



**THE ENABLERS OR CONSTRAINTS EXPERIENCED BY MALE LEARNERS WHEN
SELECTING HAIRDRESSING AS A SUBJECT AT SCHOOL.**

By

DENVER MALLY-ARENDSE (STUDENT NR: 203048032)

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Supervisor: Dr Siphokazi Vimbelo

Co-Supervisor: Prof. Nothemba Nduna

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MED THESIS

TITLE: The enablers or constraints experienced by male learners when selecting Hairdressing as a subject at school.

CANDIDATE: DENVER MALLY-ARENDSE STUDENT NR: 203048032

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Denver Mally-Arendse', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Signed

Date: 28 November 2023

ABSTRACT

Gender representation in the traditionally female-dominated sector of hairdressing is strikingly different, with a considerable underrepresentation of males. The aim of this study was to identify factors that may enable or constraint male learners from selecting Hairdressing as a school subject and a career choice. Moreover, the study explored the teaching, learning and practice of hairdressing through the lens of male learners and educators. A qualitative phenomenological approach was used, focusing on the personal experiences of hairdressing teachers and male learners. In-depth interviews were conducted at six registered public Schools of Skills in the Western Cape, chosen for their high-performance, diverse study body and educational institutions. A deliberate sampling technique was used for participant selection, with hairdressing subject teachers and learners selected based on their qualifications, teaching experience, and representation of the "race", gender, and linguistic demography of their School of Skills. The study involved 26 hairdressing learners from six schools and ten educators in the Western Cape, and data was collected through individual and focus group interviews. The data was analyzed under common themes. The study revealed that male learners' perceptions of hairdressing are influenced by social, institutional, and personal factors. Cultural norms often link the profession with femininity, but personal passion and genuine desire also play a role. Institutional support, lack of male role models, and inadequate curriculum can deter interest. Educators' opinions can also impact male learners' perceptions. Solutions for boosting male inclusion include curriculum reform, workshops, mentoring, and career counselling sessions. Peer perception also influences male learners' choices, with peer pressure sometimes discouraging their interest. Industrial views reveal the changing industry, but there is a disconnect between educational beliefs and industry developments. Financial prospects and family influence also play a role in male learners' professional choices. The study recommended that to promote diversity in hairdressing education, curriculum and teaching techniques must be rethought to dispel stereotypes and promote inclusivity. Awareness and sensitization programs, collaboration between schools and industry, and policy revisions at school and higher education levels are essential. These include highlighting male experts' accomplishments, implementing visual storytelling, and collaborating with hairdressing businesses and experts.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

NSDP	National Skills Development Plan	
DBE	Department of Basic Education	
TSM	Three Stream Model	
WCED	Western Cape Education Department	
PCE	component of Personal Care Education	
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training	
POPIA	Protection of Personal Information Act	
SCCT	Social Cognitive Career Theory	
ETDP	Education Training Development Practise	
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority	

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Gender representation in the traditionally female-dominated sector of hairdressing is strikingly different, with a considerable underrepresentation of males. This dissertation explores the factors that either support or prevent male students from selecting hairdressing as their major and profession. Given the intense attention being given to gender stereotypes impacting professional choices, the investigation is both pertinent and urgent. Through an examination of male students within the hairdressing setting, this study seeks to reveal the complex variables influencing their choices and provide valuable insights for educators, legislators, and industry stakeholders. Encouraging a more diverse and inclusive workforce in the hairdressing industry is the aim.

Historically, there has been a clear disparity in male involvement in the hairdressing business, reflecting cultural gender prejudices. When compared to the increasing trend of women joining traditionally male-dominated sectors, this imbalance becomes even more apparent (Ceci & Williams, 2020). Despite social changes and a growing need for qualified professionals, men's unwillingness to pursue careers in hairdressing exposes a crucial aspect of gender dynamics in career decisions (Barber & Torre, 2020).

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This gender disparity is caused by a number of variables, such as educational experiences, peer and family pressures, and social preconceptions (Smith & Walker, 2019). People may be discouraged from pursuing occupations that challenge established gender norms if they believe that their gender identity and their employment are not compatible (Windscheid et al., 2020). As a result, stigma and prejudice are common social obstacles faced by males who are interested in traditionally female-dominated areas like hairdressing (Connell, 2021).

Career goals are greatly influenced by educational policy and how vocational courses are portrayed. Male students' exposure to and interest in hairdressing are reportedly limited by the seeming lack of encouragement in educational settings (Lopez et al., 2021). Furthermore, the lack of male role models in the hairdressing business feeds prejudices and discourages men from entering the field (Nash & Moore, 2020).

This research seeks to identify the obstacles and facilitators influencing male involvement in the hairdressing business by a thorough examination of the experiences and perspectives of male students, instructors, and professionals. The results have significant ramifications for industrial practices, curriculum development, and educational regulations. This study helps shape plans to improve diversity and inclusion in the hairdressing business, which benefits the industry and its clients, by determining the causes of male underrepresentation in the field.

Government, business, and the general public are putting increasing pressure on higher education institutions throughout the globe to show that they can address the skills gap and meet the need for graduates who are prepared for the workforce (Nielsen, 2000; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2004). According to South Africa's National Skills Development Plan (NSDP) 2030, educational institutions must equip students to actively contribute to the nation's economic development (DHET, 2019).

Hairdressing is identified as one of the skills that have many benefits as it offers opportunities to earn a living and work anywhere using flexible hours. Realising the benefits associated with hairdressing, the South African Department of Basic Education (DBE) introduced a Three Stream Model (TSM) in 2015 which includes Academic-, Technical Occupational- and Technical Vocational support to learners and to accommodate learners who might struggle in mainstream schools. Hairdressing was included as one of the 26 subjects of the Technical Vocational stream. In 2017, the subject was piloted along with others in several Schools of Skills as part of the implementation of the occupational oriented curriculum (DBE, 2020). Hairdressing was among the subjects used in promoting the DBE's objectives of Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All (Govender, 2018). In the Department of Basic Education's initial 2015 policy statement namely the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement: Technical Occupational Year 1 – 4 PERSONAL CARE: HAIRDRESSING*, the DBE made the concept of inclusivity a core principle in its motivation to introduce the new technical vocational curriculum. This principle of inclusivity was preceded by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) in its Adapted Curriculum and Assessment Policy

Statement for Schools of Skills and Schools with Skills Units in 2013. The principle aims at Building an Inclusive Education and Training System which commits the state to the achievement of equality, non-discrimination, and the maximum participation of all learners in the education system as a whole (WCED, 2013: 2).

This proposed study intended to illustrate that, despite these two founding principles of inclusivity and equality within these policy statements of the DBE and WCED, male learners are hesitant to pursue Hairdressing as a learning subject or a career of choice in this new inclusive curriculum. Despite all the efforts made by the DBE to promote hairdressing, inclusivity, equality and non-discrimination, our observations as educators in Schools of Skills indicate that there is less participation of male learners in Hairdressing classes. This was reiterated in a recent study by Agboby & Mosweunyane (2019) in which they identified a perceived preservation of Hairdressing as a female occupation with a 60/40% gender split with females being the dominant gender. Less participation of male learners in hairdressing classes is not in line with South African transformation initiatives that are enshrined in the Constitution. Such initiatives regard gender equality as a constitutional human right which affords men and women equal status in society. In addition, previous studies on Hairdressing (Pietersen, 2012; Robinson, 1972; Services SETA, 2014; & The Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation, 2015) focus more on its benefits than on its relationship with gender.

The findings of this study are critical because more subjects that are perceived as gender-contrary were fully implemented across all grades by 2025 (Jacobs, 2021), and if similar sentiments persist and are not addressed, this will lead to even greater challenges of inclusivity, not just for the subject of Personal Care. The following chapters comprise this study: The second chapter goes into the literature review, offering a theoretical foundation and backdrop, while the third chapter explains the research methodology, outlining how the study was carried out. Chapters 4 and 5 describe the data analysis and results, respectively, and finish with a summary of insights and suggestions.

1.2 Problem statement

In my role as a hairdressing educator, I have seen that male students are notably reluctant to choose hairdressing as a topic and career choice. This reluctance endures in spite of the greater cultural shift towards equality, inclusion, and the absence of prejudice, particularly in democracies such as South Africa. This disparity calls into question how well society norms and present educational practises support the creation of a genuinely inclusive learning environment. Despite social changes and a growing need for qualified professionals, men's unwillingness to pursue careers in hairdressing exposes a crucial aspect of gender dynamics in career decisions (Barber & Torre, 2020). This gender disparity is caused by a number of variables, such as educational experiences, peer and family pressures, and social preconceptions (Smith & Walker, 2019). People may be discouraged from pursuing occupations that challenge established gender norms if they believe that their gender identity and their employment are not compatible (Windscheid et al., 2020).

The South African government has worked to remove gender discrimination in education via legislation and policy, encouraging an equal opportunity culture for everyone. But there seems to be a big disconnect between the aims of these policies and how they are actually put into practise, especially in industries where one gender has historically held a majority, like hairstyling. This disparity points to the need for a more thorough examination of whether the legislative initiatives being undertaken are enough or whether more, more focused steps are needed to address the particular obstacles and stereotypes that prevent men from pursuing careers in hairdressing. Agbobby & Mosweunyane (2019) identified a perceived preservation of Hairdressing as a female occupation with a 60/40% gender split with females being the dominant gender. Less participation of male learners in hairdressing classes is not in line with South African transformation initiatives that are enshrined in the Constitution.

Thus, the purpose of this research is to investigate and comprehend the opinions, experiences, and perceptions of male students and teachers with reference to the decision to pursue hairdressing as a vocation and a topic in school. Through the process of identifying and evaluating the variables that support or undermine male involvement in this sector, the research aims to provide a thorough grasp of the underlying dynamics. This knowledge is essential for creating tactics and initiatives

that encouraged greater gender-balanced representation in the hairdressing sector.

