how the identified elements

either uphold traditional patriarchal hegemony or provide community-based justifications for gender equality, the study can formulate culture friendly strategies that help communities within the Vhavenda communities refine (if possible) the *Mamalo* practice within the South African cultural setting. Understanding ideological and material elements of *Mamalo* can be essential for developing targeted interventions and fostering sustainable change within the Vhavenda community and beyond. It can also contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics of gender-based violence and the kind of support needed by survivors of GBV within the South African cultural contexts. The problem of this study is identified aligned with sustainable development goal five, which is to address the concept of gender equality.

1.3 Aim of the Study

The aim of the study is to explore the intersection of culture and gender-based violence in the practice of *Mamalo* within Vhavenda communities of Vhembe District, in the Limpopo province of South Africa

1.4 Research Objectives

Three main research objectives are pursued in the study, namely:

- To examine specific belief systems and the tangible traditional practices of the *Mamalo* traditional system as practiced within the Vhavenda culture.
- To appraise whether the identified components of the *Mamalo* upholds traditional patriarchal hegemony and hence, provide community-based justifications for gender equality.
- To develop sociologically based strategies and measures that help communities within the Vhavenda communities address GBV.

1.5 Research Questions

- What are the specific belief systems and the tangible traditional practices of the *Mamalo* traditional system as practiced within the Vhavenda culture?
- Under what conditions can the identified elements provide justifications for upholding traditional patriarchal hegemony?
- What are the sociologically based strategies and measures that can be implemented to help communities within the Vhavenda people to reduce the occurrence of GBV?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study has four main significances. First, it reveals the relationship between cultural elements or practices and gender-based violence. This study will show that there are various cultural practices which are contributing towards the occurrence of gender-based violence. This discovery will help the group being studied and other groups in South Africa to identify cultural practices that would require change if the act of gender-based violence wants to be mitigated or eradicated.

Secondly, it encourages change through awareness of various cultural elements which are not being perceived as the enablers of gender-based violence. There are cultural practices which are being accepted and normalised without knowledge of the fact that there are the core influencers of gender-based violence, particularly against women and children.

Thirdly, the study potentially reveal culture as one of the major roots of gender-based violence. By so doing, it will enable people from the Vhavenda group to identify measures which are cultural-friendly in terms of addressing the issue of gender-based violence. In most cases, strategic measures intended to solve social problems fail because the root issue is not yet identified. This study will help in the identification of the root cause of gender-based violence, resulting in effective and modern measures to help mitigate the problem.

Lastly, the Vhavenda people will be encouraged by this study to accept change in terms of certain cultural practices. The acceptance of this change will influence other cultures in South Africa to accept change as well, resulting in better societies and communities where women and children are free from fear of experiencing violence, either physical or sexual. This acceptance of change will also influence policy makers in South Africa regarding gender-based violence to introduce new laws within the cultural spheres to deal with gender-based violence.

1.7 Definition of the Key Terms

1.7.1 Culture- In the current study culture refers to the accepted ways of life of people within a particular community. This concept of culture draws from generally defined as the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular society or people. It can also be defined as ways of life including arts, beliefs and institutions of a population that are passed down from generation to generation. According to Kapur (2020) culture

simply refers to a way of life for all individuals regardless of gender, religion, occupation, educational level or socio-economic background an individual is from which influences living conditions.

1.7.2 Gender-based violence- This study defines gender-based violence as harm being perpetrated on women while being influenced by the misinterpretation of *Mamalo* which subject women to be inferior to men. This idea of gender-based violence draws from the general definition which defines gender-based violence as any type of harm that is perpetrated against a person or group of people because of their factual or perceived sex, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity. Yesufu (2022) defines gender-based violence as violence that is directed at an individual because of that individual's gender and this type of violence can be of a man being abused physically by a woman or a woman being abused by a man.

1.7.3 Patriarchy- Patriarchy in this study is defined as a system which is influenced by culture, making men feel superior and entitled to women. It is generally defined as a system of society or governance in which men hold power and women are largely excluded from it. According to Haslanger (2020) patriarchy refers to the rule of the father in a male-dominated family or a social and ideological construct which considers men as superior to women.

1.7.4 Oppression- This study defines oppression as the act of unjust treatment by men leading to gender-based violence which is influenced by practice of *Mamalo* which are socially accepted by the Vhavenda culture. According to Yung (2020) oppression refers to a state of asymmetric power relations characterised by domination, subordination, and resistance, where the dominating persons or groups exercise their power or a series of asymmetrical power relations between individuals, gender, classes, communities, nations and states. Oppression is generally defined as a combination of prejudice and institutional power that creates a system that regularly and severely discriminates against one group and benefits the other

1.7.5 Tradition- Tradition in the current study refers to a behaviour that is being passed from one generation to the next generation on the understanding of *Mamalo* as contributory factor to GBV or a measure to fight GBV. This draws from the general definition of tradition as way of thinking, behaving, or doing something that has been used by people in a particular group, family or society. According to Rangel (2022)

tradition refers to religious or social customs that have been passed on from one generation to the next.

1.7.6 Intimate partner violence- In this study, intimate partner violence refers to the harm against the well-being of an individual mostly by a partner as a result of the cultural ideological imperatives. Intimate partner violence is generally defined as a behaviour of physical, sexual or psychological harm within an intimate relationship. According to Jungari, Chauhan and Ubale (2019) intimate partner violence refers to psychological or physical violence among romantic partners that occurs frequently.

1.7.7 Vulnerability- Vulnerability in this study refers to a state at which women from the Vhavenda group are being placed in due to a cultural practice of *Mamalo* that comes with characteristics which are expected to be accepted by women, resulting in them being exposed to gender-based violence, which is characterised by harm. This term is commonly known as a quality or state of being exposed to the possibility of being attacked or harmed, either emotional, physical, psychological or sexual. According to Armenia, Arquitt, Pedetcini and Pompei (2022) vulnerability is defined as the degree to which a system or part of it may react adversely during the occurrence of a hazardous event.

1.8 Outline of the Study

1.8.1 Introduction and Background of the study

In this session, the empirical and theoretical background on which this study is being conducted has been introduced. This is followed by the problem statement, aim of the study, the research objectives and research questions, significance of the study. This section has provided an overview on how the issue that is being investigated emerged to the researcher as a necessary social problem that requires urgent intervention. This session also includes important aspects that will be considered on writing a proper literature review for the study and providing direction on how questions should be structured for successful collection of data

1.8.2 Literature review and theoretical framework

Review of related literature as discussed in this study is on the traditional/cultural practice of *Mamalo* and GBV. Learning from previous study, this session explored other concepts that explains the intersection between *Mamalo* and GBV, a belief system that guides marriage in African societies making it an important institution, an

exploration on either *Mamalo* upholds traditional patriarchal hegemony or provide community-based justifications for gender equality and sociologically based strategies and measures that can be implemented to help communities within the Vhavenda people to reduce the occurrence of GBV.

1.8.3 Research Methodology

This section on research methodology looks at the process on which the study will be carried has been discussed. It explained the paradigm of the study, the research approach that will be adopted, the type of research design, the population and location of the study the sampling methods and sampling procedures for the study, methods of that collection that will be used to collect reliable and accurate data for the study, the type of analysis that will be adopted in the study and lastly, the measure of quality control that will be used for the study.

1.8.4 Data presentation and analysis

This section involves presentation of data that has been collected to make sense of the insights through presentation of data in a clear and concise manner to communicate the research findings. Collected data will also be analysed in this section through thematic analysis.

1.8.5 Interpretation of data and Conclusion

This section will provide meaning of the responses from the participants from the study being guided by theories adopted in the current study and to provide a scholarly interpretation based on what other scholars have explored in relation to the responses by the participants. This section will also include limitations of the study, recommendations of the study and final thoughts/conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature that relates to the appraisal of culture and gender-based violence in the practice of *Mamalo* within the Vhavenda communities of Vhembe district. The aim of this chapter is to draw from previous studies to identify the research gaps and to justify the current research problem. The review of literature in this chapter is focused on the African belief system on marriage, with a direct focus on the importance of marriage in various African societies. It also provides a review of literature on how the practice of *Mamalo* is conducted in other cultural groups found in Africa, and also an appraisal of the cultural practice of *Mamalo* either a contributory to GBV or tool in curbing the mentioned social menace. There is also a discussion on sociologically based strategies and measures that can be implemented to help communities in addressing GBV. Furthermore, this chapter also focuses on the theories that are used to further illuminate the research findings. These theories are the social learning theory, the theory of liberty and the liberal feminist theory. This chapter is primarily focused on review of literature to find out what other scholars have said about the problem and to identify lacuna present within the context of the study.

2.2 The African Belief System on Marriage (the importance of marriage in African societies)

According to Mshweshwe (2020) patriarchal cultural beliefs and traditions that support male dominance emphasize the domination of men over women, which reinforces domestic violence. Culture, patriarchy, and negative masculine contrast are some of the driving factors of domestic violence in South Africa. This scholar argues that gender hierarchy and normative masculine and feminine roles that are prevalent in South Africa play a massive role in domestic violence. In most African homes, there is an inflexible gender hierarchy, which is influenced by culture and male dominance at home. This leads to the influence of domestic violence.

Gender-based violence is associated with masculinity ideology, beliefs and behaviours which are assigned to men during socialization. Power relations between men and women, where women are inferior to men, are rooted in patriarchal beliefs. This results in a belief that men become entitled to more power than women (Mshwemshwe, 2020).

Tsapalas, Parker, Ferrer, and Bernales (2021) hold a similar view as Mshweshwe (2020) where social gender-based violence is a result of social power relations that exist between men and women. Due to culture, these power relations are based on who has more power than the other. This creates unequal power relations between men and women. Men often have greater power than women, which justifies the submission and oppression of women.

However, Piedalue, Gilbertson, Alexeyeff, and Klein (2020) argue that culture cannot be the only reason behind GBV. These authors reveal that GBV is influenced at various levels, including the individual, family/relationship, village, society, and global level.

According to Rimjhim and Dandapat (2022) culture is a major contributory factor of GBV through societal stigma, societal prejudices, and gender-based rules. This author argues that GBV manifests differently according to the country's culture. For example, in most African countries, GBV is prevalent through IPV (intimate partner violence), but in North American countries, GBV is prevalent through dating violence. This implies that although GBV is the same, it is represented differently in different countries. Rimjhim and Dandapat (2022) highlight that in Malawi, it is evident that the cultural practices of polygamy and dowry help to perpetuate GBV. The socio-cultural is severe to the extent that GBV is justified as a form of social norm that cannot be questioned.

According to Mudimeli and khosa-Nkatini (2024) Men in patriarchal societies hold power and privilege that result in great structural gender inequality. In most African cultures, men are viewed as leaders, while women are caregivers. This notion is revealed in some African languages, where women are referred to as children and men as mature adults. This influences men to abuse women since they are perceived as childlike. In addition, women are culturally viewed as children who need to be monitored and disciplined by men (groom in marriage). Women are cared for by their parents as children, and men take over the same responsibility through marriage. This creates an idea of control over women. GBV is a direct result of ideologies enforced by patriarchy. Within most African cultures, men are allowed to be in polygamous marriages, while for a woman, it is considered taboo. GBV is influenced by culture

through the idea of men being in control of women and feeling like they can instigate violence on women since it is acceptable.

Cultural and traditional beliefs of spousal abuse being a measure of marital honour contribute to harmful gender dynamics. These beliefs influence women to endure violent behaviours within marriage. Cultural and traditional beliefs that determine the treatment of women and girls enforce justification of GBV and inequality by men (Mudimeli & khosa-Nkatini, 2024)

According to Chanda (2024) cultural factors such as traditional customs, beliefs, norms, rituals, values, and language influence aspects of life. This includes social relationships, patterns, decision-making processes, ethnicity, and world perception. These cultural factors shape what is considered taboo or acceptable. Cultural factors that are deeply embedded within various societies perpetuate GBV. This is influenced by traditional gender norms, stereotypes, and gender roles assigned that view men as dominant and women as appendages and subordinates, leading to the normalization of violence against women. This is prevalent due to asserting control and power against women.

Cultural attitudes that justify and condone violence contribute to the prevalence of GBV. This includes the act of victim-blaming or the belief that men are entitled to women's bodies. According to Chanda (2024) cultural practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM), dowry-related violence, and child marriage perpetuate inequality and subject women to being vulnerable to violence. The cultural norm that surrounds masculinity manifests through violent behaviours towards women as a result of the emphasis on dominance, suppression of emotions, and aggression. This author identifies attitudes that normalize violence within intimate relationships as influences of GBV. Attitudes such as "love" and "passion" where control is justified towards women, leading to emotional manipulation, stalking and coercive control (Chanda, 2024).

According to Chanda (2024) one of the factors leading to GBV in Zambia is the persistence of patriarchal values, where these values promote male dominance, leading to justification and normalization of violence against women and the marital rate within intimate partner relationships. In addition, Chanda (2024) urges that

traditional gender roles that assign men as decision-makers and expect women to be submissive and obedient create a power imbalance that can lead to violence.

Various belief systems influence all cultural practices. These systems affect the reason behind the performance of most cultural/traditional practices. For example, there are cultural reasons on why a man should marry, why males need to be circumcised, or why it is crucial for *Mamalo* to be paid by the husband and not the wife. All these practices are rooted within their belief system. There are various belief systems, such as cultural, religious, medical, and patriarchal. This section will cover a belief system on the importance of marriage in African societies.

In African societies, marriage is traditionally considered a necessary duty of life, thus making it significant and valued. In some parts of Africa, marriage is influenced by the desire to have children. This is so because, in history, children were crucial for securing heirs. The importance of marriage in Africa is emphasized to the extent that women who have children outside marriage or those who are single mothers are subjected to social shame or stigma of singleness and bachelorhood. The significance of marriage in African societies leads many individuals to marry without the desire towards the institution but due to social pressure to conform to cultural norms (Mudimeli & Khosa-Nkatini, 2024).

According to Baloyi (2022) marriage is a vital force in maintaining and sustaining a society. Through marriage, people create a chain of existence throughout the world. Marriage in African societies is characterized by a distinctive cultural value system with factors such as social norms, taboos, and rites of passage, which play an essential role when two families come together to negotiate and legalize marriage in African cultures. According to Chisango, Mafa, and Maunganidze (2022) In societies, women are considered successful and have significant responsibility if they are married. In contrast, the unmarried and those who are divorced are subjected to stigmatisation. This creates an idea of the importance of marrying in Africa.

The significance of marriage in African societies is beyond the procreation and nurturing of children; it is also viewed as an institution that continues African culture and traditions from one generation to the next. Despite the challenges of GBV being prevalent in marriage, the institution of marriage and family remains one of the most valuable institutions in the African context (Baloyi, 2022). According to Chisango,

Mafa, and Maunganidze (2022) women are considered successful and responsible if they are married in African societies. In contrast, the unmarried and those who are divorced are subjected to stigmatization. This creates an idea of the importance of marrying in Africa.

According to Kokunre Agbontaen-Eghafona (2021) the Family is an essential institution of the growth and development of society. This institution is a building block of society and also at the center of the survival of society as a whole in both social and biological reproduction. In African cultures, there is a high value placed on marriage and the family, and most people identify their families as one of the most essential things in their lives. Marriage and family are crucial systems in society, with a historical background as old as man.

The significance of marriage is captured within the Igbo tribe of Nigeria, where a child born out of wedlock or outside marriage is considered illegal and would not be able to access some family benefits. Children who are born outside marriage in Nigeria suffer in a way that other children in marriage do not. This results in women enduring marriage to ensure that their children do not suffer. In the precolonial era, marriage in African societies was the only legal means to procreate and socialize children (Agbontaen-Eghafona, 2021)

Agbontaen-Eghafona (2021) discussed the concept of marriage in Nigeria's pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial eras. In the pre-colonial era, being married was enough pride for the family. Women had no right to choose a husband. The rights of women belonged to their parents and their husbands. In Elif people of southeastern Nigeria, women were kept safe and taught to be obedient, loving, and loyal to their husbands. Married women were expected to view their husbands as their lords and obey all spoken and unspoken commands from their husbands. In the pre-colonial era, marriage favoured men and women suffered from discrimination, marginalization and inequality within the family. Women faithfully accepted their status as second-class citizens in society.

The colonial era brought slight liberation to women in marriage. This era between 1914 and 1960 changed the perception of the institution of marriage in Nigeria. Women got slightly advanced and became educated to get jobs. However, they had no power in marriage to make any decisions for themselves. Like in the pre-colonial era, marriage

still had value and social gains. Women gained status for being addressed as married, and men gained political and economic gain due to being married and having a family. It was this era that gave room for the problem of gender inequality to be addressed in marriage (Agbontaen-Eghafona, 2021)

According to Agbontaen-Eghafona (2021) the current era (post-colonial) is different regarding marriage and how it is vital to individuals in various African societies. Individuals who want to marry choose a spouse for themselves, which differs from how marriage was conducted in pre-colonial and colonial eras. Women are no longer in a hurry to get married since aspirations to have a career have increased to the average age at which people marry. It has become an accepted norm for young men and women to cohabit and have children outside marriage. There is less emphasis on marriage for childbirth, unlike in the pre-colonial and colonial era, where having a child outside marriage was a source of shame for the family. Traditional African family patterns are being altered slowly but progressively as part of modernization.

Within the institution of marriage in African societies, there are gender relations that dictate that a man is the head of the family. At the same time, the woman must consistently submit to the man's authority. In the native culture of Zimbabweans (Shona), a woman must defer to a man's authority as a cultural moral that is respected within the culture. Women and children are expected to obey the man's commands (husband/father) without questions. Failure to abide by raised commands attracts punishment from the head of the family. However, an adult man cannot be beaten even if he is acting the unaccepted behaviour, but a woman is subjected to punishment, thus compromising the woman's status as a sensible adult (Chisango, Mafa & Maunganidze, 2022)

In addition to the institution of marriage. Mshweshwe (2020) reveals that GBV in heterosexual relationships is a result of the patriarchal belief system that can be found within marriage. This system is characterized by social structures and practices in which men oppress, exploit, and dominate women. This patriarchal belief system legitimizes the dominance of men over women, which leads to men exercising their power and control over women or their partners through violence. The patriarchal belief system shapes the uneven distribution of power between men and women through the reinforcement of gender roles that are associated with domestic violence.

Men abuse women based on their inferiority status created by the patriarchal belief system.

According to Mudimeli and Khosa-Nkatini (2024), although marriage is valued within African societies, the culture of male dominance creates an idea of women as solely dependent on men since men are viewed as sole providers of the family. Women endure physical and emotional abuse without the thought of leaving the union of marriage as a result of going back home and being labeled as shameful in African cultures. In African societies, women are culturally segregated if they are divorced or unmarried. The fear of being segregated and judged influences women to stay in marriages that are characterized by abusive behaviors from their husbands.

At times, older women within the society who have endured abuse in marriage often expect the younger women to do the same. Such young women are told that abusive behaviours by men are normal and acceptable. The significance of marriage in Africa gives room for harsh judgment to older women who are not married. Women in African societies who are married often verbally abuse those who are not as adequate. This is prevalent in churches, where unmarried women are prohibited from preaching or wearing the church uniform. The segregation that unmarried women get subject to makes them stay in abusive marriages. This creates a never-ending chain of abuse within African marriages. This reveals how significant the institution of marriage is within African societies (Mudimeli & Khosa-Nkatini, 2024).

According to Chanda (2024) marriage in Zambian societies is a significant cornerstone of community cohesion. This institution is deeply rooted in social and cultural norms, with the tradition of the payment of bride prices viewed as an essential aspect of marriage that also provides family stability. However, bride price, according to Chanda (2024) holds a massive influence over attitudes towards violence, gender roles, and power dynamics between the groom and the bride.

Although *Mamalo* is perceived as valuable in the process of establishing a family through marriage, there are some aspects, such as negative masculinity and manhood ideologies, that are considered toxic in marriage. These aspects are manifested through men having authority over women and being justified as African cultural norms (Baloyi, 202). These aspects also benefit men while disadvantaging women in marriage. Men become authoritarian voices to which women in marriage expect to

listen and obey. Baloyi (2022) argues that the discussion on women being abused in marriage through toxic masculinity and manhood is justified by culture.

According to Mndende (2020) South African statistics reveal that the divorce rate was 44 percent per 100,000 in 2018. Racially wise, black African couples had a high number of divorces in comparison to other population groups. Studies show that young people resort to cohabitation and ignore the institution of marriage. However, this notion differs from how it was done within the Xhosa culture of South Africa, where marriage was valued and a cultural way of starting a family.

Mndende (2020) highlighted an example showing marriage's significance within African societies. A participant *stated, "Recently, I gave birth to a wonderful baby boy. I was not married to his father, and this was wrong culturally. Damages were paid to my family, as our culture requires. Damages, or Intlawulo, is the fine paid to the family of the women who became pregnant out of wedlock. This practice is also common in the Zulu and Swazi cultures. The damages are not for the father of the child to claim the baby as his but are for the family of the boy to acknowledge that they have wronged the family of the girl who is now pregnant. My son carries my surname and stays with my mother, who, culturally, is his mother. When he grows up, the expectation is that he would see me as his older sister, and he would say 'mom' to my mother. Culturally, that is the right way. In my case, he will be raised to know that his father passed away, as my family will be referring to my own father, who passed away years ago. Culturally, the biological father has no rights in this case because the child was born out of wedlock. It does not matter whether he is paying maintenance every month, culturally, he has no right. Many things may have changed with the times, but these parts of our culture have not"*. This narrative is a good example of how marriage is essential concerning children in African societies.

Still, based on the belief system on why Africans need to marry, Mndende (2020) provided reasons for why a child needs to be born through marriage. According to this author, marriage ensures that the child gets freedom and experiences the love and culture of both parents, gives the child the confidence to claim who he is, and secures the future of the child since, as the child grows, there are essential rituals and cultural rites that need to be performed for the child such as circumcision.

Most cultural/traditional practices in Africa are influenced by existing belief systems within communities. The belief system behind marriage is not the only system within Africa. The religious, medical, or cultural belief system can also influence cultural practices

A common cultural practice in Africa transitions male children from being boys to young men. This artistic practice is circumcision. This is an excellent example of how belief systems influence cultural practice. This practice is influenced by three belief systems: religious, medical, and artistic. According to Cerchiaro and Odasso (2023) circumcision is perceived as an important symbolic practice that involves intergenerational transmission. This is an important rite of passage for a male child among Muslims. Arima (2022) Explains that circumcision is a rite of initiation of a young person into adulthood.

According to Arima (2022) the religious belief system on circumcision is a sign of love between God and men and a covenant resulting from God's relationship with Abraham, a man of great faith, as recorded in the Book of Genesis. However, Nxumalo and Mchunu (2020) contradicted Arima (2022) and viewed this practice as a sin. This is based on the assumption that if a human is born in a certain way, any alteration to the body, such as circumcision, is a contradiction to what a human being is expected to be.

According to Cerchiaro and Odasso (2023) the medical belief system behind circumcision is based on the level of good hygiene that comes with the practice. However, according to Arima (2022) Nxumalo, and Mchunu (2020), this cultural practice is influenced by the prevention of HIV transmission, which is prevalent in female-to-male sexual encounters. Medical reports reveal there is a 60 percent chance of prevention from HIV as a result of circumcision.

Cerchiaro and Odasso (2023) reveal that the cultural belief system behind this cultural practice is based on how it acts as a symbolic sign that brings a sense of cultural belonging that maintains family continuity over generations from father to son. Arima (2022) explains that a young male cannot culturally transition to manhood without the practice of circumcision. All these belief systems mentioned above play a role in the performance and acceptance of circumcision as a cultural practice in most African countries.