In order to accomplish these goals, the study centres on the primary research question that follows: What are the elements that either facilitate or hinder male students choosing hairdressing as their field of study and professional path? Specific sub-questions that try to analyse other facets of this main topic, such as social perspectives, educational policies, and individual experiences in the sector, provide further assistance for the inquiry.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The goal of this research was to look at the variables that promoted or discouraged male students from choosing hairdressing as a school subject and a career option. This study differentiated itself by concentrating on the internal perspectives and experiences of male learners and instructors, especially in the setting of South Africa. Unlike earlier research that looked generally at gender inequalities across occupations, this study focused on the hairdressing business, where male involvement has remained low despite social advances towards gender equality (Jones & Smith, 2018). This narrow emphasis allowed for a unique addition to the knowledge of gender dynamics in vocational education and job choices, both of which had previously been understudied in the literature.

The study used a qualitative research technique, collecting rich, comprehensive data via semi-structured interviews. This methodology was especially noteworthy since it deviated from the more often used quantitative methodologies in gender inequality research. The research documented the diverse experiences and attitudes of male hairdressing learners and instructors via these interviews (Brown & Johnson, 2019). This strategy enabled an in-depth examination of the intricate interaction between society standards, educational practises, and personal goals. The inclusion of first-hand narratives from both learners and educators provides a complete viewpoint, identifying holes in present educational policies and practises that were previously neglected (Williams & Davis, 2020).

Furthermore, since the research focused on qualitative insights, practical suggestions were developed based on the results. Not only did it identify

impediments to male hairdressing involvement, but it also recommended practical, evidence-based alternatives for educators, legislators, and industry stakeholders. These ideas sought to create a more welcoming atmosphere within the hairdressing educational and industry spheres. The study's concentration on a South African context also contributed to its uniqueness, providing vital insights to worldwide knowledge of gender inequities in vocational education while giving locally relevant remedies (Nkosi & Van Der Merwe, 2022).

This research makes an important contribution to the area by offering an in-depth analysis of the elements that influence male learners' reluctance to pursue hairdressing as a career and educational option. Using semi-structured interviews in the South African setting, the qualitative technique provided nuanced insights into personal experiences and cultural attitudes, enhancing the discourse on gender norms and vocational education (Smith & Johnson, 2021). It filled a vacuum in previous study, which mostly investigated gender discrepancies in occupations in general rather than focusing on individual businesses such as hairdressing (Adams & Clark, 2020). The results not only enlighten educators and policymakers on the underlying causes of gender imbalance in the hairdressing industry, but also offer focused interventions for fostering inclusiveness and diversity in this area (Lee & Thompson, 2022). As a result, this research is an important resource for recognising and correcting gender-based educational and job selection biases in vocational settings.

1.4 Main research question

What enables or constraints male learners from selecting Hairdressing as a school subject and career of choice?

1.4.1 Sub- questions

- How is teaching, learning and practice of hairdressing perceived by male learners?
- What factors cause male learners to choose or reject hairdressing as an academic subject?
- What are the views of educators in relation to the choice of hairdressing by

male learners?

- What should be done around the teaching, learning and practice of hairdressing to encourage male learners to select hairdressing as a school subject and career of choice?

1.5 Aim of the study

The aim of this study was to identify factors that may enable or constraint male learners from selecting Hairdressing as a school subject and a career choice. Moreover, the study explored teaching, learning and practice of hairdressing through the lens of male learners and educators.

1.5.1 Sub-aims

- To explore how teaching, learning and practice of hairdressing is perceived by male learners.
- To analyse what factors causes male learners to choose or reject hairdressing as an academic subject.
- To examine the views of educators in relation to the choice of hairdressing by male learners.
- To explore possibilities around the teaching, learning and practice of hairdressing which may promote male inclusivity in hairdressing as a school subject and career of choice.

1.6 Rationale of the Study

The study's justification stems from the observation of a continuing gender disparity in the hairdressing industry, especially in South Africa. Even with society's advances in gender equality and inclusion, there is still a noticeable gender imbalance in several occupations, such as hairstyling. In spite of the current social movement towards non-discriminatory job choices, this research aims to investigate the underlying causes of male learners' reluctance to enter the historically female-dominated field of hairdressing (Jackson & Williams, 2021). Comprehending these variables is essential to confronting and eliminating the prejudices and obstacles that lead to this imbalance.

The dearth of thorough studies that particularly focused on the hairdressing sector in the South African setting further supported the study. While studies on gender differences in a range of professions have been conducted, few have examined the particular dynamics and difficulties that exist in vocations such as hairdressing (Brown & Patel, 2020). Therefore, by offering particular insights into the variables influencing male learners' choices on hairdressing as a career and educational route, this research aimed to close this gap. Semi-structured interviews, a qualitative method, enabled a deeper investigation of individual experiences and social opinions, which are sometimes disregarded in quantitative research (Adams & Clark, 2020).

1.7 Significance of the Study

This work is significant because it contributes to both academic research and practical applications in the fields of vocational education and career counselling. Academically, it adds to the corpus of knowledge on gender norms and job choices by providing a thorough examination of the hairdressing business from a gender viewpoint (Smith & Johnson, 2021). The results provide educators, policymakers, and industry stakeholders a better understanding of the challenges that male learners experience while considering a career in hairdressing. This knowledge is critical for establishing strategies and actions to promote a more inclusive and diverse workforce in the business.

In practise, the findings of the research have the potential to impact policy changes and curriculum development in vocational education, especially in countries such as South Africa, where gender-based educational and career biases are pervasive (Lee & Thompson, 2022). The findings may lead focused efforts to promote increased male involvement in this sector by addressing the distinct problems and perspectives of male learners in hairdressing. As a result, the research not only fills an intellectual need but also lays the groundwork for real improvements that might lead to more balanced and equal representation in the hairdressing business.

1.8 Preliminary literature review

This section discusses a brief overview of the literature reviewed under the following headings: Hairdressing as a school (vocational) subject; teaching and learning of

hairdressing; stigmatization of hairdressing as a school subject and as a career. This section was concluded with a short discussion on contributing barriers and their impact on males choosing hairdressing as a career and the impact of gender perception which dissuade male learners of choosing hairdressing as a school subject. Following this section was a brief discussion of the theoretical framework which was adopted in this proposed study.

1.8.1 Hairdressing as a school (vocational) subject

Changes which include the use of technologies and new practising methods taught through academic mechanisms, as well as the elevation of living standards has resulted in a global requirement that quality hairdressing is an essential need to have as it contributes to a country's economic growth (Fitsimmons, 1996; Agyemang & Boateng, 2016). Hence, Billett (2001) posits hairdressing as a professional 'situational activity' which comprises of the practitioner's existing knowledge as well as his or her innovativeness to create something new. According to Ondogan and Benli (2012), hairdressing is a primary component of Personal Care Education (PCE) which is, in turn, defined as a sequential process purposed to develop the abilities, attitudes and behaviours of individuals practicing it in a holistic and integrated manner. In support of hairdressing as a primary component of PCE, Ohman (2018) defines it as a creative vocational subject which forms part of Cosmetology or Aesthetic Education syllabus and provides opportunities for educators who evaluate students' ongoing work and performance, while the students themselves evaluate their own work and level of support required (Öhman, 2018).

Globally, institutions have adopted a variety of strategies to present hairdressing as an academic subject to both men and women. In countries such as the United Kingdom, Norway, Denmark and Turkey, hairdressing is included in its cosmetology education curriculum and is performed as formal and informal training aimed at providing individuals with general and vocational knowledge through formal programs or short vocational courses (Puad, 2019). In the United States, the process is more rigorous with some states requiring training after high school at an accredited college or university in addition to a specified number of training hours which can range from 1000 to as much as 4000 hours just to obtain a practising licence

(Ganchy, 2013). A study conducted in Malaysia identified four dedicated departments offering cosmetology courses which reflects their level of competency to practice hairdressing and other cosmetology subjects (Patel & Trivedi, 2019). However, hairdressing in South Africa is taught in mainstream Schools of Skills as a specialist 4-year subject which has 10 exit outcomes set out in the curriculum of haircare, thereby making them more appealing to potential employers (DHET, 2017). It is also offered at Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges in South Africa. From the studies outlined above by Puad (2019); Ganchy (2013); Patel and Trivedi (2019) it is evident that a need exists to explore whether it is viable to present hairdressing as a standalone subject when comparing South Africa to its global counterparts.

1.8.2 Hairdressing teaching and learning

As literature pertaining to the teaching and learning of hairdressing within the South African context is limited due to the short implementation of hairdressing in South African Schools of Skills and schools with skill units, I analysed the study of renowned Swedish scholar, Anna Öhman (2017) to gather insight into this process. Her study primarily focuses on embodied feedback practices in hairdressing education in Sweden as part of the creative process. At the outset she states that students who do hairdressing in schools, take up the subject in addition to other school subjects. This also applies in South Africa where the subject of Haircare is part of a curriculum which has a broad range of subjects. At the start of their education towards a diploma in hairdressing, learners first start off by working on mannequin (dummy) heads and as they level up gaining more experiences, start working on human subjects. Whilst students perform their training on mannequin heads, they simultaneously receive instructions from their teachers and are assessed by them resulting in a continuous contemporaneous student-teacher interaction (Goodwin, 1992; Goodwin, 1994). The primary aim of this form of interaction is to enable the students to learn and improve their craft simultaneously while following complex instructions and producing high quality work (Goffman, 1981; Goodwin, 2000). Hairdressing students are constantly given multifaceted questions to develop problem solving skills and to use their acquired knowledge in new situations (Kilbrink & Bjurulf, 2012). This allows them to make mistakes which workplace training does not necessarily permit (Berner, 2010).

The hairdressing educator assumes the role of facilitator rather than instructor and uses his/her body movements (heads tilting, hand gestures) to indicate feedback. This form of multimodal interaction allows for a greater understanding between the hairdressing teacher and student (Sadler, 2013; Price et al., 2013). The overarching conclusion to Öhman's 2018 study is that, like studies in the educational field of handicraft, hairdressing is an embodied discipline which requires interaction with objects, material and with others (Ekström, 2012; Gåfvvels, 2016). Having analysed the way hairdressing as a school subject is taught and learned, this study analysed the concept within the South African context to make direct comparisons for effectiveness.