2.3 The Practice of *Mamalo* in Various African Ethnic Groups

According to Akurugu, Dery and Domanban (2022) the general understanding of how the traditional practice of *Mamalo* varies. There is bride wealth (prestations are transferred from the groom's kin to the bride's family), groom price (payment is transferred from the bride's kin to the groom and his family) and dowry (payment is from the bride's family to her).

In Kenya there are various tribes that have a belief system on the legitimacy of marriage after the payment of *Mamalo*. However, the payment for the bride depends on either she is divorced, the number of children expected or based on the groom's background. Within the Kipsigis people of Kenya the amount *Mamalo* is determined by the either the woman is a maturing bride, meaning more value or if she was marriage while pregnant or if she had a child prior to the payment, leading to less value (Akurugu, Dery & Domanban, 2022).

In Ghana the payment of *Mamalo* carries an important position in the process of marriage across ethnic groups such as Dagaaba, Frafra and Builsa nations. Among the Dagaaba, the *Mamalo*, mostly comprises such items as libi-peelee fowls, tobacco and cola nuts. The amount of these items must be equal to those which were paid for the bride's mother. However, within the Daggaba, the amount of *Mamalo* to be paid is standardised for marriage. The Dagaaba people are different compared to the Kipsigis people of Kenya, because the amount of money to be paid form *Mamalo* is not contingent on how the bride is educated, either she has divorced (Akurugu, Dery & Domanban, 2022).

According Akurugu, Dery and Domanban (2022) the process of *Mamalo* among the Dagaaba is characterised by a complex process of negotiations which involves a male representative from the bride's and groom's family and a third party who acts as a marriage liaison. This third part in the negotiations is normally a man from the groom's family who is familiar with the cultural acts from the bride's village and the purpose of this third party is to ask for the woman's hand in marriage on behalf of the groom's family and also to negotiate on the amount if it is too high.

Once the *Mamalo* has be paid and accepted, the marriage union is formed and becomes legitimate. However, prior to the acceptance of *Mamalo*, special dedication sacrifices are done so the bride can be protected by the ancestors of the groom and

to ask for blessings, such the birth of children within the marriage (Akurugu, Dery & Domanban, 2022).

The Frafra tribe are different from the Dagaaba tribe in terms of the items required from *Mamalo*. Four cows, a red cock called nu-nua, which is a marriage fowl, a smock and local gin are required for marriage. These cows can either be paid at once or in instalments. Among the Frafra, the payment of the red cock legitimates the marriage. Once the fowl has been accepted, that is when the marriage will be considered valid by both families. both families of the bride and groom recognise the marriage as a valid one. However, before this marriage fowl is accepted by the bride's family, all cows must have been paid (Akurugu, Dery & Domanban, 2022).

There are sacrifices which are done that prohibits the bride from having sexual intercourse with another man or having multiple mating. If she is found to have engaged in such acts, the bride must be cleansed and purified because such as is considered a taboo (Akurugu, Dery & Domanban, 2022).

There is also the Builsa people of northern Ghana. The process of marriage within this tribe is complex and consists of several stages, payments and rituals. There are two rituals that legitimise marriage within this tribe. These rituals are the called *akaayale le o boro*, which means 'seek not, she is there (with us)' and the *nansuing ligka*, meaning closing the gate. The first ritual consists of a small amount of money for performing rituals, tobacco and cola nuts. The bride to be is abducted at first, which is a commonly known way of marrying within the Builsa people. The first ritual is performed few days after the abduction. During abduction, it is believed that the groom opened the bride's house entrance, and the second ritual symbolically brings a closure to the marriage. This ritual involves an animal either a goat, a sheep or a fowl, a hoe blade and tobacco (Akurugu, Dery & Domanban, 2022).

In Kenya there are about 43 ethnic groups with unique practice of marriage that has been handed down to several generations. The Kipsigis, Kikuyu, Ameru and Abagussi tribes of Kenya will be discussed on how cultural marriage or practice of *Mamalo* is conducted.

Marriage in Kenya is conducted through various stages which involves numerous meetings. These meeting include family introductions, betrothals, bridewealth negotiations and payments and other solemnization of unions. In some tribes, these

meetings are conducted separately but within the Kikuyu people, all these meetings can be combined and conducted in one day. Within the Kikuyu people, these meetings include the selection of elders from both sides of the family who will be responsible for running the events (Murage, 2023).

Once the elders have been identified and all the meetings have been held, the women from the bride's side of the family are responsible for counselling the bride to be on how she is expected to conduct herself at her in-laws. There are attires which are traditional regalia made out of beads, cowrie, maasai shuka, khaga and anima skin. During these events there are gifts which are expected, gifts such as gold, jewelry, money, cutlery, bedding, food stuff and sometimes electronics are required to legitimize the marriage. Some of these items are in relation to the current time and generation (Murage, 2023).

There is the Ameru tribe of Kenya where marriage is one of the most important rites of passage. Other important rites include birth and child naming, initiations, death and funeral. The main objective of marriage within the Ameru people is to create a family and to beget offsprings. Marriage is a vital ritual of existence that enables a family and the community to interact and create a lasting history of progeny. It is through marriage why people belong and identify with family unit in a community (Karicha, Akaranga & Musili, 2021).

The first step of marriage or the practice of *Mamalo* within the Ameru people is for the man to identify the woman he wants to marry and then informs the families. Both families cross-examine each to see if the two are worthy to marry each other. Once this step is completed, the process of *Mamalo* is initiated. The man would then go to the woman's home and make guttural sounds as he approaches the home and hand over a bunch of khat (a flowering plant) to secure the woman/girl from being married by someone else. The father of the bride is expected to openly chew the khat brought by the man to accept the request to marry his daughter. The father of the bride will be given a he-goat (male goat) and then the groom's mother prepares a gruel (food consisting types of cereal) for the bride's family and the bride's family does the same. After this event, women from the bride's clan and village prepares for a great celebration meal (Karicha, Akaranga & Musili, 2021).

When the marriage has been agreed upon, the groom's father will select elders who will go to bride's home to negotiate *Mamalo*. Once the two families sit, they would need to agree on an amount for marrying the woman. This amount is usually high if the woman is still a virgin. However, this amount is paid in instalments to give a chance man who are poor to have a spouse as well. *Mamalo* for the Ameru people consists of a container of honey, an ewe, a bull, a heifer, five she-goats and a ram. A heifer, ewe, and honey symbolize that the bride was a virgin, and the five goats were meant to replace the vacuum left at the girl's home and reminds her parents and siblings that she was figuratively present despite getting married elsewhere. All these items were not paid at once. A day is then decided to give out these items to the in-laws. It is then after the *Mamalo* is settled, counselling for both the groom and the bride are conducted, where they are given information and knowledge of Ameru customs and traditions (Karicha, Akaranga & Musili, 2021).

During the counselling sessions, the groom, other men and women from the village would build a temporary hut in early morning to avoid disturbance from those would want to disrupt the marriage proceedings. This hut was expected to be completed in one day. Then the first fire is kindled inside the hut as a symbol of the begging of a new life then the wedding ceremonies takes place at sunset with the belief that the evil spirits are resting and those malicious people who would want to end the marriage had go to their houses to rest (Karicha, Akaranga & Musili, 2021).

At night, the father of the bride is expected to bring a mixture of honey and milk while the mother brings a finger millet and present it to the daughter. Afterwards, an elderly person prays for the bride and adored her with bracelets and necklace before she leaves her home to the groom's residence. However, if it was found that the couple have had sex before, the marriage would be cancelled. If the bride is found to be pure, she is smeared with garlic powder then escorted to the groom's house to spend the night (Karicha, Akaranga & Musili, 2021).

On the next morning, the bride was given a gruel and two serving calabashes then the couple exchange clothes which that of the bride made out of goat hide and that of the groom from cow hide. The couple is expected to spend the whole day wearing each other's clothes. On the following day the bride's hair gets shaved, and they return to their own clothes. Then a final great feast was held to celebrate the marriage. This is

how cultural marriage/*Mamalo* practice is conducted within the Ameru people (Karicha, Akaranga & Musili, 2021).

In the western part of Kenya, there is the Abagussi tribe, where marriage is regarded as one the most important institution in Gusii culture since it is perceived as a start of life and insurance against evil such as witchcraft. The first step of cultural practice within the Gusii tribe is courtship between the man and women who wants to marry each other. This step is essential since it opens an opportunity for rituals that include family visitations, introductions, feasting, further spying and investigations of the two families (Orera, Kakai & Gimode, 2023).

The main objective on these investigations is to see if the family of the bride are not witches, have a history of laziness or if there are visible scars on those family members. These scars would tell the groom's family about parenting carelessness or child negligence. Once the two families agree on marriage, there would be a feast for both families, which will be done at night and only goat meat was served, with chicken being excluded from the feast. Eating chicken during such occasions is taboo according to the Gusii culture, therefore if chicken was served it should show not adhering to cultural customs which is believed to lead the new marriage into problems in future (Orera, Kakai & Gimode, 2023).

After the feast, the next step involves the negotiation process of the bridewealth. After the two families agree on an amount a wrestling match is organized between men from the groom's family and those from the bride's side. The winning team from this match is given a bull, which was then slaughtered for the pre-wedding ceremony that will take place at both sides of the families. It is after this ceremony that the groom and the bride are given advice on how they should conduct themselves in order for them to have a stable family. After this counselling session, the bride was then escorted to the groom's place (Orera, Kakai & Gimode, 2023).

According to the Gusii culture, after the wedding, post-wedding rituals are conducted, where sharing of the meal feasts are held. The Abugasii people believe that if all these cultural rituals are followed during a cultural marriage, issues such as break ups, contestation of gender roles become rare within Gusii families (Orera, Kakai & Gimode, 2023).

In central Africa, there is the Masubiya people who are from East Caprivi in Namibia which is believed to be renamed the Zambezi region. Cultural marriage within this ethnic group starts with satisfaction between the groom's and the bride's family with the idea of the man and woman marrying. This satisfaction is achieved through negotiations between the delegates from the groom's and the bride's family. The parents on the two are rarely involved in these negotiations. The second step involves the negotiation of the bridewealth. The payment made is called mouth opener. This enables the groom's family to state the reason of their visit. During these negotiations, the couple is not allowed to be present due to heated conversations and disagreements that might emerge and as a result lead to the couple developing hatred towards specific family members (Kapesiso, 2022).

According to Kapesiso (2022) the main objective behind the payment of bridewealth is to compensate the parents of the bride for the loss of their daughter. However, bridewealth is not an assessment of the bride's cost by cattle or other goods. When the two families reach an agreement, an amount of money which is not more than 2000 Namibian dollars (R20,000.04) is paid to close the negotiations. This amount is paid at the end of the day after the negotiations and the next step involves the bride being escorted to new home.

Prior to all the negotiations, the groom is expected to stay at the bride's village to show that he is worthy to marry their daughter through his work either in the fields or through hunting. It is after this trial that he would be granted marriage. However, this was practiced in the olden days. Since the bride wealth is paid, the next step involves preparations for the bride to leave her home and start a new life with her husband and his family. The bride is subjected to serious talks for her emotional and psychological preparations for the change that is coming. During this time, the groom's family is informed about the date that they will officially come to get their new wife. On the groom's side the aunts, sisters and female relatives are responsible for fetching the bride, clothing for the bride, the person to clothe the bride and the number of people required (Kapesiso, 2022).

In this ethnic group, after all these preparations are done, the groom's family will then leave their village and go to the bride's village to fetch her. Upon arrival, they wait outside waiting to be invited inside the yard. During this time, the bride is covered with a veil

or a long sheet, waiting to be uncovered by the groom's family. Once the bride is uncovered, she is given new clothes which represent a start of a new life. When the bride is dressed up, women ululate, and she is escorted to her husband's place. This proceeding starts in the evening and the escort of the bride takes place during the night. This is the final stage that leads the couple into being husband and wife (Kapesiso, 2022).

The next morning two significant events are expected. The first one involves the demonstration to provide for the family and the other is a session of advice or marriage counselling. The husband is given a spear, and the bride is given a hoe. The husband is expected to throw the spear into the target and hit the target, symbolizing the skill of hunting while the bride is expected to show her cultivating skill with a hoe. However, this act is skipped in the modern day due to the couple being employed and having the capability to financially provide for the family (Kapesiso, 2022).

According to Kapesiso (2022) the next step involves counselling session, where the bride is informed that a woman does not spread rumours in the village, she is going to be part of. This meant that everything the bride hears should be for her ears only. Then the couple was fed a small amount of pap while the community ululates. Then the groom's mother puts a necklace made out of beads around the groom's and bride's necks to show the union of the two. This is then followed by the bride being given a marital name by which she will be known as in the village. This is how a cultural marriage is conducted within the Masubiya people.

In Zimbabwe, the traditional practice of *Mamalo* is referred to as Roora within Shona people. *Mamalo* in Shona is conducted in various stages/steps. The first step involves the spokesperson of the groom being sent to the bride's house to inform the reason of his visit. When asked the reason for his visit, he is expected to say that he is there for 'the only beautiful flower in home'. Then the girl is asked if she knows the family of the groom. After she agrees, then a list of all needed items such as rice, meat and cooking oil is given to the spokesperson and take it back to the groom's home. On the day of payment preparations, a wooden plate is placed at the centre of the gathering, then a small amount of money which is called Sunungura (loosening pockets) or Vhuramuromo (mouth opener) is paid. This allows the groom's family to be free to start with the negotiations of *Mamalo* (Chashamba, 2016).

In Shona culture, two gifts or payments are made directed to the father and mother of the bride. The payment to the father is negotiable while the one to be mother is non-negotiable. The father is given money to show acknowledgement for raising his daughter while the payment to the mother is to thank the mother for carrying the bride in her womb and for carrying her in a pouch or sling when she was a baby. Then the groom brings a living goat to be slaughtered during the payment process. This goat is killed and cooked at the end of the ceremony. If the groom could not bring a living goat, money will be accepted then shared amongst the young males of the family. The bride is also expected to take some money from the wooden plate which the amount is usually set by the aunts. This money is used to buy cooking utensils; however, the bride can return the money at the end of the ceremony to help pay for future wedding expenses or choose to give some of it to her younger siblings (Chashamba, 2016).

The most important step of this practice is the payment of *Mamalo*. The amount of money requested vary according to the social class of the groom and the bride. The groom is expected to make the first payment even if it is not in full. Failure to pay the required money will result in the process starting over from the beginning. If no payment is ever made, the bride will not be released. The next step involves handing over of the gifts, cattle or money, based on what was requested. The amount of money that is usually requested equates to the market price of seven to eight cows. Then the groom is expected to provide the bride's mother with a living cow which is expected to produce offspring to prove that the union is blessed. Once the cow gives birth, it is slaughtered and eaten at thanksgiving by both families to strengthen the relationship between the new couple and two families (Chashamba, 2016).

Slaughtering of the mother's cow usually takes place two or five years after the wedding. The final step involves clothing gifts which are given to the parents of the bride by the groom. The groom greets the family in a traditional clapping greeting as a new family member. The groom is given a lift of clothing items for the bride's parents. The clothing is usually a complete outfit from head to toe. This is how the traditional practice of *Mamalo* takes places within Shona people of Zimbabwe (Chashamba, 2016).

According to Ngoepe (2020) the first step of how the traditional practice of *Mamalo* is conducted within the Bapedi people of South Africa involves a man identifying a

woman he wishes to marry then informs his parents who then informs his uncles and aunts. However, in marriage there is an aspect of age, where a person could be expected to be of a certain age prior wanting to marry (Hariri & Purba (2022)). Then the uncles of the groom set a date to visit the bride's home. At this stage, the groom needs to provide the uncles with a precise description of the bride. At the first appointment the bride's family declines that they have a daughter who is up for marriage. This is a cultural game of playing hard to get. During the second visit all daughters in the family excluding the bride are called for the uncles to identify the one they are there for. This practice is done to ensure that amongst the girls none of them once visited the groom's home. Therefore, the uncles are expected to decline to show that they know the girl they want to marry.

Furthermore, the bride's family would insist that there is no other girl and perhaps the uncles of the groom are at the wrong address. The delegates must be persistent and provide a reason why they are certain that they are not at the wrong address. The next step involves the bride being called to explain if she knows the family that is there to marry her. If she declines with reasons to reconsider marriage, another date is set for the appointment, but if she accepts the groom's family are sent back and given a date for *Mamalo* negotiations. At some instances the negotiations might start right away. Once *Mamalo* negotiations are concluded, the groom is informed about the number of cows needed or money in the modern days to pay for *Mamalo* (Ngoepe, 2020).

The next step of *Mamalo* in this ethnic group involves selection of delegate who will be sent to formally ask the bride on that date. She is expected to be a kind person. On the set date, a celebration take place for both the families and the communities from the grooms and bride's family. At the bride's home, a lamb is slaughtered, and the bride's father is served the liver while the groom's uncles eat tripe. One half of the lamb without organs is taken by the groom's family while the other half is left for the guests. On the day agreed for *Mamalo* to be paid, the groom's uncles go to the bride's family with all gifts requested. They are expected to pay entrance fee which must come from them and not the groom. Then there will be humble introductions and *Mamalo* will be paid together with the exchange of gifts requested (Ngoepe, 2020).

During this stage of *Mamalo*, if the required money is paid in full, they groom's family will be informed on when they can come and take their bride and if they pay half the

Mamalo they would ask to go with the bride just to display her and bring her back later. The groom's uncles will then go back and inform the groom about what transpired on that day. If the groom ends up not paying the full amount, the bride will be snatched back by her family and required theft chargers to be settled before the outstanding *Mamalo* is paid. The last step involves the bride being taken to the groom's household but not his own home, where the bride will be officially welcomed and be issued with a new bridal name and a ceremony is held. The aunts of the groom are expected to stay a week at the groom's home doing all the chores on behalf of the new bride as a way of teaching her how to look after her new family. This is how the traditional process of *Mamalo* is conducted according to the Bapedi people (Ngoepe, 2020).

2.4 *Mamalo*: A contributory factor to GBV or a Tool to fight GBV

According to Akurugu, Dery and Domanban (2022) *Mamalo* is perceived as the basis of the oppression, normalised violence, complicating gender equality and women's empowerment. Although this cultural practice is perceived to bring dignity and respect to women, men, and their children, it is still viewed as an influence on GBV. Scholars have called for the abolishment of this cultural practice due to its impact on GBV; however, ethnographic evidence shows that this act of abolishing *Mamalo* will worsen the violence and oppression that is already present towards women.

According to Mudimeli and Khosa-Nkatini (2024) the modern generation argues that the cultural practice of bride price (*Mamalo*) contributes to GBV. This artistic practice that promotes ties between two families has been criticized for enforcing inequality and promoting GBV in marital relationships. There is a correlation between bride price (*Mamalo*) and the abuse women get subjected to in marriages. Bride price violates women's rights, resulting in them being viewed as property or objects owned by their husbands. *Mamalo* acts as a mechanism that gives room to male dominance where men are granted authority to reinforce expectations for women to be submissive.

A study highlighted by these authors revealed that the negotiations and payment of *Mamalo* contribute to power imbalances in marriage. *Mamalo* is used as a tool to justify unequal gender dynamics while perpetuating cultural norms that are harmful to women. This cultural practice of *Mamalo* has been shifted from its original purpose of strengthening the two families to a commercial enterprise where women are viewed as objects to being bought and sold. Large sums of money requested by the bride's

family allow men to perceive a green card for ownership, giving freedom to control the bride as a property (Mudimeli & Khosa-Nkatini, 2024).

According to Baloyi (2022) the belief of bride price (*Mamalo*) being perceived as a gain of authority over women, gives men the opportunity to develop violent behaviours towards their spouse. This belief in South Africa is linked to masculinity and manhood ideologies. The patriarchal system in most African societies justifies and legitimises GBV, where men exercise power and control over their female partners. This idea is also captured in a study by Muguti and Mlambo (2021).

The patriarchal system in African societies defines roles for both men and women, where men are providers and women are caregivers. These gendered roles are influenced by the practice of bride price, as men are the ones responsible for the payment. When this perception of men being providers is threatened due to the inability of a man to provide financially for the family, aggression emerges, resulting in GBV (Baloyi, 2022).

It is found that in Zimbabwe, there are instances where commercialization of *Mamalo* leads to GBV. The significant amount of *Mamalo* paid gives the husbands a reason to abuse their wives. *Mamalo* should be viewed and understood as a way of showing appreciation for allowing the have the woman's hand in marriage and not as a money-making scheme (Mudimeli & Khosa-Nkatini, 2024). A study by Mbewe (2021) also provided the same insight on the original understanding of *Mamalo*.

In the African culture, women are cared for by their parents, and their husbands take care of them when they get older. This transition from fathers to daughters in traditional cultural marriage symbolizes a shift of roles, with fathers in charge until marriage, and then the roles are transferred to the husband. The husband is expected to pay the bride price as a sign or symbol of appreciation. This means the father can no longer defend his daughter since *Mamalo* has been paid. The acceptance of *Mamalo* in African societies means that the woman is no longer part of her biological family but instead of the in-laws. If the woman faces any form of abuse and goes back to their home, the father is expected to chase her away from home since he accepted *Mamalo*. This provides men with the idea of buying and selling women through *Mamalo*. *Mamalo* becomes the reason why women stay in abusive marriages, thus resulting in GBV (Mudimeli & Khosa-Nkatini, 2024).

According to Chanda (2024) the cultural practice of bride price (*Mamalo*) exacerbates GBV by commodifying women and reinforcing their status of subordination within families. Bride price creates a perception of ownership over women, making it difficult for them to leave abusive relationships in fear of bringing shame to their families or being seen as a burden. Bride price enforces women's perception as objects of exchange and control. A study in Zambia revealed that marriage and bride price were among the significant cultural practices contributing to GBV. The bride price payment symbolizes the transfer of ownership from the bride's family to that of the groom. This reinforces patriarchal structures where women are viewed as owned by men. Through this act, women are assigned roles of being caregivers and household managers, while men are expected to be decision-makers and providers of the family.

The practice of paying the bride price in African societies is to bring the family of the bride and the groom together as a new extended family. Traditionally, the bride price is required or charged as a token of appreciation, which is affordable and cements a bond between the two families. In precolonial times, a man always had a way to pay the bride price. If he could not afford the provided the expected amount, he would be allowed to replace cattle with manual labour as a way of paying the bride price (Chisango, Mafa & Maunganidze, 2022)

However, in modern times, this cultural practice has been commercialized in African countries such as Zimbabwe and many others. Exorbitant prices are being charged from the bride price, and this creates an ideology of bride price being an element of the capitalist system that benefits men while affecting women socially, economically, and politically. Bride price has become a sexist practice that reduces women to chattels and commodities that can be sold or kept to retain value. As an example, Chisango, Mafa, and Maunganidze (2022) captured reported stories in their paper, such as of a well-known Zimbabwean politician who married his bride with more than six hundred thousand rands and divorced in two weeks, a case of a man who demanded his bride price back after a breakup, a man demanding his bride price back after losing a job, an incident a gang storming a home of a father and killed him over bride price money, and a case of a man killing his wife two days after paying bride price. All these cases are centered on the concept of commercialization of bride price leading to power imbalances between married women and men.

Bride price is an essential cultural practice being misunderstood and misinterpreted, leading to GBV due to the sense of ownership entitled to the practice. Having been paid for, women are expected to be subordinate to men to avoid backlash. Amongst the urban Zulu people of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, there is a sharp decline in marriage rates due to the high amount of money required for a Bride price. In such cases, those men who can pay the necessary amount of money and marry perceive the payment as justification for control and authority. This results in GBV as a justified act due to high bride price fees (Chisango, Mafa, & Maunganidze, 2022)

According to Manobo (2021) The cultural and biblical misinterpretation of bride price has led to the justification of inequality and oppression against married women. Bride price has been commercialized in a manner that influences gender inequality, leading to the abuse of women. The amount of bride price paid charges the value of womanhood. This creates an opportunity for families to use this cultural practice for their benefit. Based on social scientists and advocates of feminism, it is revealed that the aspect of gender inequality is an outcome of the distorted understanding of bride price. Women are abused by their husbands as a result of the payment of bride price. In some instances, women whose fiancé could not pay the bride price opt for pregnancy outside marriage, and women whose bride price is either not paid or not paid in full as a result of the high amount of money demanded, the families face conflicts if the woman passes on.

A study by Nduna (2021) revealed that some women with ideas that create room for bride price (*Mamalo*) influence the occurrence of GBV. One of the data presented in the study was of two young women discussing that they would not leave their parents if the money paid for the bride price were less than ten thousand rands. This information highlighted the commercialization of bride price. In the same study, a representation of how much money is required for the bride price was included, where specific qualities were observed that determine the money needed. If a woman is a virgin with a degree, eighty thousand rands is required; non-virgin with a degree, the bride price will be fifty thousand rands, and a woman with two kids and not educated has no value. As a result, no bride price is required for her to be married. These misunderstandings of bride price increase the perception of men's ownership towards women.

In Swazi culture, once a man pays the bride price, the woman becomes one of his children, and children can be disciplined if they are not obedient to the father. This belief attached to the bride price subjects married women to GBV. It is a common practice for a bride to be informed or taught how she is expected to behave with her in-laws. This practice makes women accept authority and control from their husbands and endure abuse. The bride price payment reduces a woman's status to merely a status of property, affecting her self-perception and freedom. This issue of bride price becoming a money-making scheme makes men who pay high amounts of money justify abuse towards their spouses (Nyawo, 2021).

According to Chanda (2024), bride price creates a significant power imbalance between the groom and the bride. Since the groom's family perceives payment of the bride price as a financial investment, they perceive themselves as having control and authority over the bride. This leads to unequal power dynamics since the bride may feel compelled to do as the groom and his family wish, although it might contradict her wish and desire. This idea creates a great perception of ownership that leads to controlling and abusive behaviours by the groom. Bride price is perceived as justification for mistreatment or violence towards the bride as a result of the groom and his family developing a sense of ownership. This creates a culture of abusive behaviours being normalized or ignored within the context of marriage. According to Chanda (2024) bride price creates room for gender inequality and a sense of undermining women's rights in marriage in societies where the cultural act of bride price is rooted.

Akurugu, Dery, and Domanban (2022) perceive *Mamalo* as a central component of marriage in African societies. This practice is important and, at the same time, contradictory due to the complications it brings on the kinds of rights and entitlements for the married couple. *Mamalo* is perceived as a significant setback to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. When this practice occurs, a woman is perceived as being transferred from her home to her in-laws. The bride loses control over her life to the extent that she seeks approval or permission from her husband to make significant decisions.

Various authors argue that the traditional practice of *Mamalo* gives women value, respect, and dignity within their communities, and as a result, this allows an

opportunity for gender equality between men and women, leading to less prevalence of GBV

According to Akurugu, Dery, and Domanban (2022) *Mamalo* legitimates marriage and enables women to gain social status in their societies. In North-west Ghana, there is a perception that the payment of *Mamalo* cannot be complete, although the two families have agreed on a price. This creates an idea that the bride is worth more than any amount of money, therefore influencing the presence of respect and dignity for women, leading to less prevalence of GBV.

These authors explain that this cultural practice does not give a man any right to own a woman in North-West Ghana. If a man is abusive, the bride has the full power to leave the marriage and return to her home, and if the man's family fails to show up and apologize, the woman has the power to remarry (Akurugu, Dery and Domanban (2022)). However, without a payment of *Mamalo*, the marriage is not considered legitimate. Although some scholars argue for the end of this practice, *Mamalo* is highly recommended in North-West Ghana. This cultural practice brings a sense of belonging and acceptance of the bride to her new family. This reveals the level of dignity and respect for women, influencing gender equality and a GBV-free African society (Akurugu, Dery & Domanban (2022)).

According to Nduna (2021) *Mamalo* reinforces the status of a woman in society as a married woman. If *Mamalo* is not paid, the status of a woman as someone's wife is questioned or illegitimate. However, this cultural practice sometimes results in the modern-day characterization of a family in which both the child's parents are not present due to the man's failure to afford the bride price.

In a study by Nduna (2021) data presented shows how a woman is proud of her African culture as a Tswana child and how the cultural practice of bride price places value and dignity on women's status, thus fighting the prevalence of GBV. In the study, the young lady revealed how her in-laws were happy to welcome her into the family and to call her their daughter. The study also showed how the bride's uncles and aunts stepped in in the absence of her parents. It is well demonstrated how bride price is closely connected to the sense of belonging.

In Eswatini, *Mamalo* (bride price) builds a strong and healthy relationship between the groom's and bride's family, the payment of bride price fights GBV as a result of the

perception of the act as an indicative measure of how the groom values the bride and the commitment to her future happiness. The cultural practice is a token of appreciation to the bride's father, who endorsed his daughter as the groom's wife. The bride's price is beyond the general idea of uniting two families only; it is also the two communities from which the bride and groom come. Bride price accords a value of a woman that is not stolen but given away in the presence of the families and the community through a mutual agreement (Nyawo, 2021)

The cultural practice of bride price gives a woman the status of an "Umfati sibili" (real wife). It is significant for the bride price to be paid because marriage is an African rite of passage for every girl growing up in a family. If the bride price is not paid, it becomes difficult for a woman whose parents did not receive any amount since she would be undermined and be called "not a complete wife." Payment of the bride price is significant to the woman since it raises the value attached to her as a wife and a general person. This cultural practice validates marriage and symbolizes earnest belief in successful out-of-marriage (Nyawo, 2021).

According to Manobo (2021) *Mamalo* does not tie a woman to her marital home or enslave her. It is the misunderstanding, misinterpretation and commercialization of the practice that makes it acceptable for women to endure difficult marriages as a result of abuse from their husbands. The misunderstanding of the importance of bride price is one factor contributing to GBV and preventing women from unfolding their potential since men are the decision-makers. Taken from a cultural and biblical understanding of bride price, this is not an instrument to the oppression of women but rather a practice that supports the marriage institution and solidifies the relationship between the groom, bride, and their families. The perception of bride price where the gift of motherhood is celebrated, and values would eradicate the view of bride price as a commercial entity.

A study highlighted by Mudimeli and Khosa-Nkatini (2024) emphasizes that *Mamalo* has a significant value on women and is often a symbol of respect and dignity. Bride price (*Mamalo*), as understood from its original cultural state, does not contribute to GBV; instead, the modernized version of the practices influences GBV. Modernization of this practice is influenced by Western marriage culture. Evolving changes in bride price (*Mamalo*) contribute to marital breakdown and GBV.

Based on the literature reviewed for this study on how culture intersects with GBV, how the traditional practice of *Mamalo* (bride price) is conducted in other parts of Africa, and how this traditional practice either contributes or fights GBV through gender equality, it is revealed that the manifestation of this traditional practice based on the aspects mentioned above varies in accordance to the location of the people. This involves the part of Africa the people are from and the type of ethnic group they belong to.

All countries and ethnic groups reviewed in this study were different, resulting in different results on whether the practice of mammals influences the prevalence of GBV or whether it fights the social issue faced. The majority of the ethnic groups covered showed that the practice of *Mamalo* acts as a contributing factor to GBV rather than a tool that can be used to uphold gender equality.

It is this research gap that provides a significant need for a study to be conducted from a specific ethnic group of South Africa (Vhavenda) to investigate how the Vhavenda culture intersects with GBV, how their traditional practice of *Mamalo* was conducted in pre-colonial and the current era and if either the practice acts as a contributory factor to GBV or provide community-based justification for gender equality to minimize the prevalence of GBV within the Vhavenda community and South Africa at large.

2.5 Sociologically based strategies and measures that can be implemented to help communities reduce the occurrence of GBV.

a) Cultural programmes based on gender-based violence and change

Change is not a one-day thing, but it is possible. Culture is defined as dynamic. This simply means that no matter how hard it might be for change to occur, what matters the most is that such a change is possible, and, in this study, the type of change needed will bring about a significant curve to the rising graph of gender-based violence in South Africa. Communities must develop programmes aimed at identifying all cultural practices that are enablers of gender-based violence. The identification of elements will help in finding better ways of knowledge their culture in ways that do not create an environment for gender-based violence to occur. These programmes must be inclusive of both genders- women and men. This will give an opportunity for the two genders to identify elements that oppress each other and reach a mutual ground on how best to resolve them.

Many people would say that cultural change is difficult or rather impossible, however, evidence abounds that cultural is indeed possible. A good example is the type of clothing people wear today. In the olden days, these types of clothes were not present. People used to wear clothing made out of animal skin, but change was accepted and today people wear modern clothes. The same thing applies to cultural practices that contribute to gender-based violence, such as *Mamalo*. These practices can be changed and help in reducing the occurrence of gender-based violence (Keddie, Hewson-Munro, Halafoff, Delaney & Flood, 2022)

b) Gender-based violence programmes for men and boys in communities

This social issue of gender-based violence affects both men and women, but in most cases, it is women and female children who are the victims while men and boys are the perpetrators. This makes it important for men and boys to be involved in the process of fighting gender-based violence. One powerful tool for solving social issues is influence. Influence has the capability of increasing or decreasing the level of a social issue. When other men and boys in the community see others involved in programmes that address the issue of gender-based violence and advocacy for women and girls, they are most likely to join the move. This will create a violence-free community. These programmes should be based on how men and boys should act wherever they feel like their masculinity is challenged and not use violence as a solution. Some of these men and boys use violence to resolve disputes because they lack awareness as to how to act when angered. Sometimes violence against women and girls occurs because men and boys do not accept equality. These programmes in communities will help men and boys in the establishment of equality and respect for women and girls (Keddie, Hewson-Munro, Halafoff, Delaney and Flood, 2022). A study by Ghanda and Rania (2024) also supports this measure but in a sense of family inclusion in terms of addressing GBV in relation to men and boys in communities.

These programmes will also address issues of gender roles which is a factor that influences inequality, leading to gender-based violence. Men and boys should learn that gender is a social contrast and that there are no roles for women and men, specifically at home or in a community. This will create a healthy environment which is grounded and fair play in equality.

c) Support groups for women

At most times, people who are faced with social problems are referred to support groups to help in the reduction or relieve of issues suppressing them. The same things should happen with the idea of reducing the cases of gender-based violence. Women should form a common front by establishing support groups to provide the needed platform to discuss all issues facing them and have a collective voice with regards to action. There are women who are being abused by their intimate partners, and they do not know where or how to get help because they lack information (Worrall, Schweizer, Marks, Yuan, Lloyd & Ramjan, 2018).

These support groups will create an environment where abused women will be able to share their stories and get help while in a safe space. These support groups will also help women in identifying victims who survived gender-based violence and have knowledge as to how to escape such an environment. There are women who live in toxic environments which are influenced by cultural elements, and due to lack of insight and information, they believe that a woman is meant to be controlled and dominated by a man. These support groups will provide insight to women who lack such information and insight (Worrall et al., 2018). According to Ridwan and Wijaya (2024) empowerment through these support groups for women can be essential in Addressing GBV.

Everyone in South Africa has rights. However, some of these rights are walked over because the abuse has been observed, and it is noticed that they do not have information as to what their rights are. With women joining support groups, they will be provided with information such as their rights and to in need of help with regards to being violated by an intimate partner or any random man.

d) Integration of gender-based violence within the education curriculum of learners at primary and secondary level.

It is without doubt that knowledge is power and if the issue of gender-based violence wants to be reduced, everyone at all levels of life must be included, this will mean that children at primary school and secondary schools must be taught about gender-based violence. The school curriculum for learners must have information on what gender-based violence is and what to do if one is identified as a victim of this act. This measure will help learners to know that there are behaviours which are acceptable and others

which are not. With this integration, learners will grow up knowing that both boys and girls are equal, and one should not be inferior or dominated by the other (Villardón-Gallego, García-Cid, Esteévez & García-Carrión, 2023).

Children are great observers and, once they learn a behaviour, it is difficult to wipe it from their social system. For example, children might see their parents fighting at home where the father is dominant and controls everyone at home. This means such a child will grow up understanding that violence is a way of life and a good solution to a problem. However, if a child witnesses such behaviour happening at school, the child is taught about violence as bad behaviour. The child is most likely not to inherit that behaviour as acceptable to society. This curriculum can save the lives of children and family members who are victims of violence by knowing where to report such behaviour which is happening at home (Villardón-Gallego et al., 2023).

e) Inclusion of women in community leadership

A social problem that is affecting a specified group of people and cannot be resolved without that group being included. Communities are fuels of gender-based violence because women who are being abused are known in communities, but because the leadership consists of a group of people who are not victims, they do not see the need to address the issue. With regards to dealing with issues in a community, solutions are mostly developed by the people who are in the leadership of that specific community. This means they have the power to choose which issue to prioritize first. For example, community members can be requested to identify areas that need intervention, and if the issue of gender-based violence is raised while the leadership is dominated by men, such a problem might be placed on the side and probably be ignored. However, if women are involved and they are part of the community leadership, they will ensure that their needs are addressed (Arar, Sawalhi, Blaik, Hollweck & Brion, 2021).

It is necessary to include women in the leadership strata of the community. If possible, there should be equal representation of men and women in a group that leads a community. This might be a royal counsel of a village or a community forum. This strategic measure will also help women in the creation of effective measures on how to deal with perpetrators of gender-based violence.

f) Campaigns for women's independence in communities

One of the major issues that contributes to women being victims of gender-based violence is lack of independence. Women who are dependent and, particularly in terms of financial dependence, are most likely to be victims of gender-based violence. The introduction of these campaigns in communities will provide women with information on how to strive towards being independent, and women who are being abused due to their dependence on men will be saved. These campaigns will provide women with business ideas for those who are interested in being businesswomen. For those who seek employment, these campaigns will assist in identifying potential sectors where there are chances of employment (Arar .et al, 2021).

Independence does not mean being wealthy or living a certain lifestyle, it simply means sustainability. When women are part of these campaigns, it means they will be less exposed to gender-based violence and those who are married or in relationships for financial support will not find it difficult to leave an abusive marriage or relationship, because they will be able to sustain themselves. All of this will result in the reduction of gender-based violence.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework refers to the sets of concepts and foundations that have been developed systematically which are coined from theories that have the intent of providing needed support to the study. Theoretical framework can be easily defined as the solid rock on which a research study is built (Saluwa, Bolatitio & Masibo, 2023). For the theory, the study relies on three theories: Social learning theory and the theory of liberty and the liberal feminist theory. These theories are discussed in depth and how they will be implemented, foretell and provide explanations to the research findings.

2.5.1 The social learning theory

Social Learning theory was first developed by a psychologist known as Albert Bandura in 1977 and the Theory of Liberty by John Stuart Mill. Proponents of the theory argues that behaviour is learned by observing and imitating the behaviour of others. The Social learning theory is regarded as the most influential theory of learning and development. This theory has been referred to as the bridge between behaviourist learning theories and cognitive learning theories, because it encompasses attention,

memory, and motivation. This theory is grounded on three major aspects which are considered ways in which people learn behaviour. The three aspects are observation, intrinsic reinforcement and modelling (Modelling process) (Koutroubas & Galanakis, 2022).

Albert Bandura is recognized as the father of cognitive theory. Albert Bandura became a university student and pursued his studies in clinical psychology where He even obtained a PhD in Clinical Psychology from the University of Iowa in 1952. In 1961 and 1963, Albert Bandura conducted a series of experiments to determine where social behaviours could be acquired by observation and imitation. His studies involved the famous Bobo doll experiments. With this experiment, children observed a model of a Bobo doll being punched where they ended up initiating the same behaviour and this concluded his studies that children emulate their behaviour by watching others. This led to the development of the Social Learning Theory in 1977.

As mentioned above, this theory is characterized by three ways in which a behaviour is learned. Below is a discussion on how these three aspects of learning a behaviour work, starting with observational learning, followed by intrinsic reinforcement and, lastly, the modelling process. This is where an individual successfully makes a behaviour model of someone else. An individual would learn a behaviour through observational learning, then intrinsic reinforcement occurs, which leads to the modelling process. This is why other scholars argue that learning does not necessarily lead to a change in behaviour (Koutroubas & Galanakis, 2022).

a) Observational learning

Observational learning simply means that behaviour is learned through observing. As mentioned above, the experiment on the Dodo doll explained how behaviour is learned through observing others. In this experiment, a child was placed in a room where they could see an adult punching and hitting the dodo doll. As a result, when this child was placed in a room with the dodo doll, the same behaviour which was being done by the adult was done by the child. This will be the same with any type of behaviour that is being observed by children (Koutroubas & Galanakis, 2022).

In observational learning, there is a basic model which is explained as to how behaviour is learned through observation. These models are a live model, a verbal model and a symbolic model. With the first model, behaviour is learned when an

individual is demonstrating or acting a behaviour. For example, if a parent comes back from work, and the first thing What he / she does is open the television and place both legs on a table. When there is a child around who is observing that behaviour, the child is most likely to adopt that behaviour as well (Koutroubas & Galanakis, 2022).

The second way of learning behaviour through observation is the verbal model. In this model, a behaviour is learned through an explanation or description of it. For example, if a child is told not to play with match sticks because fire might break out, such a child will learner this behaviour and know that match sticks are not toys, because they can cause fire (Koutroubas & Galanakis, 2022).

The lastly model is the symbolic model. This explains that behaviour is learned through real or fictional characters displaying behaviour in books, films, television or online media. An individual can watch a movie with excessive gun violence or the dominance of men over women. Such a person is most likely to learn that behaviour as a way of living or maybe a character in a movie or in a book was wealthy as a result of stealing and getting away with it. A child observing such behaviour will adopt it as an acceptable way of living. All these three models explain how a behaviour is learned through observation (Koutroubas & Galanakis, 2022).

b) Intrinsic reinforcement

According to intrinsic reinforcement as a way of learning a behaviour, it explains that behaviour is learned through a form of internal reward. This involves a sense of pride, satisfaction or accomplishment. If a behaviour that is being conducted by an individual is accompanied by pride, satisfaction and accomplishment, such behaviour will be adopted by that person. For example, if a person or child makes fun of another individual within a group of people, and those laugh at the incident that occurred, the perpetrator of the behaviour feels a sense of pride and satisfaction, that behaviour will be adopted and continually be implemented. (Koutroubas & Galanakis, 2022).

c) The modelling process

When an individual has passed through the first step of observing a behaviour on intrinsic reinforcement, a process of modelling begins, where an individual is able to successfully make a behaviour model of someone else. The modelling process is

characterized by four steps, which are attention, retention, reproduction and motivation.

With the first step, which is attention, an observer is required to pay close attention to the behaviour that is being conducted. The more attractive or rewarding a behaviour is, the higher the chance of attention. After close attention is given to the behaviour, retention is required, which is basically the ability to remember the behaviour. If an individual does not pay attention, a behaviour will not be remembered, meaning no adoption. The third step is reproduction. In this step, a person replicates the behaviour that has been observed and if the behaviour receives motivation, it will result in permanent adoption. This is the last step of the modelling process where reinforcement and punishment are crucial in playing the role of motivation. This is how behaviour is learned according to the Social Learning Theory by Albert Bandura (Koutroubas & Galanakis, 2022).

In this study, the phenomena being investigated will be interpreted and understood through the social learning theory in the following manner: According to the social learning theory behavior is learnt through observation, modelling and imitation of a behaviour being reinforced by other people who are referred to as models. In the current study, the social learning theory will guide interpretation of data in two possible ways.

Firstly, the theory will be able to guide interpretation and understanding of data if the data informs the researcher that the traditional practice of *Mamalo* within the Vhavenda people contributes to GBV. In this instance, the theory will provide significant understanding on how the behaviour of the practice has either been learned through observation, modelling or imitation resulting in the acceptance of women abused being prevalent and justified through *Mamalo*.

The second lens that the theory might provide interpretation and understanding of data is if the data of the study reveals that the practice of *Mamalo* upholds justification for gender equality and a result creating room for minimization of GBV. In this regard, the social learning theory will provide insight on how the understanding of *Mamalo* as a tool to fight GBV can be passed from one generation within a specific ethnic group to the next through aspects of the social learning theory namely: observation, modeling or imitation.

Le and Hancer (2020) conducted a study to examine the YouTube viewers' desire to imitate travel vloggers which acts as a good example of how the theory can be used to interpret and understand data. In their study the main focus was to investigate the impact of perceived attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness of YouTube travel vloggers on viewers' wishful identification and behaviour intention. Le and Hancer revealed that the viewers were imitating the behaviour of the vloggers who are being perceived as models of behaviour. This study justified that behaviour can be learnt through the social learning theory, providing insight into how the theory can be utilized in the current study.

2.5.2 The Theory of Liberty

This study will also be guided by the theory of liberty by John Stuart Mill. The founder of this theory was an English philosopher, political economist, politician and civil servant. The theory of liberty addresses the nature and limits of power that can be exercised by the society on an individual. According to this theory, the purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised is for the prevention of harm to others. According to Baramidze (2023) an individual should be free from any type of harm either physical, sexual, psychological or emotional if the action of that particular individual does not harm other people.

In this study, the theory of liberty will provide guidance on measures that can be implemented to reduce gender-based violence through proper empowerment of cultural elements within *Mamalo* that will create accurate interpretation and understanding of *Mamalo* within the Vhavenda people. Individuals should know that everyone, most importantly women, have a right to liberty creating a curb on men having the idea of being entitled to women because they paid *Mamalo*.

2.5.3 Liberal Feminist Theory

Liberal feminist theory began in 18th and 19th centuries and has been present to the current time. This theory focuses on liberal movement on eliminating female subordination that is rooted in legal and customary restrictions that hinders women from entering and succeeding in the public world. The approach for this theory is to achieve equality between men and women. This equality is achieved through advocacy for equality in politics, marriage, education and at the workplace (equal pay between men and women). Liberal feminists demand the right for women to have an

active role in society and to be treated and to be treated in the same way as men (Ha & Nhi, 2022).

In a study by Mkize (2023) it is highlighted that liberal feminists argue that women in marriages that are heterosexual face high chance of gender inequality and there is not benefit for women and also that married women are more stressed than unmarried women. Therefore, for women to achieve equality the liberal feminism theory is used to alter the sexual division of labour in public and private sectors to achieve equality.

In this study, the liberal feminism theory will provide insight into how the cultural/traditional practice of *Mamalo* within the Vhavenda culture can have a mutual ground for equality between men and women. This theory will provide two possible guides to the study. The first lens if either the data collected suggests that there is an element of inequality which is rooted within *Mamalo*, therefore the theory will provide justification on why equality should exist. The second lens will be utilized if the data suggests that the practice of *Mamalo* already hold elements of equality between men and women, therefore they theory will guide further empowerment of the elements on equality to address gender-based violence within the Vhavenda communities of Vhembe district.

2.6 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter reviewed the literature on previous studies that relates to culture and GBV with a focus on the cultural practice of *Mamalo*, which is commonly known in Africa as lobola. This review of literature focused on the belief system on marriage in Africa, with an initial focus on the general intersection between culture and GBV. This chapter also reviewed the process of *Mamalo* in other African cultures narrowing the discussion down to the practice in some of South African cultures. This review also focused on appraisal of *Mamalo* as a contributory factor to GBV or a practice that can be used to address this social issue, cultural friendly measures that can be implemented to address GBV and lastly the theoretical frameworks which are the social learning theory, the theory of liberty and the liberal feminist theory.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

A research study cannot be conducted without research techniques, methods and procedures. This chapter provides a detailed description of the research components used for conducting the study. These include the research paradigm, research approach, research design, population and location of the study, sampling methods and techniques, data collection strategies, analysis of data, measures of quality control, delimitation of the study and ethical considerations. Among other things, these research components make it possible for the study to be replicable by other researchers in the future.