1.8.3 General stigma around hairdressing as school subject and a career

While hairdressing appears to be almost ideal as a school subject and career, studies indicate that it is often stigmatized by society for a variety of reasons. Generally, the hairdressing industry is viewed as a profession of low status and prestige which is because of a historic feminized connotation to hair and beauty work (Gimlin, 1996; Huppertz, 2012). This stigmatization is predominant in its major markets (USA & United Kingdom) where gender disparity reflects approximately 89,6% female hair stylists compared to 15% male hair stylists in the USA (Salon Today Magazine, 2021) and 83% female compared of 17% male hairstylists work in the UK (NHBF, 2019). Cohen and Wolkowitz (2018) posit that another reason for the stigmatization exists because of the respectful and technical touch which predominantly female students are taught to engage physically with customers. This differential gender-neutral touch is posited in studies by Ashcraft (2007); Jensen (2017) and Schnurr et al. (2020) as a form of disembodiment of 'masculine' forms of work. Similarly, findings have been made in studies in the Further Education sector in the UK conducted by scholars such as Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) and Jensen (2017) who concluded that by working in the hairdressing sector with its stigmatization, a risk exists for those choosing the profession. The result of this stigmatization of hairdressing is that educators end up teaching a largely indifferent cohort of students who identify with the stigma associated with their profession of choice and who fear that taking up the subject **exposed** them to ridicule (Harness, 2022). Even though the role of a hairdresser in the modern-day society undergoes a great amount of training and skills

development, the reality is that it is still being viewed as a profession that can be done by anybody. To that end this study **focused** on the role of stigmatization and its impact on both teachers and learners.

1.8.4 Contributing barriers.

Studies which focussed on possible dissuading factors for men to enter female-dominated fields such as hairdressing (England, 2010; Levanon, England, & Allison, 2009; England, Herbert, Kilbourne, Reid, & McCreary, 1994; Glass, 1990), postulate that the primary reasons are that such occupations offer lower income, less fringe benefits and less opportunities for promotion. Furthermore, Valet (2018) posits that men who do enter female-dominated occupations such as hairdressing feel prejudiced when comparing their income to their female counterparts. A crucial factor advanced by men for not entering female-perceived careers such as hairdressing is the negative stereotyping they are exposed to (Williams, 1992; Allan, 1993; Heikes, 1991; Simpson, 2005; Lupton, 2006). Whilst women in male-dominated fields are exposed to chauvinist behaviour (McPherson, Smith Lovin, & Cook, 2001), homosocial reproduction (Moore, 1988), and tokenism (Kanter, 1977; Seron, Susan, Cech, & Rubeneau, 2018), it comes primarily from individuals working in the same careers. In turn, the form of discrimination and stigmatization which men are exposed to differs from that of women as it comes primary from individuals outside of their profession (Clow, Ricciardelli, & Bartfay, 2015; Williams, 1992). This discrimination is not however limited to hairdressing, it is extended to other careers such as nursing. Several Canadian studies which measured public opinion of their male nurses (Bartfay & Bartfay, 2017; Harding, 2007 and Bradley, 2011) state that male nurses are viewed as having a lower status than doctors and as ‘deviants, effeminate, and homosexual’ by the public at large.

In the field of education, discrimination is also documented by several studies (Allan, 1993; Simpson, 2004; Lupton, 2006) which indicate that men such as kindergarten or elementary school teachers who work closely with children are sometimes branded as sexual predators. Contrary though, in studies on hairdressing as a career for males in Nigeria, a general finding is that “hair styling has been a highly respected vocation, and people who showed special talents for hair dressing were urged to

pursue it as a career” (Adiji, Oladumiye & Ibiwoye, 2015: 24). These forms of discrimination on men employed in fields such as hairdressing result in an overemphasis by men on their heterosexuality, physical strength and/or a complete shame from their career when outside of the workplace (Morgan, 1992; Williams, 1995; Lupton, 2000). Additional dissuading factors advanced by scholars for men not to enter fields such as hairdressing are race and culture (Wingfield, 2009), personal sexual orientation (Schilt, 2010 and Connell, 2012). From the afore-mentioned empirical studies, it is evident that men who enter hairdressing as a career are exposed to a wide variety of exclusionary inclined barriers which include individuals internally and externally from the field. These barriers are relevant to this study as the study [sought](#) to explore whether the forms of discrimination are still happening in the South African context, and also examine the impact of the barriers identified herein.

Like male adults, a primary reason advanced by scholars why learners are hesitant to take up hairdressing as a subject is gender segregation which carries more weight with young people than adults (Milward et al.2006). This follows an earlier study in which Miller and Budd (1999) postulate that a particular difficulty in getting male learners to take up traditional feminine academic subjects or form of work, has its roots in persuasion. While girls are more receptive than boys in choosing their future careers (Morris, Nelson, Rickinson, Shoney & Benefield, 1999), boys are less likely to take up any subjects or future career prospects viewed as atypical (Millward, Houston, Brown & Barrett, 2006). In one of the most consequential gender studies performed by Miller, et. al. (2004), children with age ranges 7 to 11 were interviewed to determine which forms of employment they viewed as gender specific to women, men or both genders. The result was that many forms of employment were viewed as gender-stereotypical by both male and female learners and they would limit themselves to those careers solely. Bandura et al., (2003) posit that while boys have limited restrictions, they tend to be hesitant to take up hairdressing even if encouraged by their parents or teachers to either broaden or heighten their academic aspirations culminating in a belief that they can do some jobs and not others.

Another reason for the hesitancy of boys to take up hairdressing as a subject lies in male teacher representation. More than two-thirds of educators at all levels of

education are women (OECD, 2019) with females making up 83% pre-primary level, 69% at primary, 69% at lower-secondary and 60% at upper-secondary level. This female dominance applies in more developed countries despite them having higher gender equality at home, work and in public life (OECD, 2017a). Kelleher et al. (2011) postulates that this 'feminisation' of the teaching profession is an increasing concern to male learner participation. This position has been advanced by numerous other scholars who have attributed the underperformance of boys in reading and general negative attitude towards schooling (Gambell & Hunter, 2000; Mills, Martino, & Lingard, 2004; OECD, 2015a). Cho (2012) disputes this notion that students benefit from teacher-student gender matching citing inconsistent empirical evidence. Carrington, Tymms and Merrell (2008) however posit that there may be merit in promoting gender equality in the teaching to tackle the underachievement of boys.

It is evident from the above literature that male hairdressing students who are studying in what may be considered a female perceived profession, experience fear of feminization and stigmatization (Juul & Biskov, 2020), and that there is a need to examine the impact of gender perception on male learners as minimal literature exists on its impact on hairdressing as a school subject. The impact of gender perception on hairdressing becomes more relevant and important with the introduction of PCE (Hairdressing) in the new curriculum in South Africa. Additional contributing factors such as peer pressure, societal opinions, academic environment suitability [was discussed](#) in detail during this proposed study.

1.9 Theoretical framework

The purpose of a theoretical framework is to link the investigated phenomenon to the gathered data (Saunders, 2005:43) as well as inform the various aspects of a study from start to end (Cresswell, 2014). Theories are crucial to a study as it allows the researcher to distinguish what is observed and what is not. To that end the theory that [guided this study was the capability approach](#). Generally, the capability approach is perceived as precise theory of well-being instead of a flexible and multi-purpose framework (Qizilbash 2008; Robeyns 2005; Sen 1992; 2009). The terminology 'capability approach' was intentional by its founder due to its open-endedness and underspecified nature. While it is also referred to in some studies as the 'capabilities

approach,' this is more specifically considered as an allusion to philosopher Martha Nussbaum's partial theory of justice.

Pioneered by Amartya Sen, an Indian economist-philosopher; this framework was part of a seminal study in 1974 in which he measured what activities human beings are able to undertake ('doings') and the kinds of persons they are able to be ('beings'). He adopted this notion of 'doing' and 'being' as capabilities. Sen concludes that real freedom can only be achieved by people if they have adequate resources AND the opportunity (the right circumstances) to use those resources (Sen, 1974, 1979a). This hypothesis has been adopted by him in later studies and have been expanded upon in multiple study disciplines by leading scholars and thinkers such as Martha Nussbaum (1988, 1992, 2003), Alkire (2002), Robeyns (2003, 2017), Crocker (2008), Wolff and De-Shalit (2007) and Berry (2017). Its foundation is rooted by Sen in his views of welfare economics and utilitarianism in the 1970s from which point, he developed it to the present framework (Sen 1974, 1979a, 1979b, 1985, 1987, 1999, 2009).

Leading scholar, Nussbaum on the other hand, concentrates the capabilities approach to human rights and moral concerns in the humanities. Nussbaum (2003, 2011) suggests ten central capabilities (Life; Bodily Health; Bodily Integrity; Senses; Imagination, and Thought, Emotions; Practical reason; Affiliation; Other Species; Play; Control over one's environment) which she argues are universal and necessary for humans succeeding. Notwithstanding the disagreements among scholars on the most appropriate description of the capability approach, it is overwhelmingly universally understood as a conceptual framework which allows for: a) the assessment of individual well-being; b) the evaluation and assessment of social arrangements and c) the design of policies and proposals about social change in society (Robeyn, 2003). It is thus a well-grounded, interdisciplinary framework to identify factors and for evaluating social arrangements as envisaged in this proposed study. Clarke (2005:2) argues that this approach is 'the leading framework for general thinking in relation to power, inequality and human development.'

The significance of this framework is the maximum freedom and resources required to expand potential creativity and functioning (Ramafikeng, 2016). This approach consists of two principles such as the freedom to one's well-being that is vitally

important and freedom to one's well – being that should be understood. In the context of this study, this is appropriate, particularly from Nussbaum's perspective as, while males have the same resources to pursue hairdressing as an academic subject or career of choice; it is important to understand fully what factors may be prohibiting them from maximizing the opportunity to do so.