3.2 Research Paradigm

According to Kivunju and Kuyini (2017) research paradigm refers to a perspective or thinking, a school of thought or a set of beliefs that provides meaning or interpretation of research data. It is also perceived as a reflection of the researcher's beliefs about the world he/she lives in or wants to live in. In addition, a research paradigm is generally referred to as basic set of beliefs or worldview that guides the research action or an investigation. Kumatongo and Muzata (2021) explains that a research paradigm is a viewpoint, ideologies or a set of common beliefs that are shared on how problems can be addressed or solved. Alharahsheh and Pius (2020) research paradigm is inclusive of several components which are ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods. This study adopted the constructivism paradigm.

Kumatongo and Muzata (2021) provide insight on constructivism paradigm as based on the premise that people understand the world they live in or seek to understand it through the development of meaning which is subjectively based on their experience. In constructivism paradigm, there is no single reality or truth but rather multiple and individuals understand and interpret their world based on their experience and interaction with other individuals and the environment creating one's view of the world, thus making reality socially constructed (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). According to Kivunju and Kuyini (2017) constructivism paradigm is aimed at the interpretation of participant's views on the situation under study or to understand the viewpoint of the participant in the study rather than the view of the researcher.

In the current study, the constructivism research paradigm was adopted and used to understand and interpret the views of the participants on the intersection of culture and GBV in the practice of *Mamalo* within the Vhavenda communities with the idea of finding out if either traditional/cultural practice of *Mamalo* either upholds traditional patriarchal hegemony or provide community-based justifications for gender equality.

3.3 Research Approach

Based on the focus of the study being the appraisal of the intersection between culture and GBV in the practice of *Mamalo*, a proper research approach for this study was the qualitative research approach. According to Lester and O'Reilly (2021) qualitative research is simply an approach to a study which focuses on developing explanations of social phenomena while involving the collection and analysis of non-numerical data. This approach is concerned with the social aspects of the world and seeks to understand why people behave in a certain way, how different opinions and attitudes are forced and why cultures and practices have developed in the way they have. The motivation behind this decision was based on the fact that the participants who are part of the study, have a chance of expressing themselves fully and in depth, resulting in accurate and suitable information for the study.

3.4 Research Design

Research design refers to a plan of the proposed research work or simply the arrangement of conditions for the collection and analysis of the data. This design of a study should be able to provide answers to questions such as the purpose of the study, what and how questions and also area of the study (Tomaszewski, Zarestky & Gonzalez, 2020).

This study adopted an exploratory research design. Exploratory research design is usually adopted when the research study has few or no earlier studies that can be used as reference points. This research design was suitable for this study since it was able to provide a clear statement of the research problem and also enabled the researcher to explore further on the intersection between culture and GBV with a direct focus on the cultural practice of *Mamalo*. Most previous studies on this cultural practice label it as a contributory to GBV. Therefore, the exploratory research design allowed the researcher to be creative and to gain more information on the original understanding and interpretation of *Mamalo* and how cultural practices or culture in

general can be used to combat social issues such as GBV. Present cultural elements in the Vhavenda group, which are the driving aspects behind the most spoken about issue in South Africa, which is gender-based violence.

3.5 The Population and Location of the Study

In a research study, the study population refers to a group or set of all such units that have the characteristics needed for the study or simply a total set, from which the sample for the study will be drawn (Shukla, 2020). The population of this study were individuals with traditional knowledge, who belonged to the Vhavenda ethnic nationality. This included traditional leaders/right hand man, men and women (old and young) who got married through the cultural practice of *Mamalo* and also general individuals who found themselves knowledgeable about the cultural practice of *Mamalo* in Venda.

The participants for this study were both male and females who are from the Vhevenda communities of Vhembe district, in the Limpopo region of South Africa. This does not include other people living in the communities, without grounded knowledge of the *Mamalo* practice.

The participants in the current study ranged from 24 years to 89 years. These participants were arranged based on either being old or still considered as youth in South Africa. All these participants had the demographic characteristics to be part of the study. The reason for having such a mixture of participants was to acquire accurate and balanced information on the original and purpose of *Mamalo* within the Vhavenda culture. The mixture in the demography of participants also ensured that accurate information regarding how cultural practice of *Mamalo* was practiced in the past and how it is being practiced currently.

This study had a total number of thirteen (13) participants with their accompanying data transcribed and analysed for data presentation, discussion and interpretation. The total number of the participants was reached based on data saturation, where the collected data was enough for the researcher to understand the patterns and themes that existed on the context of *mamalo*. From the thirteen participants, nine (9) are drawn from the elderly category and four (4) from youth category. While the participants from the elderly category involves mainly widows, widowers, separated and still-married individuals; the participants from the two youth category contain two

married and two single individuals. A clear and tabulated representation of these participants are shown in the next chapter (Chapter 4).

The study location simply refers to the physical or geographical area, where the research subject being conducted is located. In this study, the location was the Vhembe District, (in the Limpopo Province in South Africa). Vhembe District contains the largest population of Venda speaking communities in South Africa. It is comprised of four local municipalities, namely, Thulamela, Makhado, Musina and Collins Chabene. While the last two municipalities, Musina and Collins Chabene are mixed with other non-Venda communities, the Thulamela and Makhado local municipality are mostly dominated by Venda communities. Most Venda speaking people in South Africa regard communities in these municipalities as their ancestral home (land). Below is the map depicting the Venda communities within the Vhembe District.



Source (Nengovhela, 2016).

3.6 Sampling Method and Sampling Procedure

According to Verma, Gautam, Pandey, Mishra and Shukla (2017) sampling refer to an act, process or technique of selecting a suitable sample or representative from a population in order to determine parameters or characteristics of the whole population. The reason behind this method is that the researcher will not have enough time to collect data from each individual in the population of the study based on the research approach chosen which guided the type of sampling methods and procedures to be adopted. There are two well-known methods of Sampling, which are Probability and Non-probability Sampling. With probability sampling it means that everyone has an

equal chance of being part of the study, while with non-probability sampling, not everyone has a chance of being part of the study.

This study adopted the use non-probability sampling and an initial adoption a Purposive sampling technique, which is a technique of sampling found under non-probability sampling. In this technique, a researcher is conscious and certain of the participants needed for the study whom their characteristics are in the interest of the researcher. This study later adopted the snowball sampling method which is based on referral to other participants from one or two purposefully selected participants for the study. In this study, the thirteen participants were selected through the two sampling techniques mentioned above.

At first, the researcher purposefully identified participants with the assumption that these participants have relevant cultural information on the practice of *Mamalo* and how it is related to the social concern of GBV. It then became difficult for the researcher to purposefully select individuals with information needed, more especially where the researcher was expected to collect information from areas where there was not familiarity in terms of cultural knowledge that the individuals of the area have. This reason led the researcher to an adoption of a second procedure of sampling where the initially selected participants had to refer the researcher to individuals within the district who have matching characteristics with those needed for the study. With snowball sampling, the researcher asked the purposefully identified participants to refer the researcher to other individuals whom they know who are well knowledgeable about the practice of *mamalo*. This led to utilisation of snowball sampling.

3.6.1 Inclusion Criteria: When participants are selected for a study, it is important for the researcher to have characteristics which are deemed specific. These characteristics are used to help in the separation of the needed participants from the whole population. The inclusion criteria ensure that the participants of the study will provide information that is accurate and authentic in relation to the study.

In the current study, the selection of the participants who were part of the research was based on the following criteria: Firstly, elderly and youth individuals (both male and female) who are knowledgeable about the Vhavenda culture and the practice of *Mamalo*. These individuals could be in any category mentioned in the population above; secondly, individuals who are from Vhembe district and belonging to the

Vhavenda culture. In this study, the research utilised this inclusion criterion to gather information that relates to study and which is considered more accurate.

3.6.2 Exclusion Criteria: This study excluded all individuals who do not reside in Vhembe district, individuals who are not originally Venda or not born or raised in Venda and all minors were not part of this study.

This study will only be conducted on villages in Vhembe District, however data saturation will be considered. The reason behind this choice is based on high number of gender-based violence cases being reported from villages situated near the identified regional road and to provide better chance for a balanced representation.

3.7 Data Collection Strategies

This study during its proposal stage, it was meant to adopt two data collection strategies which are semi-structured interviews and a focus group. These tools of data collection were suitable for this study because they provided the participants the opportunity to express themselves fully, allowing in-depth collection of information on the intersection between culture and GBV in the practice of *Mamalo*, how the cultural practice of *Mamalo* can either contribute or fight gender-based violence and what can be empowered within this cultural practice as a way providing the genuine purpose of the practice to the people and on the other hand reducing gender-based violence.

Semi-structured interviews simply refer to a data collection method which is used in qualitative research. This method is characterized by a pre-determined set of open-ended questions which allows the research to explore more on the responses given by the participants. (Ruslin, Mashuri, Rask, Alhabsyi & Syam, 2022). Semi-structured interviews had an advantage to this study because they encouraged a two-way communication. This provided the researcher an opportunity to learn the answers to questions and the reason being those answers given by the participants. Since the issue of gender-based violence is sensitive, this data collection tool provided the participants enough time to open up about sensitive issues that might be triggered during the interview. One of the most significant aspects of this data collection tool in this study, was that it provided good opportunity in terms of exploring participants' feelings and beliefs about the concept of *Mamalo* within the Vhavenda people. During the interviews, no direct order of questions was used because some participants would give response for a specific question and through probing, end up giving out more

information that relates to questions that might be at the end of the interview guide. In addition, some interviews were recorded on an audio tape while some were not. The researcher jotted down a few striking points and other sundry details that could be remembered from the interviews without recordings.

As mentioned above, this study was meant to also adopt the usage of a focus group to collect data. This data collection method was aimed at allowing the researcher to gather information and perspectives from a variety of key informants simultaneously. However, it was difficult to unitize the method due to the participants being situated in communities that are far from each other and the majority of the participants were elderly people, of whom it was difficult to gather them in one place due to various factors such as old age in order to conduct a focus group.

This study conducted interviews with a total of thirteen (13) participants who had suitable characteristics needed by the researcher and also being Venda and from communities in Vhembe district.

3.8 Analysis of Data

A good study is characterized by good analysis of data. Mezmir (2020) explains data analysis as a process of examining data carefully with the idea of drawing conclusion about the information in the study. The reason behind data analysis is to change available information which is clustered into a format which is easy to understand. This study only adopted thematic analysis to analyse the collected data. This type of analysis is based on the search for themes. The researcher identified various themes through careful reading and re-reading of the transcribed data. Data in this study was be analysed manually through the Microsoft Word.

Dawadi (2020) reveals that there are five steps which are basically followed in data analysis which are presented in the table below. The steps are as follows:

Table 3.8.1 Steps of thematic analysis

STEP	HOW THE STEP IS CONDUCTED
1. Researcher being familiarized with the data	The researcher read through the written responses, be familiar with the audio of recordings captured to develop a grasp of all data collected.

2. Generation of initial codes	Data is coded from notable features from the collected information in a methodical way. This involves highlighting texts and applying labels based on their similarity from the data.
3. Searching for themes using generated codes	After codes have been generated, there are examined, and patterns are identified within the codes in order to generate themes. Multiple codes can be identified to form a single theme.
4. Reviewing of themes	The generated themes are reviewed to ensure accuracy and relevancy in terms on them representing the data.
5. Naming themes	When the finalist of all the themes is created, the themes are named and defined to nail down the meaning of each theme and how it allows the researcher to make sense of the data.

In this study, analysis was conducted in the following ways; (1) the researcher listened to all the audio recordings that were done with the participants who keenly consented to being recorded and equally read all the notes from the rest of the interviews, this led to the transcriptions of the data and the researcher got familiarized with the data; (2) all similar responses from the data by the participants were highlighted with the same colour of markings, this was the generation of initial codes; (3) these generated codes were grouped based on their similarities and with a guidance from the research objectives; (4) from the groups identified three main themes were generated and each theme had various sub-themes that relates to it; (5) lastly, the generated themes and sub-themes were then named. The main themes were named with alignment to the research objectives.

3.9 Measures of Quality Control

Qualitative research approach uses trustworthiness and dependability of the data as a measure of quality control. Trustworthiness in research refers to the degree of

confidence in data, interpretation and methods of research to ensure the quality of the study. A researcher is expected to establish protocol and necessary procedures for the study to be considered worthy by the reader. Trustworthiness of qualitative research is characterized into credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Stahl & King, 2020).

3.9.1 Trustworthiness and Authenticity of the Data

Ensuring the trustworthiness and authenticity of the data, there are expected practices from the researcher. To ensure this measure of quality in the data for this study, the responses provided by the participants should be confirmed or validated. In this study, the researcher compared the responses of the participants to confirm if there is a connection between them to maintain the authenticity of the data. For example, there was a comparison of data provided by the participants on the process of *Mamalo* within the Vhavenda culture, this ensured that the information provided can be trusted and that it is authentic.

Furthermore, in ensuring the trustworthiness and authenticity of the data, the researcher did not collect the data and went straight into analysis. After transcription of the data collected through interviews, the researcher went back to each participant with the interview guide and the interview transcript and verbally share the data collected with the participant. In this process, some of the participants corrected the information that the researcher shared from the interview transcripts. This procedure eliminated all personal views, prejudices and biasedness of the researcher in the data provided a sense of trust and authenticity of the data.

3.9.2 Credibility and Transferability

Credibility in a research study shows how confident the researcher is on the level of the findings being true. In this study, credibility was ensured by the researcher going back to the participants to verify the study legitimacy. This criterion also demonstrates transferability of the study which involves the idea of how the findings of the study can be applicable to other situations and circumstances (Stahl & King, 2020). In this study, the aspect of credibility was ensured through an audit trail to ensure that the data for the study represents the accurate interpretation of the original view by the participants and also that the information in the study was drawn from participants' original data. In the research approach adopted by this study, it is difficult for the study findings to

be generalized, therefore making it difficult for the findings to be applicable in other contexts outside that of the study.

3.9.3 Dependability and Confirmability

The criteria of dependability in a research study allows a study to be repeatable by other researchers and provide the same results or findings. This simply means that if other researchers repeat this study using the same participants and in the same context on the current study, the findings obtained to be same as those of the current study. In ensuring dependability and confirmability of a study, there could be a use of an auditor to examine the interview guide, interview transcripts, the research findings, interpretations and recommendations of the study to see if they are acceptable and coherent. An outside person can be requested to review and examine the research process and data analysis in order to verify if the findings are consistent and could be repeated.

With regards to Confirmability of the study, this refers to neutrality in the findings of the study. The findings are expected to be based on the participants' response and not personal motivation of the researcher. This criterion ensures the absence of biasness in a study. Confirmability in this study can be maintained by an audit trial. This will allow careful highlight in all steps taken during data analysis to ensure the accuracy of data (Stahl & King, 2020).

In the current study the researcher conducted a comprehensive, reliable and detailed research which can allow an auditor to critique the findings of the study in confirming its dependability and confirmability.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

A good research study needs to be conducted while considering ethics. These are measures that protect research and the participants when conducting a research study. Ethics provides a researcher and information on what is accepted or not accepted when conducting a study. Ethics are the moral principles that govern the behaviour of an individual. When conducting research, ethics is referred to as doing what is morally and legally right in research. This is usually in terms of rights, fairness or obligations (Atenas, Havemann & Timmermann, 2023).

This study will be guided by the following ethical principles:

3.11.1 Informed Consent

This ethical principle entails that the researcher must be open to the participants with regards to everything that is happening or will happen in the study. This includes giving information on the aim/purpose of the study, the outcomes of the study will be, informing the participants of any risks of being part of the study, and the benefits of the study if they are there (Atenas, Havemann & Timmermann, 2023).

In this study, all the participants we informed about the main of the study, which was to appraise the intersection between culture and GBV in the practice of *Mamalo* within the Vhavenda communities. The participants were also informed about what the study intended to achieve.

Most importantly, all the participants who were part of this study had a to sign a consent form before being part of the study as a way of acknowledging that they understand everything, and they are willing to be part of the study and that they were not forced to be part of the study.

3.11.2 Confidentiality

In a research study, it is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that the information shared by the participant is not open or accessible by the public. Confidentiality in research entails an obligation on the part of the researcher to ensure that any use of information obtained will not violate the interest of an individual or a community (Bos, 2020).

In this study, the researcher maintained confidentiality of the participants by informing them all the information shared will remain between them and the research and no external person will have access the information. If by any chance, the information is required to be shared, their consent will be requested before any action is taken. Since this study has recordings of some participants that could be recognized by their voices if known, the research has securely kept all the recordings and the interview transcripts in a password operated file.

3.11.3 Anonymity

Anonymity involves the collection of data in a research study without revealing any personal identifying information. This simply means the protection of participants' identity (Kang & Hwang, 2023). In this study, the researcher ensured anonymity but avoiding the use of real names of the participants to avoid linking the information with

real names of other individuals in the community with similar experiences as those of the participants even though they were not part of the study.

All the participants in this study were referred to as either participant 1, 2, 3 and so on. Even on the recordings, the real names of the participants were extracted to ensure a high level of anonymity.

3.11.4 No Harm to Participants

When conducting a research study that involves direct interaction with the participants, it is important to ensure that the participants feel safe at all times. Any type of harm, either physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, economic or psychological, is not tolerated (Bhandari, 2023)

In this study, the researcher ensured that this ethical principle is maintained by informing the participants that if there is any harm that was caused during the interview process, there are contact details on the consent form for their use, where they can report the researchers for any type of harm done, either sexual, verbal, physical, psychological and economic. Counselling sessions were made available to those participants who may need them as a result of emotions triggered during the process of data collection.

3.11.5 Voluntary Participation

All participants in any research study have the right to decide if they want to be part of the study or not. Even if they have initially agreed to be part of the study and mid data collection, they decide not to be part of the study anymore, the researcher is obliged to accept that. If a researcher is found to be forcing the participants to be part of the study, that will be perceived as unethical and an offence (Bhandari, 2023)

The researcher in this study, provided the participants with information with regards to this ethical concern, that they are not obligated to be part of the study, if they were keen to participate and then they are no longer comfortable they are allowed to leave the study and they can also inform the researcher that they do not want any information they have shared already to be used for the study. In this study, no participant was coerced to be part of the study but rather chose to participate out of their own will.

3.11.6 Deception of Respondents

Deception of the respondents involves giving out wrong information to the participants so that they can be part of the study. A researcher is not allowed to give false information or withhold certain information in fear of the participants withdrawing from the study. Deception can be made through promising the participants money or any form of payment. A researcher is not allowed to deceive the participants since it is unlawful and unethical (Bhandari, 2023).

In this study, all the participants were given accurate information about everything concerning the study and in this study no participant was given any promises such as of payments for them to be part of the study as way of maintaining the participants to engage in the data collection process. All the participants who were part of this study had a clear understanding of everything about the study and they always had a chance to seek clarification to avoid deception.

3.12 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter described the whole research methodology adopted for this study to be carried out. It gave a description on the type of research paradigm upon which the study is guided which influenced the type of the research approach and the research design that the study adopted. There is also a description on the population and location of the study, where there is a total number of thirteen (13) participants with nine (9) and four (4) of them coming from the elderly and youth population respectively. All the participants belonged to the Vhavenda culture, and they were from communities in Vhembe district. This chapter provided insight on sampling method and techniques, where a non-probability sampling method and purposive and snowball sampling techniques were adopted to select a sample for the study and also insight on data collection method and the type of analysis adopted. Other research components covered in this chapter includes the measures of quality control, the delimitation of the study and ethical considerations. A description of the methodology in this study ensures the replicability and credibility of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on analysis of data collected from the participants. The analysis is presented in line with the study's research objectives, which includes: (a) examining the specific belief systems and the tangible traditional practices of the *Mamalo* traditional system as practiced within the Vhavenda culture; (b) appraising components of the *Mamalo*, which uphold traditional patriarchal hegemony and (c) developing sociologically based strategies and measures that can be implemented to help communities within the Vhavenda people to reduce the occurrence of GBV.

4.2 Biographical Information of the Participants

Table 1: Biographical information of the adult participants

Participants	Gender	Age	Marital status	Participant's village
<i>Participant 1</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>79</i>	<i>Widower</i>	<i>Siloam, Thulamela municipality, Vhembe district</i>
<i>Participant 2</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>Widow</i>	<i>Ha-Rabali, Makhado municipality, Vhembe district</i>
<i>Participant 3</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>66</i>	<i>Widow</i>	<i>Thohoyandou, Thulamela municipality, Vhembe district</i>
<i>Participant 4</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>Widower</i>	<i>Tshituni, Makhado municipality, Vhembe district</i>
<i>Participant 5</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>Separated</i>	<i>Tshavhalovhedzi, Makhado municipality, Vhembe district</i>
<i>Participant 6</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>75</i>	<i>Separated</i>	<i>Ha-Mphaila, Makhado</i>

				<i>municipality, Vhembe district</i>
<i>Participant 7</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>Tshithuthuni, Thulamela municipality, Vhembe district</i>
<i>Participant 8</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>62</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>Malamulele, Collins Chabane municipality, Vhembe district</i>
<i>Participant 9</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>Tshiavha, Thulamela municipality, Vhembe district</i>

Table 2: Biographical information of youth participants

Participant	gender	Age	Marital status	Participant's village
<i>Participant 10</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Musina, Musina municipality, Vhembe district</i>
<i>Participant 11</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Tshakhuma, Thulamela municipality, Vhembe district</i>
<i>Participant 12</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>Tshikuwi, Makhado municipality, Vhembe district</i>
<i>Participant 13</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>Makhado (Louis Trichard), Makhado municipality, Vhembe district</i>

Tables 1 and 2 above show, a total of thirteen (13) participants (nine adults and four youths), who were part of the study. From the elderly participants, there were four males and five females; and two males and two females from the youth participants. While three of the elderly participants are married, six were not. From the six, they were either separated, widow or widower. Among the youth participants, two are married, while two are single. All the participants in this study are born and raised in Venda.

4.3 Presentation of Data

Seven main themes were generated from the data: These include:

Theme 1: The foundation of marriage

- Sub-theme 1: The importance of marriage
- Sub-theme 3: Family and unity
- Sub-theme 4: Social expectations
- Sub-theme 5: Age

Theme 2: The process of *Mamalo*

Theme 3: Old vs New understanding of *Mamalo*

Theme 4: The payment of *Mamalo*

Theme 5: Misconception of *Mamalo*

- Subtheme 1: Media
- Subtheme 2: Peers

Theme 6: Providers and nurtures

Theme 7: Family involvement

Theme 8: Reinterpretation of *Mamalo*

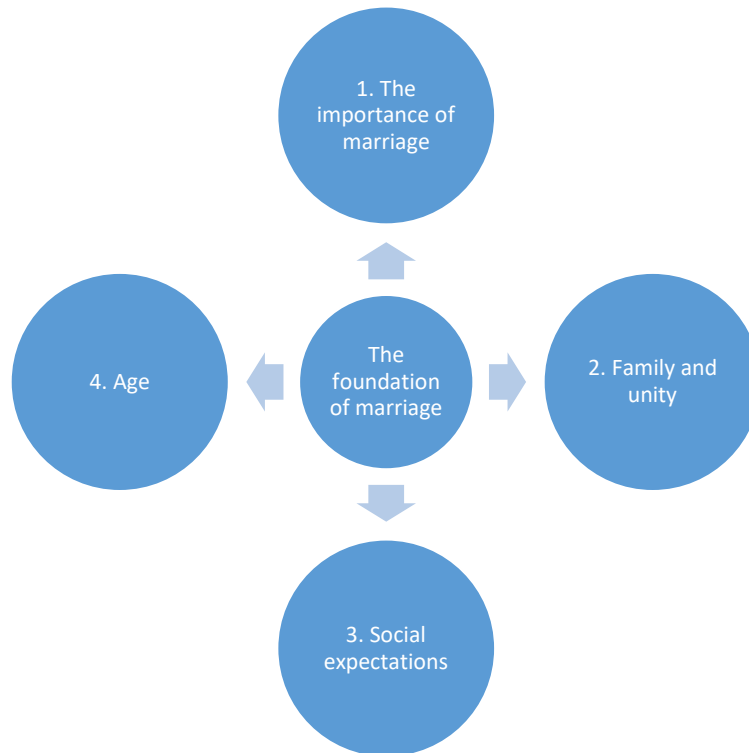
Theme 9: Cultural knowledge in education

Theme 10: Community engagement

4.3.1 The foundation of marriage

Based on the data from the study, it was revealed that there are factors that influence the foundation of marriage within the Vhavenda people. These include the importance

of marriage, family and unity, social environment and age. Below is the presentation of these factors and responses of the participants captured from the data.



Source (Researcher's analysis)

Sub-theme 1: The importance of marriage

The participants revealed how the importance of marriage is perceived as the building block of any marriage within the Vhavenda communities. The participants provided responses that provided a window for disputes on the importance of marriage within the Vhavenda culture in relation to it being the initiator of marriage. Captured below are some of the responses from the participants:

Participant 1 *"I understand marriage is a union that happens between two people, a man and a woman who have agreed on being together and want to start a family together"*

Participant 2 *"Marriage is when two people, a woman and a men get to know each other and agree mutually on being one and live together and have a family of their own"*

Participant 3 *"You know, when we talk about marriage we are talking about two people getting together and form one union that becomes a family"*

Participant 11 *“Marriage is universal across all African cultures, there is not definition that is strictly for Vhavenda. I understand marriage as a joint act between a man and woman who have decided to be husband and wife”*

Participant 5 *“I see marriage as something that has to do with two people who are have decided to date and fell in love and want to take their relationship to a next level of staying together in one place as one family”*

Participant 6 *“Marriage is when a woman is taken from her home to the home of the man when they are old enough going to build a home/family”*

Most of the participants highlighted the significance of marriage to everyone who belongs to the Vhavenda culture to marry or get married at some point in their life. This provides an idea that within the Vhavenda culture, it is expected that one should eventually get married or marry. Still, the same idea on the importance of marriage within the Vhavenda culture is captured by the participant below.

Participant 5 *“In Tshivenda it is important to marry or get married because it gives out culture and families dignity, the man and woman become free and develop a sense of belonging”*

Marriage within the Vhavenda people provides dignity to culture and family. The participant extends the response and mentions that one other important aspect of marriage is that it provides a sense of belonging to the man and woman who are about to get married.

Sub-theme 2: Family and Unity

Still, in discussing the foundation of marriage within the Vhavenda culture, the participants' responses revealed that marriage within the Vhavenda culture brings a sense of unity within the families. These responses provide insight into how unity and family are inclusive to the husband and wife and how it unites two families from being strangers to relatives. These are some of the responses from the participants:

Participant 1 *“I understand marriage is a union that happens between two people, a man and a woman who have agreed on being together and want to start a family together”*

Participant 2 *“Marriage is when two people, a woman and a man get to know each other and agree mutually on being one and live together and have a family of their own”*

Participant 3 *“You know, when we talk about marriage we are talking about two people getting together and form one union that becomes a family”*

Participant 11 *“Marriage is universal across all African cultures, there is not definition that is strictly for Vhavenda. I understand marriage as a joint act between a man and woman who have decided to be husband and wife”*

Participant 5 *“I see marriage as something that has to do with two people who are have decided to date and fell in love and want to take their relationship to a next level of staying together in one place as one family”*

Participant 6 *“Marriage is when a woman is taken from her home to the home of the man when they are old enough going to build a home/family”*

All of the participants agree that marriage is responsible for the development of unity within Vhavenda families. In addition, the participants' responses show how the aspect of family and being united has an influence on the foundation of marriage

Based on the points provided by the participants on family and unity as a factor of marriage establishment, it is revealed that *Mamalo* within the Vhavenda culture, which acts as a foundation of legitimizing marriage, is essential for developing marriage. Family and unity are significant when dealing with the social issue of GBV. The participants show that marriage acts as a bonding agent that develops between two people and extends to the two families. This is well captured by Participant 3:

“You know, when we talk about marriage we are talking about two people getting together and form one union that becomes a family” this view suggests that marriage initiates with two people only and then develops into a family”

Sub-theme 3: Social Expectations

The society and social expectations play a huge role of the development of family within the Vhavenda people. People are born and raised in societies that are guided by norms and various cultural demands. Based on engagements that were held with the participants, the data revealed that there are certain social expectations that

influences individuals to be to get married. Below are some of the responses given by the participants in this regard:

Participant 12 *“Hmm, are you aware that there are people who got married not because of love, but because their families were pressurizing them to get married. This is the reality and when you see them together, you would think they truly loved each other and wanted to start their family whereas they were pushed towards that direction by their family”*

Participant 4 *“Would you believe if I tell you that to be honest when I married, I was not really sure about the woman I wanted. My family set me down one day and they said in our family it is a must that you must marry. I ended up rushing my self just to satisfy my family and relatives. Good thing is the woman I ended up with and got married to was the woman I wanted”*

Participant 7 *“These days there are many young women and men who are getting married because of all the flashy wedding idea they have, they get married just to show that I can afford a better a wedding than that one of who who who..., which I find very wrong”*

Participant 8 *“Did you know that there are people who spend a lot of money on attires, the decorations and so one, only to find out that they just want to please the world, I find very sad. The meaning behind marriage is being distorted, it is no longer about two individuals and two families forming a union but rather who had the best wedding in the community”*

Participant 10 *“Sometimes when I look at it, I think most of youth we marry based on the pocket, what we look for is if we will get the wedding of our dreams or not. If the person cannot provide the wedding we want, we will marry the one who will. Now this makes me wonder, is marriage based on the amazingness or the fanciness of the wedding ceremony or the love between the two? “*

When looking at the above responses by the participant social expectation as one the factor of marriage foundation, the participants revealed that people are getting married for wrong reasons. There are individuals who are getting into marriage as a result of social pressures they get subjected to at home and by the society.

Another aspect revealed by this data is individuals getting into marriage because of the glamour of it. The participants provided insight into how some people get married just to have the wedding of their dreams and to be labelled as that individual who had the best wedding in town. This idea is distorting the original meaning behind getting married. People no longer marry out of love and start a family, but rather to satisfy the expectations of the society.

Sub-theme 4: Age

When engaging with the participants, there is an impression of the linkage between a person being married and the age. The data suggests that when a person gets older, there is an expectation of that individual to get married. In addition, the data also reveals the idea of marrying at a specific age and the chances of that marriage being a success. This is what the participants said in relation to this sub-theme:

Participant 12 *“I do not think there is a specific age either to marry or get married but at least you need to be a person who is responsible and in the current times I would say at least be over 18 years of age”*

Participant 2 *“These days I see a lot of young men and women getting married too early and this is the reason being many divorce and violence because they are not ready for such a huge step. For a man to marry in our culture he must at least be over 30 years. That is when we know that you are a man who knows what he wants in this world”*

Participant 3 *“In our culture it is rare to find child marriage, most people who get married are either already working and responsible adults and most are over 20 years.*

Participant 13 *“There is an age to marry, when either a man or a woman is of the age of 21, is ready to marry”*

Participant 7 *“Mamalo was paid for me and I was old enough, I was married when I was already working and got married by a person who is working and we told ourselves that we are going to build a family and even today here I am”*

Participant 11 *“This issue of being expected to marry at a specific age is real, this is mostly found in our families, you will hear them making jokes saying ‘when are you getting married?’ some you will hear them saying ‘if you are*

having any difficulties out there will the ladies let us know' in other words, they are saying I am taking too long to marry because my age permits marriage. This makes people marry when they are not ready"

Participant 10 *"The issue of being expected to get married at a specific age is very serious, I have been told that women my age are married and they have children now, I don't really understand while it is perceived as mandatory that because I am a 24-year-old female I should be already married. Yes, some of our parents got married while in their 20s but times have changed now"*

Participant 2 *"Sometimes I think us as parents and grandparents we do pressure of children into marriage. I remember telling my eldest son that I want grandchildren in this house because you are old enough. Now when I look at it I think I might be reason behind him marrying"*

The majority of the participants agree on the fact that age can be a contributing factor to a person getting married. According to the responses by the participants, it is being revealed that there are individuals who are mostly likely to get married based on their age. Some of these individuals are given comments by family members that they are of the age to marry and get married, and that they are delaying parents to opportunity of having grandchildren.

Based on the data, some of the participants linked the age at which a person gets married to the success of married. This provides insight into how delay in getting married can be done deliberately to ensure a high chance of marriage success. Some of the responses above reveal that the current generation, both male and female, are getting into marriage when they are too young. According to most participants, it is expected for a male to be over the age of 20 and this captured by the response given by **Participant 2**:

"These days are I see a lot of young men and women getting married too early and this is the reason being many divorces and violence because they are not ready for such a huge step. For a man to marry in our culture he must at least be over 30 years. That is when we know that you are a man who knows what he wants in this world"

This response reveals that according to the Vhavenda culture, a man is expected to get married when he is 30 years old and above. Therefore, when a man reaches that

age, he will feel the need to get married regardless of the level of capability and mental readiness in fear of being stigmatized by the family and the community.

4.3.2 The Process of *Mamalo*

Based on the data, there is a way in which the cultural practice of *Mamalo* is conducted within the Vhavenda culture. This cultural practice basically involves the following process according to the participants: The man will propose to the girl he is interested in and would want to marry. This proposal can also be done by the family on his behalf. If this girl accepts the proposal, she will be given a bracelet called “*lukunda*” in Tshivenda. This bracelet will symbolize that there is someone in her life now who wants to marry her. If the man is the one who proposed for himself, he will then inform his family about the woman/girl he wants to marry, then his family will do an extensive background check on the family of the woman to see if she is from a good family.

This background check is done to see she is from a kind, well mannered, respectful and also if her family are not witches. After this background check, the family of the man will give feedback to their son if the family of the girl he proposed to fit for marriage or not. The family of the girl will also do their own background check on the family of the man. If all feedback is positive then and the man still want to continue with the process of marrying the woman, he will then send his family (Delegates) to the family of the woman to start with the negotiations.

Prior any negotiations, when the family of the man arrives at the home of the girl, they cannot just enter, they will need to tell who they are, why are they here, who told them that there is a girl in this home and all answers to these questions are through money. Once the family of the man have been welcomed in the family of the girl, then girl they went there for will be requested to come out with other three to four girls covered with blankets, and the family of the man should be able to pick the right girl and failure to do so they must pay a fine. Once the right girl is chosen from under the blankets. Then the negotiations for *Mamalo* will begin.

In the olden days *Mamalo* would be paid with live cows after the two families have agree on an amount for *Mamalo*, however the money is not allowed to be paid at once. The family of the man will be given a date of which they will be expected to come back and pay the remaining *Mamalo* debt. Once all the money for *Mamalo* is paid, the woman who is being married will officially be new bride to the family of the man, then

the family of the man will then decide on the date they wish to take their new bride to her new home.

The bride will then be accompanied by other girls to her new home. These girls will be living at the bride's new home for one and a half or two full weeks. These girls will be assisting the bride with all household duties. When these girls leave and go back to their homes, the new bride will stay behind with one assistant, usually her sister or a close female relative. The new bride will then be left at her new home and be in full control of all wifely duties.

This is how the participant in their own words understand the process of *Mamalo* within the Vhavenda people:

Participant 1 *"In our Tshivenda culture the man will propose the girl he wants to marry. However, the woman will not accept the proposal at once. She would play hard to get if she does not like the man back but eventually accept or reject the proposal straight away. The proposal can also be done by the family on behalf of the man. Hmm....and another thing, when the girl accepts the proposal she will be given a bracelet called "lukunda" in Tshivenda. This bracelet will show that girl has someone who wants to marry her. In the modern day it would be more like an engagement ring"*

Participant 9 *"Hmm, you know sometimes when I think about Mamalo, I do believe that some families used this practice in a very ill manner. You would think that your family loves you so much as their son to the extent that they look for a wife on your behalf. Only to find out that the wife was not even proposed but obliged to come to your family as a way of paying some old debt. You would find that the family of the girl to be your wife did something wrong to your family, maybe they once stole, vandalized something or even kill from your family, and now this girl is being used as a payment. According me this is oppression and violation of the poor girl's rights."*

Participant 5 *"You know one thing about our Venda culture, is that a man cannot just bring a girl home and say, "this is my wife to be" proper ways must be followed. Now If the man is the one who proposed for himself, he will then inform his family about the woman/girl he wants to marry, then his family will do an extensive background check on the family of the woman to see if she is from*

a good family. They would check if her family is kind, well mannered, respectful and if they are not witches. This was also done to know the bloodline of the family of the girl because if she is royalty and the family of a man are commoners, according to Tshivenda culture they are not allowed to marry each other”

Participant 7 *“when we talk about Mamalo and marriage in, our culture, it is very wrong to bring a girl out of nowhere and then you say she is my wife. We need to do proper research on the family of that girl and after we have done our background check, then we will feedback to our son, if it is good for him to marry in that particular family. Oh and before I forget, this decision by the family cannot be disputed by this son of ours”*

Participant 4 *“Hmm...according to my little knowledge on Mamalo, both the guy and the girl will inform their families for background checks. This is not only done by the family of the guy, but also by the family of the girl and if both families are satisfied and If he man wants to continue with the process of marrying the woman, he will then send his family (Delegates) to the family of the woman to start with the negotiations. There will be one person chosen to lead the delegates who is called “Nendila”.*

Based on the data provided by the participants, the man has the power to propose to the girl he wants to marry. However, there is an alternative where the family can propose on behalf of the man. After the proposal stage, the woman and man are expected to inform their families about the proposal. The families of the two are responsible for doing background research on the family's way of living. The data shows that if the feedback from the family is negative, it cannot be disputed. However, if the feedback is satisfactory, the man will send delegates to the woman's family to start the negotiations.

The response given by participant 9 reveals the bad side of *Mamalo*, where a person, in this regard to a girl, is used as something to pay off the family's debt. This is so if either the family of the girl once wronged the family of the guy and had no means of compensating the family at the time and then offered the girl as payment.

Participant 3 *“This process of Mamalo is very interesting, it is more like a playful game. Now listen to this important part of the process, prior*

commencement of any negotiations, when the family of the man arrives at the home of the girl, they cannot just enter, they will be asked, who are they, why are they here, who told them that there is a girl in this home and all answers to these questions are through money or any valuable thing that the family of the man has. You see that this is very fun to observe. However, all this money and gifts are not part of Mamalo and they cannot be given back even if the family of the girl refuses.

Participant 6 *“In our culture, you cannot just enter the home of the girl and do as you please when you want to marry, no no no, there are ways of doing things. Let’s say the family of the man have now been welcomed and they have stated their purpose, the girl they are there for will be requested to come out with other girls, three to four girls covered in blankets, and the family of the man should be able to pick the right girl and failure to do so they must pay a fine. So when looking at this interesting process of Mamalo, how can one link it to oppression? I don’t understand to be honest. Now once the right girl is chosen from under the blankets, she will be asked if she knows the family of the man, and if she bows in accordance to Vhevanda culture which is “U losha”, it will be a sign that indeed she knows them. Then the negotiations for Mamalo will begin”*

Participant 7 *“Now let me explain the negotiation part of this practice. In the olden days Mamalo would be paid with live cows of which it has been replaced with money in the current generation. These cows were expected to be eight in number, of which the number eight is called “Malo” in Tshivenda, that is where the name Mamalo came from. However, the family has full power in terms of demanding any amount of cows for Mamalo, either less or more than the number mentioned, the two families will agree on an amount for Mamalo, however the money is not allowed to be paid at once. The family of the man will be given a date of which they will be expected to come back and pay the remaining Mamalo debt. However, the family of the man can negotiate an extension of the date if they think they will not have had the remaining money required.*

Participant 8 *“This money of Mamalo, have factors that it would depend on. These factors were responsible in gauging the amount of Mamalo to be paid. One*

factors that will make the girl to worth a lot of money is if she is proven to be a virgin. I know that in the modern this is considered oppressing and demining to women but that is how it was practice in our culture. Now if she is no longer a virgin, or if has a child or once was married before, ahh... the family of the man will be very had to impress and they will not accept the offer if the money for Mamalo is too high. In other words, the purity of a woman brought value to her during such practices.

Participant 2 *“Once all the money for Mamalo is paid, the woman whom is being married will officially be considered a bride to the man’s family. If the payment is through cows, these cows will be taken to the woman’s home at dawn or at night. Then the family of the man will then decide on the date they wish to take their new bride to her new home. The bride will be accompanied by other girls who are not yet married in the evening, and the other thing is, during these negotiations, the parents of the man and that of the woman are not allowed to be present, even the two to be married should not be present. The parents of the woman will be in other room but being informed about everything happening by the aunts and uncles of their daughter. Matter of fact they are the ones behind proposed amount of Mamalo to be paid, but operating in the background.*

Data presented above shows that the cultural practice of *Mamalo* can be fun and playful while uniting two families. The participants' responses reveal that during the process of *Mamalo*, the man's family cannot just enter the woman's household and start with the negotiations. There are ways to be followed even from the gate of the woman's home.

The participants presented above show that in the olden days, *Mamalo* was commonly paid through cows. Still, in the current generation, money has replaced the use of live cows as the payment for *Mamalo*. Data on this aspect reveals that the purity of a woman determines the money *Mamalo* is to be paid. However, the payment of this money is not expected on the same day, even though the man's family has enough. The man's family will be given a day for them to come back and finish off their debt.

Below is the presentation of the last steps in the process of *Mamalo* as extracted from the responses by the participants who were knowledgeable about this practice being researched.

Participant 1 *“To show that our culture has emphasize value and dignity for the married women through this practice of Mamalo, our bride cannot go to her new home alone. There will be young girls who will accompany the bride to her new home and live at the bride’s new home for one and a half week or two full weeks, fetching firewood, water, cleaning, crushing corn for maize in assisting the new bride. They are practically doing all the work that will be done by the bride once they leave so at least she does not start everything from scratch. However, prior this step, both the man and the woman will be advised by members of their own family on how to act in marriage. Now when these girls leave and go back to their home, the new bride will stay behind with one assistant, usually her sister or a close female relative. This person will be the one whom the bride will talk to if she has any issues at her new home.*

Participant 3 *“When the time comes for this last person to leave, she will be accompanied by the man’s family with gifts back to her home. Mind you, all this time this new bride will not have had any intimate time with her husband. I mean this shows how our culture and the olden people respected a woman, unlike the current generation where youngsters engage in sexual intimacy prior marriage, what a disgrace. Now the new bride will then be left at her new home and be in full control of all wife duties. However, after all this, she might be subjected to tests that will prove if she will indeed stay in her new home or leave. She will be given a hard to crush type of maize which is called “Tshikundaŋwedzhi” in Tshivenda. If she is able to make maize meal out of this type of maize, it means she is fit to be a wife, and this is how the process of Mamalo is conducted within the Vhavenda culture.*

The presented data shows the presence of unity by accompanying the new bride to her new family for support, care, and an easy transition to a new family. The responses by the participants show the significance of advice that is expected to be given to both the man and the woman, who are about to start their own family, on how to act in marriage. This act of advice or counseling is found in many African cultures.

4.3.3 Old vs New Understanding of *Mamalo*

The analysis of the data revealed that the participants' responses suggest a significant change in the understanding and interpretation of *Mamalo*. The participants' responses captured the idea that the constant occurrence and increase in the cases of GBV. This change in *Mamalo* is one of the most contributing factors. According to the data, a gap exists between the youth and older people in the understanding of *Mamalo*. Below are the verbatim responses from interviews related to generation change on *Mamalo*.

Participant 1 *“There is a huge change on how the practice is conducted in the modern day compared to how it was done back then. These youngsters do not even understand what Mamalo is and it is very problematic because wrong meanings and interpretations are being attached to this respectful practice. These days I even see people using this practice as a source of wealth, this is very wrong”.*

Participant 2 *“The change is not only on how the practice is conducted but also on the understanding of what marriage is how does one get married. The current generation do not even consult to elders about the person they want to marry or the family to which they want to marry in or get married to, they just come home with a girl or a boy, and say mom, dad, this is my girlfriend and we have been dating for 3 years now and we are ready to get married. This is not how things are done culturally”*

Participant 8 *“I think the current generation are slowly and surely losing their own culture and customs in terms of how marriage and how Mamalo are conducted, but it is not with all cultures though, I have seen some cultures here in South Africa who still follow the proper way of getting married in the current era. It is sad to hear a young African child saying their culture is too old fashioned while culture is the foundation of their identity”*

According to Participant 1 *“There is a huge change on how the practice is conducted in the modern day compared to how it was done back then. These youngsters do not even understand what Mamalo is and it is very problematic because wrong meanings and interpretations are being attached to this respectful practice. These days I even see people using this practice as a source of wealth, this is very wrong”* it is evident

from the response that there is a gap between the elderly and the youth on the understanding and interpretation of *Mamalo*. In addition, this response provides insight into how the misunderstanding of *Mamalo* creates a window for disrespect and negligence to cultural practices. Furthermore, the responses from the above participants reveal that change is beyond just the understanding of *Mamalo* but also the ideal understanding of marriage.

The current generation no longer follows the culturally accepted way of initiating marriage. In addition, change on the undemanding of *Mamalo* creates the possibility of the current and future generations losing some cultural aspects attached to *Mamalo* but also applauded some of the cultural groups in South Africa who still follow the original way of practicing *Mamalo*.

4.3.4 The Payment of *Mamalo*

The data for this study reveals that the idea of culture being dynamic, meaning that it changes from time to time, has led to the alteration in the understanding of the payment of *Mamalo*. In simple terms, the authentic meaning behind the payment of money in practice of *Mamalo* has been distorted. Below are some of the verbatim responses from the participants in relations to this theme.