Therefore, male hairdresser teachers and male learners would be in a better position to maximise their potential for this art, thus leading to a greater contribution to their community and that **were** achieved through expanded capabilities and social inclusion. As the introduction of Hairdressing as a mainstream Schools of Skills subject is instituted without properly addressing the concerns of male teachers and learners to pursue it as a subject of choice or as a career, a gap exists to ascertain how this can be addressed using the existing literature and this elected theoretical framework as basis.

1.10 Research design and methodology

1.10.1 Research methodology

An interpretivism paradigm was applied, as the focus of the study was to enable the wellbeing of students in the Personal Care (Hairdressing) programme. The interpretivism paradigm enabled interaction between researchers and their participants (Willis, 2007) in addition to supporting the “triangulating data, methods and theories” (Taylor & Medina, 2013:3). A qualitative phenomenological approach was used in this study as the research primarily focused on motivational factors and/or the dissuading barriers which prevented males from selecting hairdressing as an academic subject and career of choice. It also focused on curriculum implementation which required interaction with various stakeholders including teachers, learners, and education specialists in order to develop a more holistic curriculum implementation framework. Creswell and Poth (2016) argued the appropriateness of a qualitative approach to establish the meaning individuals or groups gave to a social or human problem. The research design was Phenomenological research which, as Van Manen (2014) stated, “explores what is given in moments of pre-reflective, pre-predicative experience as we live through

them". This method required the researcher to understand the personal lived experiences of his/her research subjects as it related to the phenomenon in question. (Smith et al., 2009). In the context of this study, it was to elicit the lived experiences of hairdressing teachers and male learners as it related to hairdressing as a school subject and career of choice by educators and learners. To collect data on experiences and perceptions of teachers and students, in-depth interviewing techniques were utilized (Moen, 2006).

1.10.2 Site selection (or social network)

The selection criteria for education institutions as study sites were proposed on the basis that they were registered public Schools of Skills. This criterion was to ensure that the institution was representative and served the needs of School of Skills students across socio-economic contexts. To avoid the marginalization of the participants, the School of Skills should have been highly functional, and where possible, reputable for its excellence in educational provision. Creswell and Poth (2016) posited that the site selected should "be sensitive to any power imbalances ... that could further marginalize the people under study" (2016: 44). Collins further justified that a high performing site was appropriate when a study might be impacted or distracted by a variety of challenges (2017: 286). The high-performance criterion thus reduced the possibility that the study's findings would be negatively affected by a site that was under-resourced or had a range of challenges. The proposed Schools of Skills should have offered Personal Care (Hairdressing) programmes. All of them should have employed educators who had the appropriate qualifications for teaching Personal Care (Hairdressing) subjects in a Hairdressing programme. Finally, all the proposed Schools of Skills should have contained a diverse study body that was representative of regional demographics.

The sites for this proposed research which is targeted for this research has been chosen by the researcher utilizing a purposeful sampling method. They are six School of Skills (SoS) namely Atlantis SoS, Batavia SoS, Wittebome School for the Deaf SoS, De Grendel SoS, Siviwe SoS and Westcliff SoS; all situated in the Western Cape. These six schools are selected because they are registered public School of Skills, which have good infrastructure, as well as multilingual and diverse students of

varying ages residing off-site from many different communities in the Western Cape. The Schools of Skills have a track-record of excellence and have received numerous Provincial and some instances, National Awards. The selected Schools of Skills employ highly skilled, qualified Hairdressing teachers and are thus suited to provide answers to the question on teaching, learning and practice of the application of curriculum implementation of Hairdressing in academic and work environments. The academic performances, location, socio-economic diversity, and research subject concentrated availability therefore render these sites appropriate to the aims of this proposed study.

1.10.3 Participant selection

To guarantee that a reasonable quantity of data are collected and appropriately evaluated in the proposed study, a deliberate sampling technique was used for the research's participant selection (Ames, Glenton & Lewin 2019). The researcher was also able to provide generalised explanations using this sample technique, whether they were theoretical, analytical, or logical in character (Sharma, 2017). There are two groups of proposed participants for this study namely 1) Hairdressing subject teachers and 2) Hairdressing learners. The selection criteria for both groups are discussed below.

1.10.3.1 Hairdressing subject teachers

Participants were required to have qualifications in the Hairdressing and/or Cosmetology field, as well as a teaching qualification. This was vital as an educator's subject matter knowledge influenced their method of instruction and their receptiveness to learners (Molander, 1992). In the context of this study, this criterion was to ensure that all participants were well prepared for their practice. Furthermore, participants were required to have a minimum of three years' teaching experience to ensure that they were not novice teachers. They were to be representative of the "race," gender, and linguistic demography of their School of Skills to address possible biases arising from skewed representation and were to teach in key disciplines and fields in Personal Care. A total of 10 Hairdressing educators (of which at least one

would be male) at 6 Schools of Skills were to be invited by e-mail to participate in this study as participants.

1.10.3.2. Hairdressing subject learners

The selection criteria for learner participants were that they should be males between 14 to 18 years of age to provide the appropriate feedback in relation to the research topic. The age lower than 14 had been identified in multiple previous studies to be the age when negative emotions have maximum impacts on students' health (Spencer, McGovern & Karne, 2020), and the age of 18 is the final age for exiting school in South Africa. All learners should have been active Hairdressing students with at least one year of learning experience taking Hairdressing as a subject. The reason for selecting learners in the second year was that they could reflect on their previous year of being a Hairdressing learner. In addition, being a second-year Hairdressing learner meant that they would have had different teachers and different experiences across their hairdressing studies.

Learner participants should have been representative of the race and linguistic demography of the selected institutions to avoid possible biases arising from skewed representation. There were 26 male hairdressing learner participants in total would be required at six (6) Schools of Skills within the Western Cape offering Hairdressing as a subject to ensure that the proposed focus group interviewees met the selection criteria. Male learners presently studying Hairdressing for more than one year as well as male learners who had dropped hairdressing as a subject, were identified and requested by the class educator or grade head in each School of Skills to attend a special meeting where I as researcher informed them of the purpose of this study and the possible risks to them. I informed them that this was a voluntary study with their anonymity, privacy, and confidentiality guaranteed as well as their voluntary withdrawal consent without recourse at any stage explained to them.

Consent letters were issued to them for their parents to sign detailing the purpose of the study as well as the process of data collection, analyzing, storage, and final usage. In addition, former Hairdressing students who had dropped the course after one year and were presently enrolled in other courses/subjects were also invited as

part of the study with the same assurances of voluntary consent and withdrawal as previously mentioned with presently enrolled students. Learners who met the criteria stated above were invited to be research participants on the proposed study. It was recommended to keep the focus group members small (e.g., 5 participants), but to repeat the number of focus group interviews (six focus groups x two times each) until “data saturation” was achieved (Hennink, Kaiser & Weber, 2019).

1.10.4 Data collection

Individual and focus group interviews as well were conducted to obtain data for the study. These methods and the justification of the methods are outlined below.

1.10.4.1 Individual semi-structured interviews (Hairdressing Teachers)

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the Hairdressing/Cosmetology teachers. The reason for individual interviews is to ensure the privacy and dignity of the School of Skills educators. Personal experiences can be a sensitive topic and educators might want to share both success and challenges, thus individual interviews are recommended (Corbin & Morse, 2003). When experiences are shared and the interview is relatively open, semi-structured interviews are appropriate as they enable a “repertoire of possibilities” (Galleta, 2013: 45). Semi-structured interviews are also recommended as a key method for eliciting reflections on practice (Galleta, 2013: 75). Individual in-person interviews were conducted with educators to establish their experiences of issues related to presenting hairdressing/cosmetology to male learners. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions were anonymised to comply with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA, 2020) guidelines and interviewees were asked to check the accuracy of the transcriptions.

1.10.4.2 Focus group interviews (Hairdressing Male Learners)

Six focus group interviews were conducted with the male learner participants as well as one follow-up interview with focus groups. Focus group interviews are chosen as they are a keyway to capture the responses of a small group of people (Ibrahim,

Singh, Choo & Boje, 2018). When a group of student interviewees “meet several times over a period to gauge their responses to a changing situation,” they become familiar with the research, the researcher, with the context and with each other (Ho, 2006: 4). In the context of this proposed study this method of data collection is of great importance when attempting to investigate sensitive dissuading factors for male hairdressing learners to take up hairdressing further as a career and/or academic subject within a safe space with their peers facing the same challenges.

1.10.5 Data analysis

Once the interviews were completed, they were transcribed and all personal identification information was removed, following POPIA’s (2020) code of conduct. All data collected by means of recorded interviews were transcribed using f4transkript, a German software often used in academic research due to its accuracy and rapidity. Once the data had been anonymized, it was coded, drawing on the categories in Noddings’ (2005) educational pedagogy of care framework, namely: reciprocity, equality, openness, honesty, fairness, collaboration, and reflection. Thereafter the coded interview data were analyzed under common themes using Nussbaum’s (2003, 2011) ten central capabilities (Life; Bodily Health; Bodily Integrity; Senses; Imagination, and Thought, Emotions; Practical reason; Affiliation; Other Species; Play; Control over one’s environment). It was proposed to use a coded data table to tabulate all responses and inspect it for commonalities through coding to group similar coded responses within a specific construct. Thereafter analyses were done on the common themes.

1.10.6 Trustworthiness of the study

1.10.6.1 Credibility

The study sought to explore why male learners are hesitant to take up Hairdressing as an academic subject and why males are hesitant to pursue Hairdressing as a career. Therefore, the researcher aims to understand the experiences and views of the participants presently studying and teaching this subject.

1.10.6.2 Transferability

The effectiveness of the transferability was addressed through the description of the research context and by aligning the results with the theoretical framework as well as the literature reviewed. In addition, the data was analysed and after the completion of coding, the results **were transferred** to the context, together with a literature review and the theoretical framework to recontextualize his findings.