Participant 13 *"My parents-in-law asked a lot of money when I wanted to marry my wife, so I do not think as her husband I should ever sleep on an empty stomach or wear clothes that are not ironed, since I paid Mamalo for her, she must know that she is expected to take good care of me".*

Participant 6 *"Most families now use the practice as a way of gaining quick cash and this strips off the true understanding of Mamalo, I have of a case where the family of the daughter demanded 80 thousand rands from the man who wants to marry. Do not get me wrong, I am not saying there should be an expected amount of money but 80 thousand rands that's only going to the parents and not assist the newlyweds in any way is unacceptable"*

Participant 7 *"You see the reason why we have so many cases of GBV these days, the issue of understanding what Mamalo is plays a huge role. In the olden days, Mamalo was never seen as a payment to the parents as if they are selling their daughter, this is just an appreciation gift, I am saying this because the valuable gift to be given such as cows, was never to enrich the family of the*

daughter, because if that daughter have male siblings, they are going to use the same cows to pay for their own Mamalo, and it goes on and on, but today, people want to get rich through Mamalo. This is why some parents end up refusing Mamalo because the ideology of it being seen as a payment has penetrated the minds of the current generation”

Participant 5 *“I think in most cases they still do follow the right process when conducting the practice of Mamalo, but the problem we are faced with now is the issue of this practice being commercialized.*

Participant 9 *“Since men are the ones who are expected to pay Mamalo, it simply means that they are the head of the family and I doubt if there is any man who can get charged an arm and a leg for Mamalo and be inferior to his wife”*

Participant 5 *“The payment of Mamalo is strictly attached to the value and level of respect for the woman. Some families charge a lot of money based on the presentation of the girl in alignment with factors such as, being a virgin or being educated. So to the men who will marry her, a lot of money will be required and if he is able to pay it means he is in full authority of her”*

Participant 6 *“Hmm, when I think about how this practice of Mamalo has been changed to a way of gaining wealth, it hurts me. There are many women out there who are enduring abuse because their families charged unrealistic money and they know that if they decide to go back their family will not be able to pay back the money for Mamalo, so it best to endure the abuse”*

Participant 4 *“Mamalo is not buying a person and if men ever state to his wife that you need to do this and that because I paid mamalo for you, that man lacks principles and do not love that woman, because if the money for mamalo will not have been paid to her, so how do you tell her about it, that is an insult to her and her family. Mamalo is not paying to buy a person or being sold by her parents”*

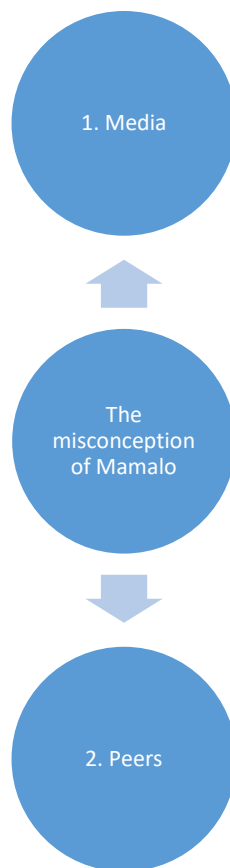
The above responses by the participants show that the idea that has developed where the practice of *Mamalo* is being used for financial gains, influence men to perceive the practice as a buy/sell transaction from the family of the woman to his own family. It is

this idea that subjected women to be degraded to objects that are sold and bought based on their value.

The adoption of the idea on *Mamalo* being used for financial gain is destroying the original meaning of the practice within the Vhavenda culture. Some of the responses by the participants provide insight into how the distorted current meaning of this practice fosters the sense of authority, dominance and entitlement to women by men. This data reveals that, there are women who are in abusive marriages, but they are finding hard to leave due to the fear of the man wanting his money back from her family. This data shows a new meaning of *Mamalo* where the practice is viewed as a money-making scheme.

4.3.5 The Misconception of *Mamalo*

Misconception of *Mamalo* and other cultural practices is revealed as a factor that has influence in the alteration of meaning. The participants revealed that, there are wrong opinions and incorrect information that is being attached with the practice of *Mamalo*. The level of misconception on *Mamalo* is severe to the extent that the current generation do not know the original meaning behind the practice. Based on the similarities of the responses provided by the participants on this aspect, two factors were revealed as possible causes of this misconception which are media and peers.



Sub-theme 1: Media

The data of the study revealed media as one of the driving factors behind the misconception of the *Mamalo* within the Vhavenda people. After engagements with the participants, it is revealed in the data that the misconception of *Mamalo* is deeply rooted, and media is playing a significant role in this misconception from the background. According to one of the participants, the sense of Ubuntu has parted ways with most individuals. This is based on the fact that it is easy to see a video of a woman being abused in day broad light on social media while the community watch and record. This lack of Ubuntu can play a significant role on the influence being projected to the other person watching such behaviour being done on their cell phone, leading to an ideology on how women should be treated.

The media has an influence on the meaning attached to the practice of *Mamalo*. Movies, soapies and the social media platforms, can provide an incorrect meaning of an act and based on its influence, such meaning gets adopted and be treated as authentic. The same applies to *Mamalo*. The media has influence in providing wrong meaning of the practice to the public. Below are some of the verbatim responses given by the participants:

Participant 10 *“I think this issue is way deeper than we think and the technology we have these days is activity contributing to GBV. It is so easy to see a video of man abuse a woman on social media or being stabbed multiple times and the nation will just be standing taking videos, that influence whoever who might watch the video that the only solution to disputes with a partner is violence and where is Ubuntu, how can one take a video of someone being murdered, do you think if it was your relative you would do the same? The majority of us ignore GBV because it is just not someone we know yet and we should not wait until is someone we know to act”*

Participant 10 *“I have seen many movies were women are being portrayed as sex objects and victims in marriage, this creates a negative impression on the basis of marriage and it has a lot of influence of domestic violence”*

Participant 13 *“Media is one the most influential platforms in terms of behaviour adoption. In some of South African soapies, I have seen Mamalo being used as justification for abuse, where the husband will be demanding things based on him paying a lot of money to marry, and worst part, some of these soapies do not show that such I bad to our cultural practice, now we end up with the generation who do not believe in Mamalo because of the abuse they see of their screens”*

Participant 11 *“I do believe that if the media is used in the right way, it can be a very good educational platform more especially to our youth were they all have cell phones. Media can be used to advocate for gender equality and show the original meanings behind our cultural practices”*

Based on the data presented, the media has a significant influence on the misconception of *Mamalo* and also on adoption of behaviours. However, media can also be used to challenge such misconceptions and also challenge issues such as power imbalances and behaviours that condone the abuse and oppression of women in communities.

Sub-theme 2: Peers

Data collected in this study, provided insight into another factor which is ignored but influential in misconception of cultural practices such as *Mamalo*. The data also revealed the presence and influence by peers in all levels and stages of life. According

to the participants, peers can provide justifications to domestic violence which increases the prevalence of GBV in communities. Some of the responses by the participants that captures the influence of peers on misconception of *Mamalo* are presented below.

Participant 3 *"I used to think the influence of peers is only found among teenagers, but what I have realised is that peer influence is present in all ages. There are men who would share with their friends confidently that, in that house I am a man, I go home at any time I want, who will question me?"*

Participant 1 *"The truth is, there are many men who became perpetrators of GBV due to the influence they received from their friends, there are friends who will tell you that if a woman is not respecting you in your house, you should teach her a lesson then she will respect you"*

Participant 13 *"A female colleague once shared with me that she does not like a husband who never beats, she said she need a man who will sometimes be physical with her sometimes, it shows that he is a real man and he can protect her since he paid Mamalo for me. I have never been shocked like that day"*

By looking at the data presented on this sub-theme, the responses by the participants bring an insight into how the influence from peers can play a role in the creation of an opinion or view of *Mamalo* which is incorrect. From the responses, it is revealed that the influence by peers can establish a sense of male dominance within the household setting where the husband develops justifications for abuse as a result of paying *Mamalo*. According to the response by the last participant, peer influence can create a sense of justification by women to endure abuse within their home since the man paid a lot of money for *Mamalo*.

4.3.6 Providers and Nurturers

Focusing on appraising the intersection of culture and GBV based on the cultural practice of *Mamalo*, the participants' responses revealed an intersection between *Mamalo* and gender roles. This sub-theme focuses on how the participants viewed the cultural practice of *Mamalo* as an enforcing factor in the development of gender roles. This created an ideology on whether the payment of *Mamalo* is linked with developing gender roles. Below are some of the responses given by the participants that relate to this theme:

Participant 1 *“Gender roles culturally have nothing to do with Mamalo, the idea of linking gender roles with Mamalo is the reason some man start to demand certain marital activities to be performed by their wives as a result of Mamalo being paid”*

Participant *“It has always been known that men are providers and women are expected to take care of the household, this is why in the olden days when a man wants to marry a wife, he would be given spear to show off his hunting skills and woman would be given a garden hoe to show her skills as well”*

Participant 5 *“This concept of gender roles in marriage is not complex at all, there are roles which are just in our nature. A man is a protector and a provider and the woman is there to take care of her home and the children, even in the current generation where both men and women do the same jobs and have same responsibilities in the society, these roles are still naturally rooted”*

Participant 9 *“I believe Mamalo has an impact on the certain gender roles, I do not think that my granddaughter’s boyfriend could have the power to tell my granddaughter that she should do his laundry, cook for him and give him children without taking cows first to her parents. she cannot do wife duties while she is not properly married”*

Participant 3 *“I do not think the payment of Mamalo has nothing to do with gender roles, culturally and biblically, a man is a provider and a woman is nurturer, when the two are in marriage, they should now that and be keen to perform their roles, how can a man call himself a man of the house without providing for the house?”*

Participant 4 *“There are few women out there who are influencers of the understanding of the payment of Mamalo being associated with performance of gender roles, when they are in a relationship and cohabiting as it is a new normal way of doing things, when the boyfriend asks for something to be done, the girlfriend will say, if you had paid Mamalo I would but since you have not I will not. This creates a perception that for certain things to be done by my girlfriend I should first pay Mamalo, and when she does not do then even after Mamalo has been paid, that is where conflict now starts”*

Participant 5 *“When Mamalo gets paid and two people get married, they become one, meaning we are equal in that household, however there are certain things or activities that are naturally expected from a man, since the man is the one who paid Mamalo as a way of showing that he will provide for the wife, why should he now stop being a provider when he starts living with his wife. This is culturally and naturally rooted in us. And another thing, if two really love each other and have respect for one another, if the husband perhaps loses a job and cannot provide anymore for the family, the wife should take over the wheel and provide for the family with the same level of respect and equality as before, nothing should change”*

Participant 13 *“I do not understand why people like to create tension when talking about gender roles, if we look in the creation of a human being, one was created and then followed by the one to be united and work towards one goal. The same perception should be brought into this issue, two people cannot all do the same thing at the same time and reach a goal, one should do this and the other does that, with respect. This is the same in marriage, Mamalo should not be a gateway to oppression and specific obliged gender roles either to the man or woman, people who are married are one and they should treat each other as such”*

The responses from the participants who were part of this study, provides insight on the practice of *Mamalo* and gender roles. Based on the responses, some participants agree that *Mamalo* plays a role in developing gender roles within the family; however, other participants disagree. The idea on this aspect that *Mamalo* creates gender roles, creates the ideology of entitlement by men on women. This ideology enforces the concept of male dominance within the household space.

As shown in the presentation of the data above on the participants' responses, some disagree with the statements provided that *Mamalo* has no impact on the development of gender roles in the family. There is a belief that there are specific duties that, if people are still in their dating stage, they cannot be performed by either the man or woman. The payment of *Mamalo* is regarded as a gateway to these duties that are primarily home based such as, childcare and childbearing.

The response by participant 13 on this matter suggests that, both the husband and wife have roles that they are expected to perform. According to this participant, performing these roles is based on respect and unity between the two. The participant even gave a biblical example of how Adam needed Eve to accomplish his roles.

Looking back on the data presented, there is a perception that roles are naturally and culturally assigned to both the husband and wife. The husband is regarded as the man of the house; therefore, should automatically assume the provider role in the family. Respect and unity are the family's foundation in duties to be performed at home, if the provider perhaps loses his job, in this case being the husband, the wife should take over. Based on this idea where there is respect and unity, there will be gender equality through healthy sharing of duties.

4.3.7 Family Involvement

The data analysis revealed that one of the strategies that could be useful in addressing disputes within families, leading to reduced chances of GBV, is the family's involvement. Family disputes can be severe to the extent that a third person who will be a mediator, in this case, the families, will be the best option for resolution. Below are some of the verbatim responses from the participants:

Participant 7 *"If the two have issues within their marriage, it will determine on the type of issue they are facing, they should be about to share with the family and the elders could have encountered the same problem before and were able to resolve it, so it gets easier for their issue to be resolved"*

Participant 2 *"When there are issues you cannot solve with our wife, you tell your parents the issue they will tell their delegates, and the wife will do the same then they will seat as two families and help you solve your issue"*

Participant 7 *"If there are issues within the marriage, the wife will take the complaints to that person who was the lead in representing her during all negotiations and speaking for the girl that there are issues, then they will be brought together and each state their issues and the issue get resolved with the help of the family"*

The participants' responses above reveal the significance of family involvement in marital disputes. These responses show that sharing issues with external trusted

individuals could play a positive role in ensuring disputes do not become violent. Sharing this marital issue with families opens the opportunity for the issue to be solved amicably.

4.3.8 Reinterpretation of *Mamalo*

Reinterpretation of the *Mamalo* is necessary to bring the original meaning and understanding of the practice to the Vhavenda communities. It is also beneficial when such reinterpretations are conducted with involvement from the whole community. Through mass village meetings, trust and solidarity are established, leading to the mitigation of the wrong interpretation of *Mamalo*, which subject women to oppression and male dominance. Based on the analysis conducted in this study, the participants' responses revealed a significant change in the interpretation of *Mamalo*. Below are verbatim responses by the participants that support this culturally friendly strategy towards GBV.

Participant 4 *"I think it is very important for our communities to introduce meetings that will help us in sharing of knowledge that relates to our culture. During our time as small boys, old men would sit down with us after practicing tshikona and they just share knowledge about our culture and the practices we do"*

Participant 3 *"It hurts me so much when I see how the current generation which is the future of tomorrow having wrong interpretations about our cultural practices, we need to sit down with these youngsters and teach them how things are done and their correct and original meaning because our culture as Vhavenda people is getting lost"*

Participant 1 *"In our villages we have men and women who understand the true meaning of Mamalo, such people should be used by our villages to share their knowledge in village meetings, because they are the ones to pass the knowledge to the next generation"*

The above responses, reveals deep emotions attached to the loss of cultural knowledge on the practice of *Mamalo*. Villages are being modernised at present, which is essential and advisable. However, this modernization of villages establishes ignorance regarding the accurate interpretation of *Mamalo*. The village council is the custodian of culture and values and saddled with the responsibility of ensuring that

people who are knowledgeable within villages and rural areas are encouraged to engage in mass village meetings where knowledge is shared from time to time, and not only with the concept of *Mamalo* but with other cultural elements that exist within the Vhavenda people in Vhembe district.

4.3.9 Cultural knowledge in Education

The analysis of the data collected in this study provided insight into various culturally friendly strategies that can be used to help address the social issue of GBV. Education is one of the core aspects of learning, making it a usable way of providing cultural knowledge. The participants' responses reveal the integration of cultural knowledge in the education curriculum as a strategy that could be relevant in addressing GBV within Communities. Presented below are some of the responses provided by the participants during data collection.

Participant 7 *“one thing that I can tell you is that if we do not stand and act, no one will come and save our culture. In primary schools, the department of education must introduce stories that shares knowledge on the origin of various African aspects. Because if these kids are provided with information that is correct about our culture, they will grow up having knowledge on their culture”*

Participant 2 *“I do not understand why most of our youth think having knowledge about their culture is outdated. Since they do not want to learn more and have understanding of their culture, cultural knowledge should rather be included in their school curriculum, in this way they will know the significance of knowing your roots. I also think that this will show that our culture speaks about respect for women, and this will create a generation of anti-GBV society”*

Participant 6 *“I am so happy that sometimes when I listen to our local radio station, I would hear guests who are well knowledgeable talking about various cultural aspects within our culture. I once heard a conversation on the practice of Mamalo and I was so happy that if there are young people listening, they will be gaining a lot knowledge on this practice”*

Participant 9 *“I believe that if there is a focus on ensuring that culture is incorporated within the education curriculum, good young people with deep understanding of their culture will be groomed. But I also think it is our duty without involving education to teach and share information on various aspects*

of culture to avoid this issue of people thinking that paying for Mamalo is buying a person”

Reading the participants' responses provides rich insight into the fact that the integration of cultural knowledge could help in the understanding of various cultural elements. The reactions provide great insight into how the education system, through cultural knowledge integration, can be used to help understand the cultural practice of *Mamalo*.

4.3.10 Community Engagement

Collaboration is one of the fundamental aspects to be recognized when dealing with most social problems, and this study is the social issue of GBV. Where there is collaboration, there is the establishment of innovative ideas, increased knowledge, increased productivity, and varied perspectives. Based on the data collected from the participants, the data analysis revealed that collaborative village sessions led by professionals are one of the cultural strategies that can be implemented to address GBV. Some responses of the participants on this strategy are captured below:

Participant 2 *“You see this issue of GBV truly need someone who is well trained on how to address it without separating the community. Because people have different understanding of relation between men and women, so if GBV needs to be addressed, it should not only be by our village’s chiefs and royal council members but by professions who studied about people’s behaviour”*

Participant 1 *“To address this problem of GBV both men and women must be joined together into one. This will men to express their feelings on the issue and also women will address their views, and through this technique, both will be knowing how each understand the issue and then be able to build themselves on addressing issue without violence, unlike having talking sessions with both men and then women have their own. Do not get me wrong, I am not saying these sessions wouldn’t wok but when addressing such issues both participants in conflict must be joint”*

Participant 12 *“I believe the best of addressing any issue that involves two people or two different groups, a joint collaboration would be the best solution, but it is also beneficial when whoever responsible for the joint sessions is a proccessional”*

Participant 8 *“Where there is collaboration, positive output is always achieved. GBV affects both men and woman, so when addressing GBV unity is needed so that the whole community will be having uniform understanding of measures that should be taken to reduce the prevalence on GBV in rural communities”*

Addressing the social issue of GBV within rural communities requires collaboration between those who are most probably victims and also those who could be perpetrators. The response given by Participant 2 raised a concern on the fact that individuals can think that they are solving an issue while fuelling it further. The view of this participant is based on different perspectives that individuals hold. Therefore, when collaborative village sessions are held, a professional must guide the village/community in addressing their social issues healthily and productively. From the data presented above, collaboration is regarded as a way of addressing social problems. However, it is emphasized that both men and women should work together when addressing GBV within their villages.

4.4 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter summarized all the data collected to answer the research questions. It also presented the participants' verbatim responses under each theme and sub-themes.

This chapter presented the participants' demographic information. There were 13 participants, nine adult participants, and four youth participants. The participant's data was captured on two tables based on gender, age, marital status, and location. This study was not a comparison study; the participants were separated into two tables to create an easy way of locating them and their responses.

This chapter presented ten main themes that were generated from the collected data. Some of these themes had sub-themes which are presented. These themes are: the foundation of marriage, the process of *Mamalo*, old versus new understanding of *Mamalo*, the payment of *Mamalo*, misconception of *Mamalo*, providers and nurturers family involvement, reinterpretation of *Mamalo*, cultural knowledge in education and community engagement.

The themes mentioned above were for representing and also guided by the research objectives that were set out to accomplish the study, which was to examine specific belief systems and the tangible traditional practices of the *Mamalo* traditional system

as practiced within the Vhavenda culture, to appraise how the identified components of the *Mamalo* upholds traditional patriarchal hegemony or provide community-based justifications for gender equality and to develop sociologically based strategies and measures that help communities within the Vhavenda communities to address the occurrence of GBV.

The data collected and presented in this study revealed aspects and issues related to other previous studies. However, most previous studies labelled the cultural practice of *Mamalo* as an influence on GBV, while this study focuses on uprooting the original meaning of *Mamalo* and how cultural practices can be used to address social issues.

CHAPTER FIVE: OVERVIEW, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter provides a critical overview of the study. It provides a detailed discussion of the data, in terms of how it answers the study's research questions, and contributions to both theory and knowledge. It also highlights the study's limitations, the general conclusion and recommendations that are based on the findings of the study.

5.2 Overview of the Study

The study has set out to explore the intersection of culture and gender-based violence in the practice of *Mamalo* within Vhavenda communities of Vhembe District, in the Limpopo province of South Africa. Three objectives guided the study: (a) to examine specific belief systems and the tangible traditional practices of the *Mamalo* traditional system as practiced within the Vhavenda culture; (b) to appraise how the identified components of the *Mamalo* upholds traditional patriarchal hegemony or provide community-based justifications for gender equality; (c) to develop sociologically based strategies and measures that help communities within the Vhavenda communities to address the occurrence of GBV.

Given the lack of information on *Mamalo* and GBV in rural communities, a qualitative research approach and an exploratory research design were adopted for this study. The adoption of this approach and design led to a significant accumulation of data on the intersection of culture and gender-based violence in the practice of *Mamalo*. Semi-structured one-on-one interviews were conducted to collect data for this study. This type of data collection tool allowed the participants to express themselves fully, leading to in-depth data collection on the subject matter. This study adopted a thematic analysis method to analyse the information collected from the participants. This method of data analysis uses the generation of themes from codes identified by the researcher through depth familiarization of data as a technique of analysing the data.

Below is the discussion of the findings in line with the research questions for the study in relation to the objectives of the study.

5.2.1 Marriage Belief System Within the Vhavenda People

Based on the engagement with the participants, it is revealed that within the Vhavenda culture, there is a belief system that guides the concept of marriage and *Mamalo*. This

belief system is rooted in the foundation of marriage which is characterized by factors such as the importance of marriage, family and unity, social expectations, the process of *Mamalo* and age. All these aspects were identified based on the interactions with the participants.

A) The Foundation of Marriage/ Factors Guiding the Marriage Belief System

The Importance of Marriage

Based on the data collected from the responses given by the participants. There are factors that justify why people should get married within the Vhavenda culture. These factors they are the ones that explains the marriage belief system that exists within in this cultural group in guiding *Mamalo*. It is found that people within the Vhavenda culture, they marry based of the importance of marriage. To those individuals who are married being the man and the woman, they develop a sense of freedom and belonging through marriage.

The importance of marriage, it is suggested to be cultural and spiritual. This is captured by one of the responses given by participant one, where there is a reference on the biblical story of Adam and Eve. This point suggests that marriage is mandatory towards a man and a woman not only culturally but also spiritually, justifying the importance of marriage and also giving insight into why people within the Vhavenda culture get married.

Still on the aspect of the marriage belief system within the Vhavenda culture, there is an aspect of family and unity, which influences both men and women to get married. With regards to this factor, people know that it is through marriage that there is the establishment of family. This idea enforces marriage in order to start a family. In addition to the factor of family and unity within the Vhavenda people, there are individuals who get married based on the idea of marriage as an initiative of unity between two families and the community as a whole. It is this idea of having people around you who love you and acknowledge you which encourages people within the Vhavenda culture to get married.

Based the data in this study, based on the responses by few participants, it is argued that marriage is the primary source as well as hotbed of GBV. The responses argued that if two can agree on being together and having a family outside marriage, that could help mitigate GBV Within the Vhavenda culture. The responses from the minority

participants on the idea of marriage being important are similar. The response from these participants to perceive the concept of marriage as necessary is based on the idea that, in the olden days, it would be taboo to engage in certain activities without being married first, such as having children. However, with the current generation, it is not widely considered a taboo to have children when not married, therefore giving the idea that the importance of marriage is not entirely guiding the marriage belief system.

In a study conducted by Chisango, Mafa, and Maunganidze (2022) being married to women is associated with a sense of significance and success in society, and unmarried ones are stigmatized in most African societies. This idea by Baloyi (2022) on the importance of marriage is supported by Chisango, Mafa, and Maunganidze (2022) where women are considered successful and responsible if they are married. This study justifies the understanding of the importance of marriage based on the responses from most participants. In addition to the importance of marriage, according to Baloyi (2022) marriage transcends bearing of children and having a family; it extends to the ability to continue culture and tradition from one generation to the next.

These findings on the importance of marriage can be linked to the social learning theory, which suggests that behaviours are learned through interaction and observation by people in a society in two following ways; firstly, most of the participants perceive marriage as embodying both cultural and spiritual significance, suggesting that social norms, beliefs and practices within the Vhavenda communities reinforce these beliefs. In addition, the idea by the participants that marriage provides freedom, and a sense of belonging reflects behaviours that have been learned and passed down from generation to generation, where individuals see expectations linked with marriage.

The second way of linking the findings with the social learning theory is based on the responses given by youth participants, who see marriage as insignificant and one of the core sources of GBV. This view by the participants suggests that these youths have observed adverse outcomes linked with marriage, such as violence and power imbalances, leading them to question the importance of marriage.