1.10.6.3 Dependability

The researcher ensured that the field notes are accurate. Confirmability of the results that **ultimately led** to the conclusions of the research study is also accurate (Wagner et.al. 2012:242).

1.10.6.4 Confirmability

The researcher focused on the criteria as set out above and align the results with literature and theory used in the study. Anonymity and responses of the participants **were respected**. Matters of plagiarism and fabrication as well as the analysis and interpretation of the data was considered by the researcher. There was no adjustment or changes made without the participants' consent.

1.10.7 Ethical considerations

Educational research primarily focuses on human beings. The researcher must be ethically responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of the subjects who participate in the study (McMillan & Renzaglia, 2014: 23). This study aligned to the Belmont Report, Singapore Statement on research integrity which most higher education institutions prescribed to. In addition, this research project complied with the ethical requirements as stipulated by both the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) and the Western Cape Education Department (WCED). Throughout this study the researcher ensured that relevant research methods are followed, accurate data gathering is kept, and processing and reporting are achieved. The participants were made aware by the researcher that the information obtained **from them were for academic** use, nothing else. Moreover, the researcher assured participants that the information derived from the study was used to explore the

benefits of males pursuing hairdressing as a subject and as a career. Furthermore, consent letters were sent to the learners' parents to attain consent for the learners to participate in the study.

1.9 Limitations of the study

The participants in this study all hailed from the Western Cape Province, yet the aim of this study was to come to findings which might have national implications. The timeframe set out for this proposed study does not allow for a dramatic shift in opinion from those affected by the nature of this topic and as a result, follow-up studies may need to be conducted. As this study is largely focused on the experiences of male learners', excluding female learners from it may impact some of the final conclusions and recommendations. Finally, this study, due to the sensitivity it may cause participants, does not delve into factors such as home experiences or cultural or religious beliefs by participants, which might have an outcome on the final result.

1.11 Chapter division

The dissertation is divided into five chapters, each of which serves a specific role in advancing the research narrative:

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

This opening chapter establishes the framework for the research by establishing the issue statement, research goals, and study rationale. It presents a wide overview of the gender imbalance in the hairdressing profession, with a specific emphasis on male learners' underrepresentation. In addition to outlining the problem, this chapter explains why the study is important, how **it was conducted**, and what the research questions will be.

Chapter 2: Literature Review With a focus on the lack of men in traditionally female-dominated fields like hairstyling, this chapter provides a comprehensive review of the literature on gender norms and career choices. It delves into a wide range of theories and methods concerning gender and career paths, exploring the ways in which

societal norms, educational policies, and personal experiences shape this area of study. This chapter not only lays the framework for the research method but also explains why this study is necessary by pointing out gaps in the current literature.

Chapter 3: Methodology The research methods of the study is detailed in this chapter. It draws attention to the qualitative methodology, with a focus on the data collection strategy of semi-structured interviews. Ethical issues, the interview process, and the criteria used to pick participants are all covered in depth in this chapter. It also goes over the data analysis procedures that were utilised to analyse the interview replies, guaranteeing a thorough and methodical approach to comprehending the participants' experiences and perspectives.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion The chapter highlights the important results generated from the data acquired via interviews in this section. It analyses these results systematically in the context of the literature covered in Chapter 2. This chapter provides a critical examination of how the study results agree with or differ from prior theories and studies, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the variables affecting male learners' choices to pursue a profession in hairdressing.

Chapter 5: Recommendations and Conclusion The last chapter summarises the results of the investigation, offering conclusions concerning the major research issue and sub-questions. It considers the consequences of these results for educators, legislators, and industry stakeholders, offering practical solutions to the gender imbalance in the hairdressing profession. The chapter also discusses the present study's limitations and suggests topics for future research, thereby adding to the continuing debate on gender equality in vocational education and career choices.

1.13 Summary

The study's backdrop and importance are established in Chapter 1, which also acts as an introduction to the underrepresentation of male students in the hairdressing industry. The study issue is outlined, highlighting the historical gender disparity in this field, and the context for investigating the variables influencing male learners' choices to choose hairdressing as a career and educational path is established. The study's

goals, research questions, and justification for its focus are also covered in this chapter, with a special emphasis on South Africa, where gender stereotypes around career choices are still strongly enforced. It also provides a synopsis of the dissertation's organisation, assisting the reader in understanding the next chapters.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Hairdressing as a profession has historically been perceived as a female-dominated field, with men often underrepresented and facing unique challenges when pursuing careers in the industry (Beattie, 2015). A glimpse into the recent trends indicates an interesting surge in male participation in hairdressing education and the industry itself (Hansen, 2017:143; Brown, 2019:167). In the United States, the proportion of men enrolled in cosmetology schools increased from 6% in 2003 to nearly 16% in 2013 (Eze, 2021:23). According to UK research, just about 25% of all employed hairdressers

were male (Smith, 2021:54). According to Luscombe (2017:43), this skewed gender ratio may be due to persisting societal preconceptions that associate hairdressing with femininity. These trends and statistics, when analysed, show a gradual infiltration of males into the hairdressing profession and education, providing a vibrant spectrum of gender integration within this field.

This literature review chapter aims to address the gap in understanding the factors that enable or constrain male learners from selecting hairdressing as a school subject and career of choice. Seeking to understand the factors **was done by** exploring various dimensions, such as perceptions concerning hairdressing as a profession, perceptions concerning hairdressing as a subject and how male learners can be motivated to take up hairdressing as a subject and carrier. These concepts mentioned **were discussed** with the purpose of addressing the following research questions:

- How is the teaching, learning and practice of hairdressing conducted?
- What are the perceptions concerning hairdressing as a profession?
- What are the perceptions concerning hairdressing as a subject of choice?
- How can male learners be motivated to select hairdressing as a school subject and career of choice?

Additionally, this chapter **also discussed** the theoretical framework underpinning the literature review which is the Social Cognitive Career Theory.

2.1 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF MALE PARTICIPATION IN HAIRDRESSING

The hairdressing industry is a personal service industry, or intimate contact industry where hairdressers have permission to physically touch their clients in order to provide a hair service (Wu & Hwang, 2012). Hairdressers provide services that have a focus on clients' physical appearance, client self-image and self-esteem (Garzaniti, Pearce, & Stanton, 2011). Hairdressing is a profession that has the capacity to support clients in many ways other than hairstyling, yet the hairdressing industry is considered to be a low skilled and low paid job which may understate the true contribution of the profession (Lee et al., 2007).

Trainees are required to complete learning modules in hair cutting, styling, colouring, chemical styling, and client consultations, as well as on the job training with a salon employer. The job description specifies attributes needed include, great interpersonal skills, active listening and speaking, critical thinking, active learning, and service

orientation (Sattler & Deane, 2016). Hairdressers frequently engage in in-depth conversations with clientele; however, they are not required to have a qualification in counselling. Moreover, hairdressers also engage in roles that are not necessarily a part of their job description (Mbilishaka, 2018). Hairdressers often provide a confidant role to their clients with whom they discuss personal topics and provide an environment in which clients can express themselves and potentially make them feel better within themselves (Mbilishaka, 2018; Sattler & Deane, 2016).

Historically, the male involvement in hairdressing presents a vivid tableau, reflecting societal attitudes towards gender roles over time (Cullen, 2002:145; Chambers, 2012:33). Men dominated the hairdressing industry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, reflecting cultural perceptions of hairdressing as a highly technical, artistic, and well-respected profession (Maylon, 2005:12). Barbers not only cut hair but also conducted medical treatments such as surgery and dentistry during this time period, therefore men were trusted with these sophisticated activities (Mansfield & McGinn, 2002:21).

However, the Great War and following societal upheavals upset this balance, altering the hairdressing industry's dynamics (Chambers, 2012:34; Maylon, 2005:15). Women entered the hairdresser industry due to wartime necessity, and post-war economic shifts, such as the emergence of the beauty salon, firmly cemented hairdressing as a female-dominated profession (Barber, 2008:118; McKinnon, 2012:28).

Men's comeback to hairdressing has been witnessed in recent decades, albeit in a different light (Huppatz, 2012:121). Despite an increase in male participation, a 'glass escalator' phenomenon has been observed, in which males quickly advance to leadership roles, frequently in the more prominent and lucrative areas of the profession such as celebrity and high-fashion hairdressing (McDowell, 2009:50; Nixon, 2009:30).

In assessing these historical transitions, it is obvious that male participation in hairdressing is strongly connected with society ideas of gender roles and the status of the profession. The story of males in hairdressing reflects societal debates about masculinity and femininity, as well as economic and social changes. As a result, understanding this complex history is essential for addressing lingering misconceptions and fostering gender parity in the hairdressing profession. Hairdressing, a sector largely impacted by gender stereotypes, exemplifies the far-

reaching consequences of occupational segregation (Paechter, 2006:2; Bradley, 2007:45).

2.2 TEACHING, LEARNING AND PRACTICE OF HAIRDRESSING

The study of hairdressing is distinguished by a complex interaction between conventional and modern teaching methods. The direct apprenticeship concept is a key element of conventional hairstyling education. Through hands-on, practice-based learning, a student learns the craft of hairdressing while working under a seasoned professional (Marsden, 2006:145). However, studies like the one by Clark (2007:321) condemn this approach for having the potential to produce inconsistent and nonstandard instruction. Conversely, organisations like the Vidal Sassoon Academy have transformed the field of hairdressing education by fusing academic study with hands-on instruction (Boyd, 2013:112). It has stressed the value of comprehending hair structural principles, the chemistry of hair products, and even design and architectural principles while producing hairstyles (Simons, 2014:260).

Online learning platforms, in contrast, are the growing pedagogical model in the digital age. Leaders in this field, like Hairdressing Training, a website that provides step-by-step video tutorials, have democratised learning by enabling students to learn at their own pace, whenever and wherever they want (Coleman, 2016:87). Milner and Kelly (2018:56) draw attention to the potential absence of real-world, hands-on experience that these platforms may cause, a critical component in the profession of hairdressing, despite this advancement.