Social Expectations and Age

Furthermore, this belief system on marriage is also guided by social expectations. Social expectations as a factor in the Vhavenda marriage belief system guides individuals within the Vhavenda culture to get married because the society or their families expects them to marry or get married. According to the data, it is revealed that there are some men and women who got married while they were not ready for marriage. However, due to the pressure that they get or receive from their families and their societies, they end up being married. This aspect on social expectations, it can also be related with age, where the families and the society would compare individuals of the same age, where one is already married the other is not, leading to comparison and expectation to be married. This is how age and social expectations guide the influence or guide the marriage belief system within the Vhavenda people. Age within Vhavenda culture can also be linked with the chances of marriage success. This simply means that there are people who will get married because of their age only because they know that at that specific and material time the chances of the marriage being a success are high.

According to the study conducted by Hariri and Purba (2022) on examining the ideal age of marriage in maintaining a marriage or getting married, it has been revealed that although a person is of legal age for marriage, in South Africa, the legal age eighteen (18), age has no impact on either marriage will be well maintained or if either the person is obliged to get married. According to these authors, age is not the only determining factor in marriage. The study conducted by these scholars suggested that economic struggles, lack of understanding of the purpose of marriage, emotional readiness, and mental readiness are the core aspects of getting married.

This study by Hariri and Purba (2022) suggests that age has nothing to do with initiating marriage or the success rate in marriages. This view contradicts with the argument based on age in the current study. Based on the findings of the current study, age plays a role in marriage because of the marriage belief system that exists within the Vhavenda people which expects an individual to get marriage at specific age brackets. The current study differs with that of Hariri and Purba (2022) because it is based on a cultural context of the Vhavenda culture while their study is in general. In addition, this study by the above scholars omits the aspect of social expectation on the initiation of marriage.

These findings align with the social learning theory. In the context of marriage, the belief system within the Vhavenda culture supports the age at which men are expected to get married; it reveals societal norms that have been learned on maturity and readiness in marriage. Young individuals who see their elders and some of their peers delaying getting married or getting married at the age supported by the marriage belief system, may develop the idea that life experience and psychological development are crucial in initiating marriage. This will lead to the youth choosing to follow such behaviour as they see it in their communities, as it prioritizes stability in marriage, leading to a delay in marriage or marrying at a specific age.

B) Desire to Marry and the Process of *Mamalo*

The marriage system within the Vhavenda culture has factors as identified above that influences or encourage the concept of *Mamalo*. This reveals a need for discussion on how this marriage belief system guides the process of *Mamalo*. Marriage within the Vhavenda culture and in most African cultures, cannot be recognised or considered legitimate without the payment of *Mamalo*.

According to the marriage belief system within the Vhavenda people, a man is the one who is suspected to propose to the girl, or the family of the man will propose the girl on the man's behalf. Since the marriage believes system within the Vhavenda people encourages or enforces a man to be the one who proposes to the girl, therefore it is the man who is expected to pay *Mamalo*. This influence to propose is enforced by factors that are found in the marriage belief system as already mentioned above. This shows how the marriage belief system guides the practice of *Mamalo* in its process.

In the process of *Mamalo*, both the men and the woman are expected to inform their families about the proposals. Then the families will embark on an extensive and thorough background check to identify the compatibility or incompatibility as the case may be. This background check is conducted to get a clue or two about the genealogy and descent of the individual in question. The same reason applies to the family of the man. This background check is also conducted to see the bloodline of the families, since within the Vhavenda culture, royalty marries royalty, and a commoner marries a commoner. This step of family background within the process of *Mamalo*, it is enforced or influenced by family and unity which is one of the factors that guides the marriage belief system within the Vhavenda culture.

The above mentioned first steps of *Mamalo* within the Vhavenda culture are similar to that of the Ameru tribe from Kenya. In this tribe, once the man has identified the woman, he wishes to marry, he informs the families. Both families cross-examine each other to see if the two are worthy to marry each other. Once this step is completed, *Mamalo* is initiated (Karicha, Akaranga & Musili, 2021).

This step of doing investigations to find information about the families is also done by Abagussi tribe, where they engage in family visitations, introductions, feasting so that they could spy and do investigations to see if the family of the bride are not witches, lazy or negligent through checking for scars on the bodies of the family members meaning that their grandchildren will be in danger of getting harmed, if the family has a history of laziness (Orera, Kakai & Gimode, 2023).

The ideology from the marriage belief system informs the man as the initiator of marriage. This is why the man is the one who is expected to propose or the family of the man to propose on his behalf. It is this idea within the marriage belief system that justifies why it is the man who is expected to pay *Mamalo* and not the woman. The payment of *Mamalo* by a man is practiced in almost all African cultures. This is in sharp contrast to most western cultures where in the practice of *Mamalo* or marriage there is an element of equality or the woman and her family being the one to pay for *Mamalo*.

Before any payment of *Mamalo* is expected and even before the negotiation stage, the family of the man are expected to visit the family of the woman. All this effort is justified by the man being the initiator of marriage. When they arrive at the woman's home, they are not permitted to enter freely as they so wish, rather there is money expected that will allow them to state the reason of their visit, allowing them to enter and to state who informed them that there is a girl in this home.

This way of practice within the Vhavenda culture is similar to that of Ameru people, where the man will go to the woman's house and make guttural sounds as he approaches the home and hand over a bunch of khat (a flowering plant) to secure the woman/girl from being married by someone else. The bride's father is expected to openly chew the khat brought by the man to accept the request for him to marry his daughter (Karicha, Akaranga & Musili, 2021). A similar idea is found within the Masubiya people from East Caprivi in Namibia, which is believed to be renamed the

Zambezi region, where a payment is made called mouth opener. This payment gives the groom's family access to state the reason for their visit.

Based on the practice of *Mamalo*, a woman is the one whom *Mamalo* is paid for, it means she is expected to move from her home to the home of the man and be a wife with expectations attached to the concept of marriage. The relocation of the woman from her home to the home of the man and not vice versa, provides an idea on who holds authority position in the household.

The process of *Mamalo* is guided by the marriage belief system and enforces the significance of family unit because of the man having the desire to start a family. This is captured by how the new bride, after all the payments have been made, is accompanied by other girls from her own community and also by receiving counselling and pieces of advice on how she should conduct handle herself in her new home. This act shows the presence of gender equality since even the man receives guidance from his family as well. This shows that how *Mamalo* creates unity and bonding, even outside the two families and extends the establishment of oneness to the community.

The findings of the study show the presence of unity within *Mamalo* through the act of the woman being accompanied to her new family for support, care, and an easy transition to a new family. The responses by the participants show the significance of advice that is expected to be given to both the man and the woman, who are about to start their own family, on how to act in marriage. This act of advice or counselling is found in many other African cultures. This act is present within the Kikuyu, Ameru, and Abagussi tribes of Kenya and the Masubiya people from East Caprivi in Namibia (Murage, 2023; Karicha, Akaranga & Musili 2021; Kapesiso, 2022; Orera, Kakai, & Gimode 2023).

Mbewe (2021), revealed that the practice of *Mamalo* is not well understood. According to the study, those who do not practice *Mamalo*, view it as a burden to both men and women. However, those who practice it perceive *Mamalo* as a cultural practice that strengthens and preserves the marriage of many Ngoni people of the Mzimba district in northern Malawi. The finding of this study supports this view, that the practice of *Mamalo* within the Vhavenda people brings dignity and value for women while strengthening their marriages.

The findings on the desire to marry and the process of *Mamalo* can be linked to the social learning theory, which indicates that people learn behaviours, values, and norms through observations, imitations, and modelling within their social context. Based on the responses by the participants on the process of *Mamalo* show how cultural practices are learned and reinforced through the community and the family. The process of *Mamalo* and the expectations placed on women and men reveal the social norms that dictate behaviour in this cultural context. The idea of men being expected to take the initiative to propose and women being subjected relocation reflects the social learning characterized by observations and internalization of behaviours and expectations from their families. In addition, the idea of women being expected to prove that they are worthy of marriage can be seen as a learned behaviour perpetuating from generation to generation.

Furthermore, the act of the new bride being accompanied by young girls to her new home serves to model the expected responsibilities of a wife, and these cultural norms are learned behaviours that are observed by the younger generation and will be passed down to the next generation. These findings show how cultural practices through the process of *Mamalo* are observed, learned, and reinforced within the Vhavenda culture, shaping the expectations and behaviours of men and women in marriage.

3.2.2 The Association of *Mamalo* with GBV

The findings of this study reveal an element of nexus association that exists between the cultural practice of *Mamalo* and gender-based violence. Individuals within the Vhavenda culture, marry because of various factors that exists within their marriage belief system. Therefore, there is an interception between the marriage belief system through the practice of *Mamalo* and the prevalence of GBV. The findings of the study captured the association of *Mamalo* and GBV through commercialization of *Mamalo*, generational change in the understanding of marriage, *Mamalo* and gender roles, and the misconception of *Mamalo*.

A) Commercialization of *Mamalo*

The findings of the study revealed that there is palpable change in the understanding and interpretation of the practice of *Mamalo*. This practice of *Mamalo* has been turned into a money-making scheme. Families now use this practice to enrich themselves

while destroying the genuine intentions, authentic understanding and interpretation of the practice. Women are placed value through the practice of *Mamalo* based on their purity (chastity before marriage), the number of children they have, if she was once married before or not, and based on her background. If she is educated and comes from a wealthy family, it means money that will be paid for *Mamalo* will be very high. This idea of using my *Mamalo* for financial gains and enforce the perception of the practice as a buy and sell transaction. Commercialization of *Mamalo* provide men with the idea of dominance and authority.

Commercialisation of *Mamalo* influences men see women as object that they own since they paid a lot of money for. Men develop justification of abuse based on them paying *Mamalo*. According to the data in this study There are women who endure gender-based violence because of commercialization of *Mamalo*. Since their families requested a lot of money for them to be married, they find it justifiable to be abused, knowing that even if they want to leave the abusive marriage, it will be difficult for their families to pay back the money that the men paid for *Mamalo* making them stay in abusive marriages.

A study that relates to commercialization of *Mamalo* by Chisango, Mafa, and Maunganidze (2022) revealed that the commercialization of this cultural practice of *Mamalo* in Zimbabwe justifies the capitalist system, which affects women socially, economically, and politically. This system is being enforced by extreme bride prices being requested for marriage. The commercialization of this practice takes away the cultural dignity attached to *Mamalo* and marriage.

In another study by Mudimeli and Khosa-Nkatini (2024) it was revealed that the commercialization of *Mamalo* through a high amount of money required, gives men the authority to abuse their spouses. However, *Mamalo* should be viewed as showing appreciation to the family for allowing them to marry their daughter.

Muguti and Mlambo (2021) perceives that the payment of *Mamalo* being used as a money-making scheme influences GBV. This idea of the practice widens an existing gap between women and men, where women are now considered property to be bought by the highest bidder. These scholars revealed further that alcohol abuse, infidelity, and norms of masculinity are some of the factors that play a role in GBV.

However, it does not mean that violence should be condoned, either by law, tradition or by society.

Studies by these scholars support the argument in the current study. The practice of *Mamalo* has been commercialized and this act enforces male dominance and the entitlement of women by men resulting in high chances of GBV. However, it is the distorted understanding and interpretation of *Mamalo* that has an impact on GBV and not the authentic understanding and meaning of the practice.

The study by Mbewe (2021) reflects on a loophole that exists in the *Mamalo* process in Malawi. A high amount of money is required, which is associated with women being treated as objects for sale. A similar issue is present in the practice of *Mamalo* within the Vhevenda culture, where the woman is subjected to tests to prove her worthiness. This justifies the violation of women's rights and oppression.

Chisango, Mafa, and Maunganidze (2022) also added that the practice of paying the bride price in African societies is to bring the family of the bride and the groom together and their families. *Mamalo* is required as a token of appreciation to the wife's family, not as a buy-and-sell transaction. This scholar justifies that the original meaning and interpretation of *Mamalo* does not promote the oppression of women supporting the current study.

The justifications given by Chisango, Mafa, Maunganidze (2022); Mudimeli and Khosa-Nkatini (2024) show that although some studies by various scholars, as referenced in the literature review suggest that paying bride price leads to male dominance and, therefore, GBV, the original meaning of *Mamalo* does not contribute to GBV but instead informs value, dignity, worthiness, respect and a sense of belonging to women. The current misunderstanding and misinterpretation of *Mamalo* lead to husbands' giving having sense of entitlement on their wives. The current study is also supported by Muguti and Mlambo (2021) who found out that the distortion of the original understanding and way of practice for *Mamalo* can be linked with GBV.

The intersection between the practice of *Mamalo* and GBV, which focuses on understanding the practice within the Vhavenda people, can be linked with social learning theory. The misinterpretation and misunderstanding of this practice reveal how social norms can distort the authentic intent of cultural practice. The idea of perceiving *Mamalo* as a transaction and not a symbol of respect and connection shows

behaviour that has been learned, which prioritizes wealth over dignity and value for women. This ideology can create justification for patriarchy and the perpetuation of GBV due to its ability to make power imbalances where women are seen as inferior to men.

B) Generational Change in the Understanding of Marriage

Based on the data in the study, it is showed that there is a gap that exists between the youth and the elderly in their understanding of marriage. This generational change is not only visible in the process of *Mamalo*, but also in the understanding of marriage. The current generation no longer follow the proper way of initiating marriage. There is a difference in how marriage was initiated in the past compared to how it is initiated today.

In the olden days, the family was the centre of marriage from the first day. This is well captured in the process of *Mamalo* in chapter 4, where the family had full force to tell the man or the woman if he or she is allowed marry or get married in a specific family after intensive background check conducted by the family. This feedback by the family could not be disputed by either the man or the woman. The current generation is in full authority of their marriage. They no longer do background checks on the families of the people they want to marry. The current generation do not involve their families in the initial stage of marriage.

The segregation of the family from the process of marriage by the youth because of change in the understanding of marriage makes it difficult for the family to intervene in future when the marriage encounter disputes. The issue of not involving the family in marriage creates a room for abuse by the man where he knows that the woman's family will not intervene since they were not involved during the initiating stage of the marriage. This makes it even difficult for the woman to ask help from her family when she is being abused by her husband.

Generational change in the understanding of marriage and *Mamalo* is also influenced by the media and the peers. These two factors influence the misconception on marriage. The current generation of youth being are exposed to distorted meanings, interpretations, and understandings of marriage through social media platforms, movies and soapies they watch on their televisions. Influence from peers plays a significant role in change in the misconception of marriage among the youth. There is

an element of influence amongst the young, were wrong opinions and incorrect information on the understanding and interpretation of marriage and *Mamalo* is shared.

This generation change has altered the true meaning of *Mamalo* were now paying for *Mamalo* is attached with entitlement and male dominance. This idea on generational change in the understanding of marriage is rooted in the marriage belief system within the Vhavenda culture. The misconception on the understanding and interpretation of my marriage by the youth creates room for abuse and the prevalence of gender-based violence within communities.

The findings openly reveal that there is a generational change in the understanding and interpretation of marriage and *Mamalo*. This is evident based on the responses given by the elderly and the youth. The perception by the youth does show a linkage between the payment of *Mamalo* and GBV. However, the original idea behind *Mamalo* provides justification and advocacy for gender equality through the idea of value, respect, and dignity being attached to women through the act.

According to the study by Baloyi (2022) there is a belief exists in South Africa in the practice of *Mamalo*. This practice is currently understood as a gain of authority by the man who has paid the required amount for marriage. This belief is linked with manhood ideologies and negative masculinity. The current study's findings suggest that there is a generational change in *Mamalo*, which is supported by Baloyi (2022). However, these findings add information on the base at which change is prevalent, which is between the understanding of the youth and the elders.

Generational change in the understanding of marriage and *Mamalo* can be interpreted by the social learning theory. Firstly, the responses by the youth participants show how their perception of *Mamalo* as a way of gaining dominance and authority could have been observed and learned from societal norms and generational emphasis on materialism and wealth accumulation through *Mamalo*. This turn in the understanding by the youth reflects the influence of media representations and the possibility of such behaviours being learned from the adults in their lives or by influence from their peers.

Regarding the elders, the practice of *Mamalo* aligns with dignity for women, traditional values, family unity, and respect. Their understanding of *Mamalo* has been shaped by possible teachings they received from previous generations. This gap between the

youth and older people in understanding marriage and *Mamalo* shows how social learning can develop different understandings of the same cultural practice, where the youth have the knowledge to align with their changing social landscape.

The division that exists between the youth and the elderly in their understanding of marriage and *Mamalo* shows how this theory can provide an explanation for the evolution of cultural practices and their impact on people's behaviours and perceptions.

C) *Mamalo* and Gender Roles

The findings of the study reveals that there is a connection that exists between *Mamalo* and gender roles. The concept of *Mamalo* and gender roles is linked to the marriage belief system within the Vhavenda culture. *Mamalo* is only present where there is marriage, and a marriage is characterised by expectations attached to men and women. Based on the data, it is revealed that there are two sides in relation to *Mamalo* and general roles. One view suggests that the practice of *Mamalo* influences establishment and reinforcement of gender roles, which has an impact on gender-based violence, while the other view suggests that gender roles are naturally rooted, which excludes *Mamalo* having an influence on them.

Based on the findings, it is revealed that in marriage there is a provider and a nurturer. According to finding in the study this idea is naturally rooted. As a result of factors within, the marriage belief system in the Vhavenda culture where men are the ones who propose marriage, men are expected to be providers since they are the ones who ended up paying for *Mamalo*.

According to the findings of the study, a woman cannot be taken from her home to the home of the man and then become a provider. This is captured in marriage ceremonies in African cultures where a man is given a spear to showcase his hunting skills, which shows that he is a provider, and a woman is given a hoe to show her agricultural skills which resembles household duties.

The payment of *Mamalo* in marriage, generally comes with expectations from the man and the woman. The woman will be expected to be responsible for all household duties and the care of children, while the man will be expected to be breadwinner of the family. *Mamalo* creates an idea that when a woman agrees to getting married, she is accepting all the responsibilities that comes with marriage.

Men develop a sense of dominance to enforce gender roles on women because they paid *Mamalo*. In most cases where women refuse to perform these duties, men enforce them through violent behaviours. According to one of the participants, some women enforce the idea of *Mamalo* and the gender roles expectations. This is caused by alterations in the understanding of marriage, there is an issue of cohabitation which is mostly found in today's lives where a man and a woman live together without being married.

Such women in Cohabitation, will inform the man that there are certain duties that they cannot do without *Mamalo* being paid. This idea provides the man with justifications to enforce gendered roles on the woman if he paid *Mamalo*. It is this idea that influences the prevalence male dominance and oppression of women creating more chances of GBV cases in communities.

A study by Hodzi (2024) most African traditional beliefs and cultures play a huge role in the recognition of gender roles. However, the same belief systems can be shaped to address the social issue of GBV through the empowerment and promotion of respect and value for women. This idea brings gender equality between men and women.

Ampim, Haukanes, Blystand and Kpoor (2022) illustrate the understanding of gender roles in the same way as Hodzi (2024), namely that culture can play a role in developing gender roles. According to Ampim, Haukanes, Blystand and Kpoor (2022), there are gender roles assigned to women, such as doing housework and caring for children. This ideology on gender roles creates oppression of women and influences male dominance, resulting in GBV. Studies conducted by the above-referenced scholars inform gender roles as a result of the entire African belief system and culture in general. These studies by these scholars justify the findings of the study on the basis of gender roles being culturally and naturally rooted. However, the findings of this study also suggests that although the gender roles already existed prior marriage, the payment of *Mamalo* does influence enforcement of these gender roles.

Mensah (2023) conducted an interesting study on gender roles, patriarchy and naming of female children in Nigeria to reinforce gender roles. This study revealed that in Nigeria, there are female children who are given names that will strengthen specific gender roles in their lives. These names make the girl child grow up knowing that there

are specific gender roles expected from men and women, and they are not questionable. This scholar gave an example of the name Alór-yè, which means 'she does not mind whatever comes.' Such names provide the idea that a woman does not have a say. The current study on the aspect of *Mamalo* and GBV is supported by Mensah (2023) on the fact that gender roles do exist in the African context and also that, some gender roles are not culturally rooted but promoted and reinforced by the society.

The findings on the intersection between *Mamalo* and gender roles can be linked with the social learning theory in two interpretations based on the participants' varying understandings of this aspect. The first view shows how the payment of *Mamalo* can reinforce gender roles between women and men, where men are expected to be providers in the family, and women take on domestic responsibilities. Aligning this finding with the theory, individuals observe the expectation of these roles from their cultural narratives, communities, and families, such as a man being a provider. This reflects how such understanding is passed from one generation to the next, suggesting that some gender roles are not culturally rooted but also reinforced by society.

The responses by the elderly participants provide an interpretation that aligns with the modern world of advocating for equality in gender roles and sharing responsibilities between marriage partners, which is interesting when expressed by the older generation. This finding suggests that people can learn and adopt behaviour that people are equal, and as social norms evolve, people can imitate and observe marriages where roles are shared and where there is mutual respect, leading to a shift in the understanding of gender roles within the Vhavenda culture.

3.2.3 Socio-Cultural Strategies and Measures to Address GBV in Communities

One of the significant reasons behind this research study is to investigate the possibility of developing strategies from within the *Mamalo* practice, with which to address the social issue of GBVs. This study's plan, resulting from participant engagement, is culturally friendly. The participants suggested that family involvement in marital disputes, reinterpretation of *Mamalo* through mass village meetings, integration of cultural knowledge in the education curriculum, and collaborative village professional sessions are the implementable cultural strategies to address GBV with

the cultural practice of *Mamalo*. All these strategies are interpreted and fully discussed below.

A) Family Involvement in Marital Disputes

In this study, not all strategies are required to address the social issue of GBV, but only those that are culturally friendly. From the findings of the study, family involvement in marital disputes is considered a culturally friendly strategy that can be implemented to reduce the prevalence of GBV within marriages. In conflict resolution, various techniques, including mediation, are used to resolve disputes. Aligning mediation to this study, the families of the woman and the man in marriage act as mediators in marital conflicts.

The family's involvement in marital disputes will allow the two parties who are in conflict to express themselves openly and freely during disputes. This eliminates uncontrollable emotions and actions that could be violent. However, for this strategy to be effective, it will require the establishment of marriages based on the proper cultural ways that are expected when two marry.

Within the Vhavenda culture, when two people want to get married, there is a person called 'Nendila' from each side of the family who is responsible for representing man and wife during the initial stages of the *Mamalo* process. This is the same person who will be told if there are disputes between the married couple, either by the husband or the wife. Once the conflicts have been reported, the two are brought together to discuss and resolve the matter.

The findings show that involving the family in marital disputes is significant. The importance of this strategy is the high chance of finding out that some of the family members have once experienced such issues and were able to find effective measures to deal with the matter. This makes it easy for the problem to be resolved before it gets out of hand, leading to the possibility of GBV. In addition, the involvement of the family makes it difficult for the development of male dominance and entitlement of women by men as a result of both families being present in the marriage.

Ghanda and Rania (2024) in their study on the role of social work in managing family disputes, suggest that in most cases, the intervention by legal professionals and social experts is beneficial in helping individuals facing conflict. This avoids the issue of family members taking each other to courts where disputes are no longer manageable,

and threats of divorce are present. This study by these scholars suggests that social expectations such as family officers bring neutrality between those in conflict. This view by Ghanda and Rania (2024) supports family involvement in marital disputes. This is where the family members assign the role of family officers in resolving conflicts that can lead to GBV.

The involvement of family in marital disputes as a cultural strategy to address the social issue of GBV can be linked to both the theory of liberty and the liberal feminist theory. The theory of liberty emphasizes the importance of freedom and advocates the rights of individuals to make their own choices. In this context, the family's involvement in marital disputes by assigning the role of mediators can be viewed as a way of enhancing the autonomy of both parties in conflict. This provides an environment that allows expressing feelings and open dialog while promoting their liberty within the marriage context.