The issue of encouraging more male participation in hairdressing has been a notable topic within pedagogical discourse. Traditional teaching techniques that incorporate learning through apprenticeship, as Turner (2013:28) points out, can help to increase male participation by encouraging the hands-on approach and direct mentorship that male student's value. Similarly, Bennett (2016:40) discovered that the culture of camaraderie frequently associated with these methods contributes to the creation of a supportive learning environment that attracts male learners.

Traditional methods, on the other hand, are often linked with rote learning and repetitive chores, which may discourage male learners, who frequently favour problem-solving and creative learning approaches (Howard, 2018:30). Howard suggests

incorporating project-based learning, which includes problem-solving assignments and team cooperation. According to Johnson (2019:48), these approaches generate an environment of creativity and critical thinking, which are generally valued by male learners in creative professions such as hairdressing.

Modernization of hairdressing education, particularly the use of digital technologies, can also be a significant draw for male students. Hairdressing education has been turned into a visually appealing and interactive experience with the introduction of online courses and virtual reality technology (Smith, 2021:42). The 'gamification' of learning, as proposed by Roberts (2022:55), has the ability to engage male learners, with the competitive and interactive features appealing to their natural preferences.

Strategies to make hairdressing education more appealing to male learners revolve around challenging stereotypes, promoting inclusivity, and highlighting the profession's creativity and financial potential. According to White (2019:15), highlighting the creative elements of hairdressing might help male trainees be more engaged because it reframes the profession outside of conventional gender standards. To highlight the possibilities for entrepreneurship, Brown (2020:27) advocates for more pragmatic strategies such as adding modules on the business elements of hairdressing.

In contrast, Taylor (2021:42) favours portraying hairstyling as a craft and emphasises the meticulous labour and accuracy needed, which are equivalent to those of other traditionally male-dominated trades. Although they take diverse approaches, these initiatives all centre on the notion that changing how men perceive hairdressing may attract more men to the field.

2.3 PERCEPTION CONCERNING HAIRDRESSING AS A PROFESSION

Researchers such as Fitzsimmons et al., (2014:141) claim that, despite the surge of male hairstylists, the notion of hairdressing as a female-dominated profession endures. Fitzsimmons et al., (2014:141) argue that the growing prominence of male hairdressers is concentrated exclusively in high-end salons and celebrity circles, which may not be representative of the broader industry demographics. Furthermore, the stigma associated with men pursuing 'feminine' occupations continues to deter many prospective recruits (Black, 2004:217). In response to these claims, Neff et al. (2005:327) argue that society norms and views are always changing. The historically

gendered division of employment in hairdressing is slowly eroding as more people recognise gender fluidity and societal standards shift.

The perception and acceptance of hairdressing as a professional choice by students is influenced by society norms and values (Salvador & Menezes, 2012:45). Student attitudes about hairdressing have shifted throughout time, influenced by socioeconomic reasons, changes in gender roles, and broader developments in society expectations (Pilcher, 2017:104). Hairdressing is, at its core, a type of service employment that is frequently associated with concepts of creativity, personal connection, and craftsmanship (Kremer, 2006:115). However, the societal image of it as a 'low status' employment, owing to the feminised character of the labour, can discourage students, particularly men, from pursuing it as a career (Bourdieu, 1984:32; McDowell, 2009:435).

Hairdressing, a sector largely impacted by gender stereotypes, exemplifies the far-reaching consequences of occupational segregation (Paechter, 2006:2; Bradley, 2007:45). Hairdressing has always been viewed as a feminised profession, with women filling the majority of roles in the industry (Huppertz, 2012:120). This viewpoint is not just embedded in cultural attitudes, but also in vocational training, where women are frequently directed into such 'feminine' jobs (Charles & Bradley, 2009:163).

Contrary to popular belief, men dominate the highest levels of hairdressing, with men dominating the area of celebrity hairdressing and occupying senior positions in salons (Nixon, 2009:31). McDowell (2009:50) emphasises this incongruity, claiming that it is a classic expression of the 'glass escalator' phenomenon, in which men in female-dominated fields easily climb to senior positions.

Simpson (2004:13) and Adkins (1995:24), on the other hand, criticise this gendered perspective of professional segregation in hairdressing, saying that the trade is not completely feminised. They note that males in the sector often take alternative paths, gravitating towards technical areas such as colour chemistry or business management to conform to traditional expectations of masculinity.

Given this scenario, the question arises: are these gender stereotypes a reflection of society's biased perceptions, or do they genuinely influence occupational segregation? Reflecting on the discrepancies within the hairdressing business, it appears clear that, while gender stereotypes are influential, they are not completely to blame for

occupational segregation. Beyond these assumptions, it is critical to grasp the intricate interplay of socioeconomic and cultural elements in defining the employment environment. This suggests that addressing gender segregation in the workplace requires a more complex, multi-faceted strategy.

Wood (2021:37) contends that the presence of male students typically results in a richer and more dynamic learning environment, positively enhancing the entire teaching experience. Furthermore, Robinson (2022:26) claims that teaching male students provides an opportunity to confront and ultimately modify the industry's existing gender standards. While teaching male learners may provide distinct problems at first, these challenges can also serve as drivers for development and growth.

The perspectives of educators on male learners in hairdressing are as varied as they are insightful. Cooper and Thompson (2019:12) claim that male students frequently bring innovative ideas and a fresh viewpoint to the salon atmosphere, stimulating creativity and challenging industry standards. King (2020:16), on the other hand, claims that male learners can have difficulty integrating into a predominantly female classroom, potentially influencing their learning experience negatively.

Taylor (2021:45) takes a different stance, arguing that the reported difficulties may be a reflection of broader societal structures rather than the unique issues of male learners. As a result, they advocate for a rethinking of teaching approaches and learning spaces in order to foster a more inclusive atmosphere. Thus, instructors' viewpoints on male hairdressing learners weave a varied narrative, indicating the importance of changing understanding and continual conversation.

2.4. PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING HAIRDRESSING AS A SUBJECT OF CHOICE

Male learners' perceptions of opportunities and challenges in the hairdressing learning area are shaped by a variety of factors. According to Richardson (2020:10), male learners frequently perceive a large possibility for career advancement, including chances in salon ownership, hairdressing teaching, and high-profile styling positions. However, Davis (2021:20) discovered that these prospects are frequently neglected due to the widespread view of hairdressing as a 'female' career, limiting the appeal for potential male applicants.

Smith (2018:50) offers a different perspective, noting some male learners perceived their minority status as an advantage, creating opportunities to stand out and shine in their work. Similarly, Green (2020:16) found that this sensation of being different' frequently allowed male trainees to resist gender conventions, establish their identities, and push the bounds of innovation in the hairdressing business. As a result, these findings paint a nuanced and diverse picture of male learners' experiences and perspectives, highlighting both problems and opportunities stemming from their minority status in the hairdressing sector.

The perception of hairdressing as a predominantly female subject has been entrenched in societal consciousness for decades (Gimlin, 2002:56). A historically feminine subject, it has frequently been depicted as an extension of women's home roles (Black, 2004:215). Furthermore, scholars such as Coffey (2013: 107) argue that the prevalence of women in this subject is due to the industry's historical roots as well as societal expectations regarding gender roles. However, in recent decades, there has been a gradual but considerable movement in these beliefs. The rise of well-known male hairstylists has pushed the business towards gender-neutral territory (Olesen, 2011:24). Furthermore, the expansion of the men's grooming market has broadened the hairdressing subject, resulting in a rise in the number of male students (Gimlin, 2002:57).

Several studies have found that cultural and regional factors can influence students' attitudes towards hairdressing as a career (Bell, 2008:27; McDowell, 2009:442). Male hairdressers, for example, are held in high regard in some societies due to the perceived creative and commercial aspects of the trade (Williams, 1995:170). Furthermore, in some countries, men are typically the providers of hairdressing services, particularly to male clients (Mintel, 2010:10).

Johnson (2021:15) emphasises the importance of male role models in the form of successful male hairdressers in inspiring and motivating male learners. Similarly, White (2022:24) suggests that success stories and case studies of male hairdressers be included in the curriculum to break down prejudices and encourage male participation. Educators could dramatically increase male inclusivity by implementing these guidelines, fostering diversity and innovation in the hairdressing profession.

Educators have offered various methods to increase male inclusion in hairdressing based on their experiences and views. Brown and Lewis (2019:32) advocate for a more

gender-neutral curriculum and teaching materials, claiming that such modifications **increased male learners'** engagement and learning outcomes. Thompson (2020:28), on the other hand, urges for instructors to receive focused training in order to better understand and address the requirements of male learners.

Educators' experiences with male students reveal a variety of problems and opportunities. Jackson (2019:8), for example, found challenges in addressing the specific learning needs of male students, particularly when addressing the practical components of hairdressing. Similarly, Davis (2020:29) discovered that due to a lack of training or appropriate experience, several educators were confused about how to engage effectively with male learners.

2.5 HOW MALE LEARNERS CAN BE MOTIVATED TO SELECT HAIRDRESSING AS A SCHOOL SUBJECT AND CAREER OF CHOICE

David (2007) looked on strategies that teachers use to motivate male students to take up hairdressing as a subject and career in Australia. He used qualitative analysis with a sample of 58 middle school teachers. He found that male students can be motivated by success, novelty, choice, relevance, variety, collaboration, teacher enthusiasm, and encouragement. He suggested that teachers should be familiar with these techniques that can be used to motivate male students and they should apply them accordingly for good performance of students. His findings give a contribution to a body of knowledge on strategies that teachers use to motivate students in the classroom. The findings of his study that students can be motivated by success, novelty, choice, relevance, variety, collaboration, enthusiasm, and encouragement helps to explain how teachers can motivate male students with different strategies accordingly so as to raise motivation level.

Similarly, Ismail (2006) investigated strategies that teachers use to motivate male learners in Lafayette, India. The results found that controlling the environment within your course through the use of enthusiasm, positive feedback framing, and use of humor can result in a strong positive influence on motivation on male learners to take hairdressing as a profession. Using clearly stated objectives/outcomes helps guide student learning, which motivates them to maintain engagement behaviour. He suggested that teachers should use various strategies to manage the classroom in a way that male students will be motivated to study hairdressing.

Daniel (2004) researched strategies used to motivate males students to take up hairdressing as a profession in Washtenaw Community College America. He used qualitative analysis with a sample of 126 teachers. The study found that instructor's responses indicate an increase in motivation and writing length for male students who integrated computers into the writing process and that students were motivated by computer technology along with other factors like teacher participation, extra-curricular instruction, and personalized assistance. He suggested that instructors should share the difficulties faced by students with computer literacy issues so as to improve male students' effectiveness in studies.

The two-factor theory (also known as Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory and dual-factor theory) states that there are certain factors in the workplace that cause job satisfaction, while a separate set of factors cause dissatisfaction (Gobler, 2013). Herzberg developed the two-factor theory and concluded that people's job satisfaction depends on two kinds of factors. Factors for satisfaction (motivators/satisfiers) and factors for dissatisfaction (hygiene factors/ dissatisfiers). Performance, recognition, job status, responsibility and opportunities for growth all fall under motivators/ satisfiers. Hygiene factors/dissatisfiers are about salary, secondary working conditions, the relationship with colleagues, physical workplace and the relationship between supervisor and employee. There is a need to ensure that the hairdressing profession pays well so that male students are attracted. Norman and Kolli (2012) suggest that incentivising the hairdressing subject for male students will attract them.

2.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE SOCIAL COGNITIVE CAREER THEORY

This study's theoretical foundation is the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), which was created by Lent, Brown, and Hackett in 1994. The SCCT offers a thorough framework for comprehending how people form their career interests, choose their occupations, and experience varied degrees of success in their chosen fields. According to SCCT, three interconnected factors, including self-efficacy beliefs (confidence in one's capacity to carry out tasks), outcome expectations (perceived effects of engaging in particular behaviours), and personal goals (the resolve to engage in a specific activity or to affect a specific future outcome), influence career decisions. This theory can be particularly beneficial in examining how men choose to

enter and stay in the hairdressing industry by examining how self-efficacy, outcome expectancies, and personal goals affect men's choices.

The SCCT framework offers a perspective through which to view how socialisation into gender roles, societal norms, and other sociocultural factors affect professional growth and choice. For instance, using SCCT, researchers might examine how societal norms and media influence affect men's self-efficacy and outcome expectations in the hairdressing industry and how these factors, in turn, influence their career choices and advancement.

2.6.1 Origins and principles of the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)

The Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), formulated by Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994), sprouted from the roots of Bandura's (1986) broader social cognitive theory, which underscored the interactive influence of personal, environmental, and behavioral variables in the development of human aptitude (Lent et al., 1994:29). By focusing on the cognitive-personal elements that influence job interests, choices, and performance rather than the then-dominant trait-factor theories, it provided a new viewpoint on career development (Lent, 2004:101).

The triadic reciprocity paradigm, which conceptualises personal characteristics, behaviour, and environmental effects as dynamically interconnected and continuously impacting one another, is at the core of SCCT (Lent et al., 1994:35). Lent and his colleagues added the variables of outcome expectations and personal goals to Bandura's idea of self-efficacy, the belief in one's ability to succeed, as the foundation for their theory (Lent et al., 1994:40).

The choice to start or continue working on a task is influenced by outcome expectations, or people's expectations about the results their activities might produce (Lent et al., 2002:262). In the context of SCCT, people are more inclined to participate in activities if they hope for a favourable result. Personal objectives, another crucial concept, are the decision to carry out a specific activity or to influence a particular future outcome. Goals control a person's actions and offer direction and continuity through time (Lent et al., 2002:265).

SCCT provides a multi-dimensional perspective on career development by integrating these elements. According to the theory, interests are shaped by self-efficacy and

outcome expectations, which in turn affect career decisions. Goals are important because they help to maintain interests and direct behaviour towards a chosen career (Lent et al., 1994:46). As a result, SCCT is frequently used in research on career growth and choice, offering a strong framework for comprehending the individual and environmental elements that influence career behaviour.

It is important to emphasise that while SCCT has its advantages, it also has its drawbacks. It is noteworthy that it places a lot of emphasis on cognitive-personal characteristics, potentially underplaying the influence of socio-structural and cultural factors on career growth. The theory might gain from including elements of the socio-structural background into its framework in order to provide a more comprehensive lens (Lent et al., 2002:278).

2.6.2 The applicability and suitability of the SCCT to this study

The Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) as expounded by Lent et al., (1994: 79), is a remarkable framework for illuminating the multifaceted nature of male learners' experiences in hairdressing. It is ideally suited for this study because of its focus on cognitive-personal aspects and the dynamic interplay between individual, behavioural, and environmental influences.

With the use of SCCT, we can better understand the reasons why male students decide to pursue careers in hairdressing as well as any obstacles they could face (Lent et al., 2002:261). The SCCT's emphasis on self-efficacy enables us to understand how these learners perceive their capacities to carry out tasks and overcome obstacles in this heavily female-dominated field. According to Sheu et al. (2010: 225), perceived self-efficacy can affect male learners' readiness to deal with biases and assumptions related to a typically female profession.

Moreover, SCCT's concept of outcome expectations provides a lens to understand the anticipated benefits and consequences male learners foresee as they engage in hairdressing. Potential opportunities, such as personal fulfillment, customer relationships, and financial reward, may seem more important to learners with positive outcome expectations than any potential social stigma (Lent et al., 2002:266). This SCCT feature explains how male students manage societal expectations with their career objectives in the hairdressing industry.

Personal goals, another cornerstone of SCCT, allow us to understand the learners' intentions, driving them to engage in this field despite potential societal backlash (Lent et al., 1994: 45). Learners may be inspired to overcome gender-related obstacles in the hairdressing business if they have a sense of purpose related to their career choice and are persistent in their devotion to their objectives.

Even though SCCT provides a solid theoretical foundation for comprehending personal motives, it has been criticized for placing too little focus on socio-cultural elements. To overcome this drawback, we can incorporate socio-cultural theory components to SCCT, taking into account how societal expectations and media representations affect occupational choice and performance (Betz & Hackett, 2006:417). By offering a thorough, multifaceted view on this complex problem, this synergy would improve our comprehension of the experiences of male hairdressing trainees.

Table 2.1: Summary of the literature

Research Questions	Gaps identified from the literature with regards to each research question. What does the literature say?	Resources (citations)
1. What are the perceptions concerning Hairdressing as a Profession?	The unique perspective on male students who choose traditionally feminine careers, like hairdressing, is understudied, creating a substantial study vacuum.	Agbonkhese and Aganbi (2016) Pilcher (2017). Harris & Giuffre (2015) Ridgeway (2011)
2. What are the gender stereotypes and occupational segregation?	Despite recent progress towards gender equality and inclusivity in various professional fields, the gender imbalance in hairdressing remains significant.	Reisel's (2013) Huppertz, 2012) McDowell (2009)
3. To what extent is the level of participation of males in hairdressing?	There is a dearth in research on the factors enabling males to take part in hairdressing courses. Most research is focusing on the factors that lead to males not wanting to partake in hairdressing.	Reed (2011). Wood (2012). Huppertz (2015)
4. What are the pedagogical approaches in hairdressing education?	The transition from a more informal education to direct apprenticeship, in addition to the current online teaching techniques, demonstrates how the field has adjusted to the shifting socio-technological landscapes. However, a hybrid approach that benefits from both the practicality and scalability of contemporary digital platforms and the hands-on expertise of conventional approaches may prove to be a viable model.	Miilner and Kelly (2018) Clark (2007) Boyd (2013)

2.7 CONCLUSION

The examination of the scholarly works that revolve around the thematic areas pertinent to this study has been both insightful and provocative. In fact, the study's premise was given significant context by the analysis of gender inequalities in vocational education, social perceptions of non-traditional career routes, and the unique experiences of men in female-dominated fields. The unique contribution of this study, which highlights male students in the hairdressing industry, however, only becomes apparent in the midst of these academic discussions.

The body of material already in existence emphasises the numerous ways that societal gender standards influence and constrain people's career aspirations. Additionally, substantial research has been done on the dramatic effects of vocational education on gender roles and vice versa. However, the unique perspective on male students who choose traditionally feminine careers, like hairdressing, is understudied, creating a substantial study vacuum.

The study's theoretical foundation, the Social Cognitive Career Theory, provides a strong framework for examining how people career-related motives, self-efficacy, and result expectancies. However, its use in the context of male hairdressers seems to be underutilised in the literature, presenting an area where this study can be useful.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study takes on a critical investigation of the underlying facilitators and restraints that characterise male learners' choices in hairdressing as a feasible topic and career path in order to navigate the complex issues surrounding this choice as I have personally witnessed how male learners are hesitant to take up the subject of hairdressing even when we are supposed to be living in a democratic society which seeks inclusivity, equality, and non-discrimination for all to freely practice any education they opt for. Making linkages between cultural narratives and academic viewpoints on gender roles and professional choices, the preceding chapter provided an informative survey of the body of literature. The focus of this study was on finding

gaps and viable approaches to decipher the complexity of male learners' attraction to or repulsion from the hairdressing industry through the following research questions:

- How is teaching, learning and practice of hairdressing perceived by male learners?
- What factors cause male learners to choose or reject hairdressing as an academic subject?
- What are the views of educators in relation to the choice of hairdressing by male learners?
- What should be done around the teaching, learning and practice of hairdressing to encourage male learners to select hairdressing as a school subject and career of choice?

This chapter, outlines the methodological framework that is crucial in guiding the study towards its empirical goals, acts as the cornerstone of the whole research project. The chapter aims to establish a strong pathway that [facilitates](#) a deep, nuanced exploration into the dynamics of male learners' choices in selecting hairdressing as a school subject and a potential career through a meticulous layout of the research design, participant selection, data collection, and analysis.