Based on the liberal feminist theory, which advocates for gender equality through social and legal reforms, it links with this culturally friendly strategy in resolving marital disputes. This approach accepts power imbalances that historically exist between men and women and seeks to ensure that women's voices are heard in resolving the conflict. In addition, looking at how to resolve disputes based on the experience of the elders in the family helps mitigate male dominance while fostering an equitable environment for both men and women. This idea provides insight into the importance of cultural practices supporting gender equality.

B) Reinterpretation of *Mamalo* Through Mass Village Meetings

Based on the engagement held with the participants, mass village meetings based on a reinterpretation of *Mamalo* could help address the social challenge of GBV. The study's findings revealed a lack of information on the understanding and interpretation of *Mamalo*, especially by the youth. Therefore, mass village meetings will collaborate between older people who are knowledgeable about the practice of *Mamalo* and the youth.

These mass village meetings on the reinterpretation of *Mamalo* will establish youth with an authentic understanding of their culture. These are the youth who will be advocates for gender equality in marriage. In addition, developing these mass village meetings will open opportunities for other cultural practices that are being

misunderstood and misinterpreted to be correctly explained, ensuring significant cultural mobilization. It is through mass village meetings where there is simultaneous collaboration between village members in addressing the issue of GBV.

A study by Ridwan and Wijaya (2024) emphasized the importance of community empowerment in addressing a social issue. This study revealed that community empowerment not only helps in resolving the identified issue but also helps in pinpointing hidden aspects that hinder change or progress in combating a problem. The element of empowerment supports the reinterpretation of *Mamalo*. When these mass village meetings are being conducted, it will be easy for individuals to advocate for change and identify underlying factors contributing to distorting the original meaning of *Mamalo*.

This strategy in addressing the issue of GBV aligns with the theory of liberty. The reinterpretation of *Mamalo* through mass village meetings allows inclusive community engagement that empowers the youth to understand and advocate for gender equality through the reinterpretation of how the practice of *Mamalo* should be conducted and what it means by Vhavenda culture. This strategy will allow the removal of wrong meanings attached to the practice that reinforces oppression and leads to the prevalence of GBV.

C) Integration of Cultural Knowledge in Education Curriculum

The education sector is considered one of the most prominent institutions. By looking at the participants' responses, integrating cultural knowledge within the education curriculum could be an implementable strategy to address GBV by providing insight into the conversation on gender equality within the education curriculum.

The significance of this strategy is based on the target group that it will be focused upon, which is mainly the youth. This will support the discussed strategy through the development of a generation characterized by a completely new and original understanding of cultural practices.

The study by Ridwan and Wijaya (2024) also supports the findings on integrating cultural knowledge into the education curriculum to address GBV. The majority of individuals in the education sector are youth, and youth are considered agents of change. Through empowerment, the youth will mobilize the need for cultural knowledge to be integrated into the education curriculum. This empowerment will also

be utilized in the integration to ensure a forward movement of addressing GBV without any knowledge relapse or distortion.

The liberal feminist theory can be used to justify and interpret the integration of cultural knowledge in the education curriculum and as a strategy to address GBV. In this regard, the liberal feminist theory focuses on acquiring gender equality with an emphasis on education's role in dismantling structures that reinforce male dominance. The integration of cultural knowledge in the education curriculum is a critical tool for this theory as it is focused on educating the youth about gender equality and the use of artistic practices in a manner that challenges traditional norms that oppress women. This strategy of equipping the youth with knowledge and encouraging talks on gender roles creates a broader goal of creating a society where men and women have access to equal rights.

D) Collaborative Village Professional Sessions

According to the participants, collaborative village professional sessions are an implementable strategy that can be used to address GBV within rural villages. It is through collaboration that new ideas and knowledge are shared. The study's findings reveal that this culturally friendly strategy focuses primarily on victims and perpetrators of GBV within the villages. However, these victims and perpetrators are expected to be monitored and supervised by professionals such as youth workers, community development practitioners, social workers, and law enforcement, such as the police.

The involvement of those directly affected by GBV and the community at large increases the chance of developing many more effective strategies for addressing GBV. The primary significance of involving professionals in this strategy is to create an environment that remains neutral and healthy in terms of interaction so that all the participants can express themselves fully without fear or intimidation. Furthermore, these sessions will give women opportunities for leadership positions within their villages. This will ensure the proper and effective establishment of additional strategies to address GBV with the influence driven directly by women.

The current study's findings on collaboration as one of the strategies to address GBV within villages are supported by the concept of empowerment in a survey by Ridwan and Wijaya (2024). This study supports three strategic findings in this study through empowerment. Effective collaboration is influenced by empowerment, where

individuals will hold collaborative village professional sessions to address GBV. Empowerment within this strategy will ensure the representation of voices from both ends, where, in most cases, women are ignored. Through empowerment, the focus on resolving the issue at hand will not be shifted.

Collaborative village sessions that professionals supervise as a strategy for addressing GBV have a linkage with the theory of liberty and liberal feminist theory, where the strategy will create an environment that allows individuals to express themselves without any fear of intimidation. These collaborations will foster a neutral setting for all individuals within the village, reflecting the liberal feminist theory where the voices of those who are oppressed, who are women in this study, are heard and respected. This strategy will promote women's agency and participation in community matters and empower women to be in leadership positions to establish additional strategies that can be implemented in combating GBV.

Furthermore, the involvement of professionals in this strategy aligns with liberal feminist principles. This shows the need for support and intervention to protect individuals' rights and promote justice. This strategy, which allows the sharing of knowledge and collaboration, embodies the liberal feminist belief in the significance of community involvement and collective action in addressing GBV.

5.3 Contributions of The Study to Literature

The contribution expected from a study to the literature is to fill the research gap. This simply means filling a significant gap left by studies conducted by other researchers. The purpose of this contribution is to evaluate whether the study is providing new information, whether the information is the same as that of previous studies, or whether it is better.

By studying the intersection between culture and GBV in the practice of *Mamalo* within the Vhavenda communities of the Vhembe district, this study can uncover the belief system with various aspects under it that guide the concept of marriage within the Vhavenda culture. It has also uprooted how the practice of *Mamalo* is linked with the most concerning social issue of GBV. The understanding of GBV within the Vhavenda culture has been thoroughly discussed in this study, allowing knowledge to be shared on the cultural perspective of GBV. All these aspects shaped this study's contribution

to literature and, most importantly, to culturally friendly strategies that can be implemented to address GBV.

Most studies on *Mamalo*, commonly known as lobola, label this cultural practice as a factor contributing to GBV. This ideology strips away the real meaning and understanding of the practice, leading to thoughts of abolishing it. This study uncovers that some aspects of the practice are perceived as oppressive to women. However, the original understanding and interpretation of *Mamalo* bring value and dignity to women. This idea provides the studies with justification for their contribution to the body of knowledge.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

Despite the success of this study, it is not without a few limitations. These include the limited number of participants used in the study. This study was strictly based on participants from Vhembe district who belong to the Vhavenda culture and who were also born and raised in Venda. As a result of this parameter on population, other participants outside the population who matched the characteristics of the study could not be part of the study. Hence leading to limited utilization of the participants. However, this does not weaken the value of the study.

Another limitation that was encountered in the study was sample biasness. Provided the nature of the sampling method (non-probability) and samplings techniques (purposive and snow-ball sampling) that was adopted by the study, it is highly possible that the participants in the study have the same understanding and opinions of the aspect which the study is based on. This means that the researcher was limited to a group of people with the same views on the intersection between *Mamalo* and GBV.

5.5 Recommendations:

Recommendations are implementable suggestions expected to bring change. They are aimed at all stakeholders who can consider such suggestions in addressing the social issue of GBV, focusing on cultural practices such as *Mamalo* in the current study.

Based on the study's findings, recommendations are directed to the traditional/village heads, the community, gender-based violence NGOs, the media, the Department of Sports, Arts, and Culture, and future research. These recommendations are suggested to various stakeholders to combat GBV with the influence of culture.

Traditional/village heads: Based on the study's findings, GBV is prevalent in most rural areas. Previous studies on a similar aspect support this idea. Traditional/village heads have the power and authority to implement measures and new ideas that could effectively address an issue. In this study, these leadership figures should reintroduce the use of traditional courts, traditional activities targeting the youth, cultural storytelling, and traditional counselling. Their influence and power can be effective in addressing GBV within their communities.

The community: Such broad social issues require collaboration to find strategies to reduce their prevalence. In the current study's findings on strategies for addressing GBV, the community is central to most strategies. Communities that are affected by this issue should be empowered and develop the sense that Ubuntu is the eradication of male dominance and women's oppression. Community members should not stay quiet when they see other individuals being victimized. Furthermore, the community should ensure that all cultural practices distorted regarding their means are reinterpreted to their original meaning.

Gender-based violence NGOs: The findings of the current study revealed that when addressing a social issue of GBV, both the victims and the perpetrators should be involved in combating GBV. To the NGOs that deal with GBV issues, there should be a collaborative inclusion of rehabilitated victims and perpetrators of the act in addressing GBV through proper interpretations and understanding of culture about either idea of patriarchy or women abuse.

The media: The current generation and world are based at the centre of media, either social or entertainment. With advancing technology, media is becoming very influential and used to echo beliefs, norms, and behaviours. Some of the findings of the study are interpreted with the usage of the social learning theory, and this theory revealed how behaviour and norms could be learned through observations. The media can reinforce the prevalence of GBV or combat the issue based on its influence. Therefore, it is recommended that the media either regulate the broadcasting of media that reinforces gender inequality and male dominance or use the medium to educate people on authentic understanding of cultural practices that are linked with GBV. This will help ensure that people receive information and knowledge that is beneficial in advocating for gender equality.

The Department of Sports, Arts and Culture: Based on the current study's findings, influence and empowerment are some of the core aspects of addressing this social issue. When looking at one of the strategies mentioned in the study's conclusions, which includes the Department of Education, the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture should be involved in implementing that strategy. This department should provide the education sector with ideas and justifications for integrating cultural knowledge into the curriculum. These ideas and justifications are found in studies that relate GBV with culture, such as the current study.

The Department of Sports, Arts, and Culture should also be involved in projects that establish traditional public forums where people can express their ideas and opinions with regulation by the department. These forums will reinforce the flow of cultural knowledge that is beneficial in addressing GBV from generation to generation.

Future research: The research on future study recommends that there should be a comparative study that is strictly between the youth and older people on the understating and interpretation of *Mamalo* to create one base understanding of the practice while addressing gender-based violence. Future studies should also explore universal cultural-friendly strategies in addressing GBV in South African communities.

5.7 Final Thoughts/Conclusion

The study aimed to appraise the intersection of culture and Gender-Based Violence in the Practice of *Mamalo* within the Vhavenda Communities of Vhembe District in the Limpopo Province of South Africa, based on the knowledge generated from stakeholders within Vhavenda communities. Based on the interpretation of the data generated from the study, it is safe to conclude that there remains a direct relationship between the *Mamalo* (as practiced within the Vhavenda communities in Vhembe district) and GBV. Even though the adoption of *Mamalo* is traditionally meant to provide dignity, value, and respect for women; its modified interpretation has become associated with male dominance, entitlement, commercialisation of women and oppression within the Vhavenda communities.

The above conclusion is based on the following. Firstly, the idea of payment associated with *Mamalo*. Given that the man (the groom) or his family provides payment of some sort, he feels a sense of ownership over the wife, leading to expectations of obedience and submission. Secondly, the transactional nature of the

practice. The transaction and negotiation practice used for *mamalo* in most cases fosters entitlement, where the husband assumes control over his wife's choices, labour, and even her body. Within this context, women, in turn, may struggle to assert their autonomy within marriage, as societal norms dictate that they fulfil traditional roles dictated by their husbands and in-laws. This dynamic perpetuates gender inequality, making it difficult for women to challenge oppressive structures within their households and communities. Moreover, the practice commercializes women by reducing marriage to a financial exchange, where families sometimes demand high payments, treating their daughters as economic assets rather than individuals with rights and aspirations. More dangerously, it can also trap women in unhappy or abusive marriages, as their families may be reluctant to welcome them back without refunding the lobola.

On a bigger scale, these findings shine light on many issues. Firstly, on the existing belief that there remains a very significant link between certain cultural practice and gender-based violence. Within a certain context, a cultural practice can enhance patriarchal beliefs that enable GBV. Cultural practice like *Mamalo* particularly can create an environment, within which gender inequality and resultant GBV is enthroned. Secondly, on the emerging understanding that cultures and traditions can serve as both an enabler of GBV and a tool to address GBV. Despite being an enabler of GBV in this case, elements of the same culture can provide specific belief systems with which to address GBV. Within the contexts *Mamalo* as the study shows, there still exists a possibility of developing socio-cultural strategies and measures, upon which GBV can be well addressed. Such strategies include the involvement of family in marital disputes, reinterpretation of *Mamalo* through mass village meetings, integration of cultural knowledge in the education curriculum, and collaborative village professional sessions. This means, culture has the dual possibility to serve as both enablers of GBV and a tool to remedy it.

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APPENDIX A: INFORMATION SHEET

Title: Appraising the Intersection of Culture and Gender-Based Violence in the practice of *Mamalo-Lobola* within Vhavenda Communities of Vhembe District, in the Limpopo Province of South Africa.

Greetings, my name is Nesane Ndamulelo Putco and I am conducting a research for a Master's degree in Gender Studies at the University of Venda. My research aims to explore how gender-based violence intersects with the cultural/traditional practice of *Mamalo-lobola*. The idea is to draw from this practice to develop community-based justifications for gender equality for the development of socio-culturally based strategies to address gender-based violence in Vhavenda communities.

I would like to have a one interview with you. The interview will be audio/visual recorded only with your permission. Everything you share during the interviews will be confidential and your real name will not be used. There will not be any access to the interviews and the scripts other than me and my supervisor and co-supervisor. The interviews will be held in a private place where there will be mutual comfortability. It is your decision to decide if you want to be part of the study or not. If you decide to be part of the study, you will be provided with an informed consent form.

At the beginning of the interview that you are expected have to sign. This is where confidentiality will be explained in detail. Although you have signed the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will not be part of the study.

There is no risk associated with you being a participant in this study and there will not be any direct benefits to you, either in payment or some sort of compensation but your contribution will develop the understanding of *Mamalo-lobola* in addressing GBV within the Vhevenda communities of Vhembe district.

If you have any concerns or queries concerning the research you can contact myself, Nesane Ndamulelo Putco on 072 760 0641 or 18001381@mvula.univen.ac.za or my supervisor Prof. T.J Mudau on +2715 962 8223 or Thizwilondi.Mudau@univen.ac.za

Participant's signature: **Date:**

Researcher's signature: **Date:**

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT

Title: Appraising the Intersection of Culture and Gender-Based Violence in the Practice of *Mamalo* within Vhavenda Communities of Vhembe District, in the Limpopo Province of South Africa

Researcher: Nesane Ndamulelo Putco

Please tick box

☐ I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet explaining the

above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.

☐ I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.

☐ I understand my responses and personal data will be kept strictly confidential. I give

permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses.

☐ I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the reports or publications that result for the research.

☐ I understand that I may decline to be audio/visual-recorded at any point.

☐ I agree that the data collected from me may be used in future research.

☐ I agree to take part in the above research project.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Name of Researcher

Date

Signature

Researcher:	Supervisor:	Co-supervisor:
Nesane Ndamulelo Putco 072 760 0641 or 18001381@mvula.unive n.ac.za	Prof. T.J Mudau on +2715 962 8223 or Thizwilondi.Mudau@unive n.ac.za	Dr K.E Amaechi Kingsley101amaechi@gm ail.com

APPENDIX C: DATA COLLECTION TOOL

Name of interviewer: Nesane Ndamulelo Putco

Name of Interviewee: _____

Place/method of interview: _____

Age of interviewee: _____

Marital status: _____

Date of interview: _____

This interview guide consists of questions relating to the social issue of gender-based violence and the cultural/traditional practice of *Mamalo*-lobola within the the Vhavenda context of Vhembe district in Limpopo, South Africa. These questions will be asked in alignment with the research objectives for collection of in-depth understanding and information regarding the investigated issue. The researcher will write briefs answers down where the participant is comfortable with audio recording.

QUESTIONS

1. How would you define marriage within the Vhavenda culture?

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2. Do you think it is important to marry or get married in Vhavenda culture?

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3. Is there a specific age to marry or get married according to the Vhavenda culture?

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4. How would you explain what *Mamalo* is?

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5. Do you think it is important for *Mamalo* to be paid?

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6. Within the Vhavenda culture who is expected to pay *Mamalo* and why? (Probe: why is a woman not allowed to pay for her own *Mamalo*?).

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7. How is the process of *Mamalo* conducted in Vhavenda culture?

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8. Do you think there is change in the way the process of *Mamalo* is conducted in the current era compared to the olden days?

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9. What qualities does the practice of *Mamalo* brings to both the groom and the bride?

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10. Does *Mamalo* foster the existence of gender roles? (Probe: do you think gender roles in marriage are identified by either *Mamalo* has been paid or not?).

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11. What do you understand about Gender-based violence?

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12. Do you think *Mamalo* creates a sense of entitlement to women by men? (Probe: does the payment of *Mamalo* mean the men is an authoritative figure in marriage?).

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13. How are marital disputes expected to be handled according to the Vhavenda culture?

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14. Do you think *Mamalo* can be an essential tool in bringing harmony in marriage?

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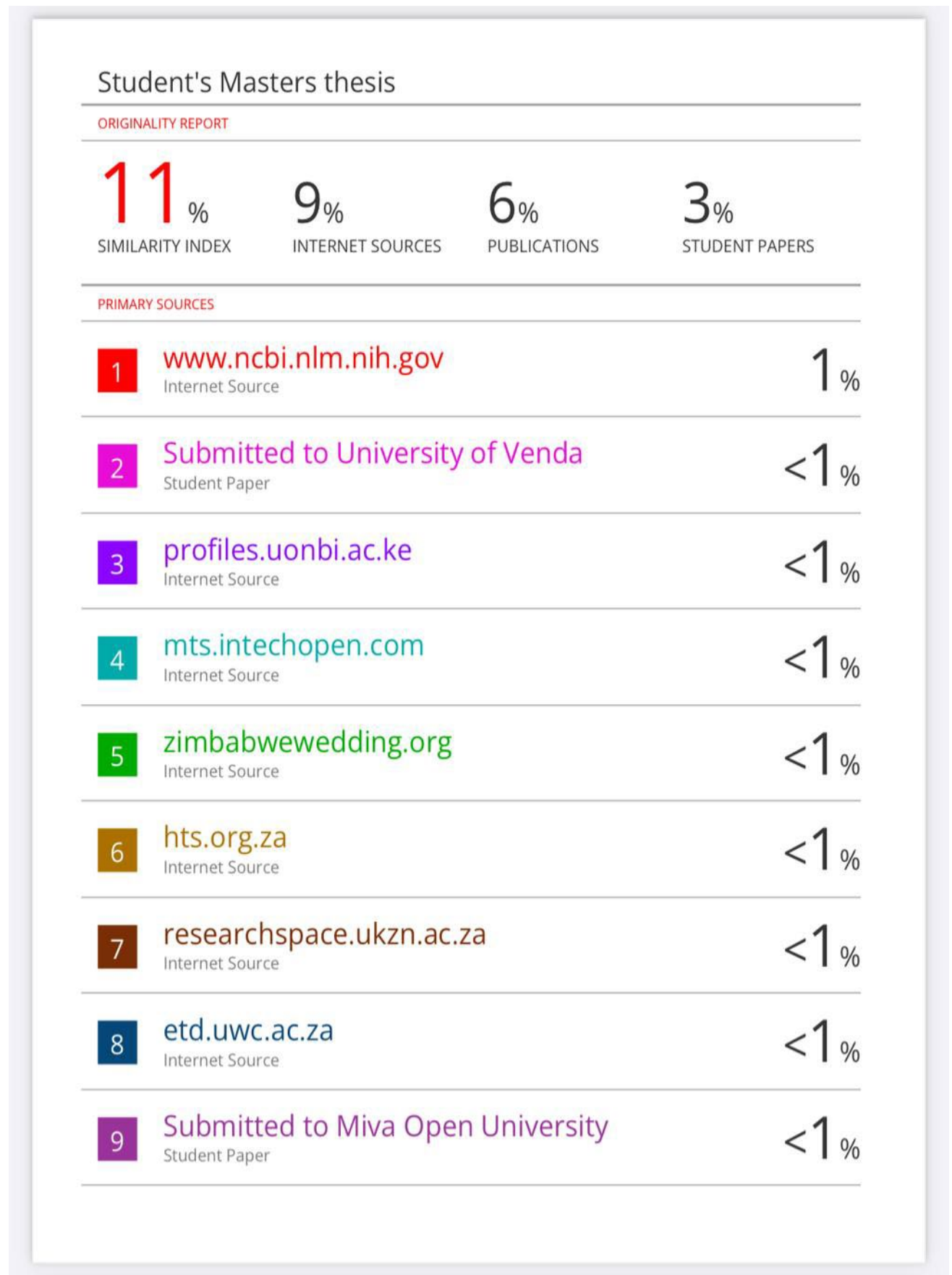
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APPENDIX D: TURNITIN REPORT



APPENDIX E: LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE

EDITING AND PROOF READING REPORT

2025/03/22

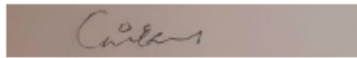
Editing and Proofreading Report

This letter serves to confirm that I, Dr Chukwuebuka Abara has proofread and edited the Masters Dissertation titled, "Appraising the Intersection of Culture and Gender-Based Violence in the Practice of Mamalo within Vhavenda Communities of Vhembe District, in the Limpopo Province of South Africa", by NP Nesane, Student number: 18001381 to be submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for Masters Degree program in the Department of Youth in Development Studies, University of Venda, South Africa.

I carefully read through the dissertation, focusing on proofreading and editorial issues.

Detailed recommendations were also made for the improvement of the document.

Yours Sincerely



Chukwuebuka Abara (PhD)
University of Johannesburg Cnr Kingsway and University
Road, Auckland Park, Johannesburg, 2092
PO Box 524, Auckland Park, 2006 South Africa
Tel.: +27646607525
E-mail: chukwuebukaabara@gmail.com

EDITING AND PROOF READING REPORT

APPENDIX F: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:
Mr NP Nesane

STUDENT NO:
18001381

PROJECT TITLE: Appraising the Intersection of Culture and Gender-Based Violence in the Practice of Mamalo within Vhavenda Communities of Vhembe District, in the Limpopo Province of South Africa.

ETHICAL CLEARANCE NO: FHSSE/25/DS/02/1203

SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Prof TJ Mudau	UNIVEN, YOUTH IN DEVELOPMENT	Supervisor
Dr KE Amaechi	UNIVEN, YOUTH IN DEVELOPMENT	Co-Supervisor
Mr NP Nesane	UNIVEN, YOUTH IN DEVELOPMENT	Investigator -Student

Type: **Master's Research**

Risk: **Minimal risk to humans, animals, or environment (Category 2)**

Approval Period: **March 2025 – March 2026**

The Research Ethics Social Science Committee (RESSC) hereby approves your project as indicated above.

General Conditions

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:

- * The project leader (principal investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the REEC:
 - Annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project, and upon completion of the project.
 - Within 48hrs in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.
 - Annually a number of projects may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- * The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the REC. Would there be deviation from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- * The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date; a new application must be made to the REC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- * In the interest of ethical responsibility, the REC retains the right to:
 - Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project,
 - To ask further questions; Seek additional information; Require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process.
 - Withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - Any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected.
 - It becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the REC or that information has been false or misrepresented.
 - The required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately,
 - New institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.

ISSUED BY:
UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
Date Considered: **March 2025**

Name of the RESSC Chairperson of the Committee... **Prof M. Mwale-Manjoro**

Signature.....