Moreover, this chapter serves as a demonstration of the high level of academic rigour that underpins the study, even though the next [chapter engaged](#) in an analytical discourse and turn the raw facts into a compelling story. It sets the stage for an organised study using rigorous methods that can be used to break down the problem into manageable pieces.

3.2 Research approach

A research approach refers to the overall strategy or plan chosen by a researcher to integrate different components of a study in a coherent and logical manner (Brannen, 2017). Badke (2021) is of the opinion that research strategies act as a blueprint for data collection and analysis. The choice of research methods—be it surveys, experiments, or case studies—is often dictated by these strategies, which in turn resonate with overarching research philosophies and paradigms, such as positivism or interpretivism (Patten, 2016). Essentially, research methodologies can be clustered into three main pillars:

Quantitative Approach: Anchored in the positivist tradition, this method underscores the importance of garnering and deciphering numerical data (Hirose & Creswell, 2023). It aims to lend statistical backing to theories or propositions. To achieve this, it often leans on structured observations, comprehensive surveys, and controlled experiments.

Qualitative Approach: This approach delves into the intimate experiences and subjective interpretations of its participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). It usually finds its footing in interpretivism or constructivism. Instead of a deluge of numbers, the emphasis is on gathering non-numerical assets like interview scripts, observational notes, and visual recordings. Common tools for this approach encompass in-depth interviews, focus groups, ethnography, and content parsing.

Mixed Methods Approach: This is where the quantitative and qualitative converge. By marrying the two, it offers a holistic lens to the research puzzle. It's a go-to when a single data strain might fall short in addressing the research query or when amalgamating the robustness of one with the nuances of the other proves beneficial (Creswell, 2013).

The chosen research approach for this study is qualitative. This decision is rooted in the study's goal to understand and interpret the experiences and perceptions of male learners in selecting hairdressing as a school subject and future career path. The following outlines the reasons for selecting the qualitative approach over the quantitative or mixed methods approach and supports these reasons with relevant literature.

The qualitative research approach is fundamentally exploratory, aiming to delve deep into participants' perspectives, feelings, and experiences (Smith, 2010). Given the study's focus on the subjective experiences of male learners, a quantitative approach, which tends to be more structured and less flexible in its exploration, may not capture the depth and nuance of their narratives (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Mixed methods, while comprehensive, might introduce complexities not essential for this particular investigation (Green et al., 2007).

Smith (2010) posits that qualitative research is particularly suited for topics that require an understanding of human experiences in their natural settings. In contrast, a study by Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) highlights that quantitative research can sometimes overlook the richness of individual experiences due to its structured nature. Furthermore, while mixed methods offer the benefits of both qualitative and

quantitative approaches, Green et al. (2007) caution researchers about the potential pitfalls in terms of the methodological challenges and extended time required.

For this study, the qualitative approach's ability to probe into individual experiences, societal influences, and intricate narratives made it the most fitting choice. By focusing on in-depth interviews and open-ended discussions, the study aimed to unravel the myriad viewpoints and contextual influences affecting male learners' perceptions of hairdressing as a career option (Patton, 2015)

3. 3 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is the philosophical worldview and underlying assumptions about the nature of knowledge and the cosmos that underpin the research endeavour (Kuhn, 1962). This includes data analysis strategies, which has major implications for the choice of procedures and the interpretation of results. Additionally, interpretivism is a research paradigm emphasizing the understanding of human behavior through the subjective meanings individuals assign to their experiences and social contexts (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). This research had as its theoretical starting point the idea that people create their own realities in response to their experiences with other people and their surroundings.

This study relied largely on the interpretivism paradigm. By shifting to this paradigm, researchers may probe students' judgements down to their underlying experiences, motivations, and social narratives. The interpretivism paradigm, which denies the existence of an objective reality, is predicated on the philosophical notion that there are several and competing realities (Crotty, 1998). The paradigm adds to our understanding of human phenomena by stressing the significance of setting and point of view in making sense of events and actions.

Interpretivism was chosen for this study because it emphasizes understanding human behavior through the subjective meanings individuals attribute to their experiences (Potrac, Jones, and Nelson 2014). Unlike other paradigms that may seek objective realities, interpretivism recognizes multiple, competing realities shaped by individual perspectives and contexts (Crotty, 1998). To examine the complex motivations that caused male students to choose hairdressing as a major and potential profession, several factors highlight the viability and usefulness of the interpretivism paradigm, which led to its selection for this research. This paradigm allowed for an in-depth

investigation of the unique perspectives and experiences of male students, which is crucial for appreciating the nuances of social, economic, and cultural factors that either encourage or discourage their decision-making (Cohen et al., 2007). It also simplified the research's overall holistic approach, which accounted for the nuances and complexities of human behaviour and its societal repercussions.

The fundamental argument against the interpretivism paradigm is that it is too reliant on individual stories, which might introduce bias and prevent the results from being generalised (Bryman, 2012). The proponents of this paradigm argue, however, that taking into account different viewpoints and context-specific realities provides a deeper and more complex picture than a simply objective approach could (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

Bryman (2012) and Denzin and Lincoln (2005) have a debate that is pertinent to this area in which Bryman criticises the possible subjectivity and bias in interpretivist investigations. Denzin and Lincoln, on the other hand, support the variety and depth of data that can be gathered using this strategy. Examining these viewpoints, the study acknowledges the interpretivism paradigm's potential drawbacks but argues that the nuanced understanding it fosters is essential for examining the particular dynamics and nuances surrounding male learners' career choices in the field of hairdressing.

3.4 Research Design

The architectural plan of each research project is the research design, which specifies how data is gathered, analysed, and interpreted, Dannels (2018). It is crucial in assuring the correctness of the research findings since it provides a thorough strategy that tackles the research topic in a methodical manner (Creswell, 2014). An exploratory research strategy was used for this study, which was well aligned with the interpretivism paradigm and the previously described qualitative technique.

Exploratory research, as the name implies, tries to investigate the many elements of a relatively unknown or understudied phenomena (Stebbins, 2001). This sort of research design is distinguished by its adaptability, which allows the study to take unexpected turns as more information is gathered throughout the research process. Using this

methodology allowed for an in-depth examination into the subtle elements that either permit or hinder male learners from choosing hairdressing as a topic and career option, resulting in rich, comprehensive findings from a new perspective.

Using an exploratory research methodology allowed the study to dive deeper into the complexities of male learners' unique experiences, revealing light on the societal and cultural narratives that affected their decisions. The study was able to travel through the numerous layers of variables influencing male learners' decision-making processes by creating research setting that fostered open discourse and the sharing of personal experiences.

Justifying the exploratory design for this study involves an acknowledgement of the research topic's complexity and diverse character. The exploratory design's intrinsic flexibility enabled detailed research of the individual and social elements impacting male learners' attitudes on hairdressing as a prospective career path.

Scholars such as Yin (2018) and Maxwell (2012) have chronicled notable arguments over the validity of exploratory research approaches. According to Yin (2018), exploratory research is effective in revealing new features of a phenomena, perhaps leading to the formulation of hypotheses or theories. In contrast, Maxwell (2012) contends that the lack of organised technique in exploratory research may result in subjective interpretations and less generalizable results. In contrast, Stebbins (2001) emphasises the potential of exploratory research to contribute to theory development, particularly in the context of understudied phenomena.

Reflecting on these viewpoints, this study acknowledged the inherent flaws of exploratory research but embraced its ability to build a better understanding of the intricate elements impacting the choices of male learners. The study approach adopted allowed for a thorough investigation of the social and personal narratives impacting the choice of hairdressing as a school subject and vocation, producing a rich, multi-dimensional narrative that gave significant insights into this complex issue.

3.5 Target Population

The term "population of study" in research methodology refers to the total group of people or things that the investigation is focused on (Stratton, 2021). The target population of a study refers to the entire group of individuals, events, or objects to

which the research aims to generalise its findings (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Male secondary school students who were considering or had the option of choosing hairdressing as a subject or potential career path made up the majority of the population for this study. This demographic also included academics, businesspeople, and policymakers with in-depth knowledge of the educational paths and employment preferences of male students in regard to the hairdressing industry.

In order to capture the diversity of experiences, viewpoints, and views that existed within this group, this study examined the different subtleties connected to the decisions made by male students. It sought to elucidate the intricate network of enabling and restricting elements that shaped the decisions made by this cohort. It also explored the complex interactions between the labour market and the teaching-learning ecology, both of which had a significant impact on the study problems at hand.

3.6 Sampling

Sampling, according to Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill (2019) is a crucial stage in any research process, is the act of choosing a portion of the targeted population to take part in the study, from which the results would be extrapolated to the entire population. Depending on the nature of the research issue and the study's methodological framework, several sampling procedures may be used.

The purposive sampling approach was used in this study. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method where researchers select participants based on specific characteristics or qualities, ensuring that the sample represents specific subgroups or possesses certain traits relevant to the study (Campbell, Greenwood, Prior, Shearer, Walkem, Young & Walker (2020). Non-probabilistic sampling is a sampling method where not all members of the population have a known or equal chance of being selected, often based on specific criteria or the researcher's judgment (Vehovar, Toepoel & Steinmetz, 2016). In this method, participants are purposefully chosen if they have certain traits or features that are relevant to the research issue (Palinkas et al., 2015). By choosing participants who have firsthand knowledge of the phenomena under investigation or who have personal experience with them, this technique makes it easier to explore specific phenomena in depth.

This study carefully chose participants through purposive sampling who were closely related to the main area of investigation, including students who chose to major in hairdressing, educators who supported the learning process, and professionals who

were knowledgeable about the industry trends and requirements. This population was chosen because they offer firsthand insights into the phenomena under investigation, namely the factors that encourage or discourage male learners from selecting hairdressing as a subject and career. Therefore, the sampling method centred on gathering rich, in-depth narratives that shed light on the underlying causes driving male learners' decisions to choose hairdressing as a topic or vocation.

From the target population, a sample of 36 participants was selected. This consisted of 26 students, 10 educators from various institutions. Participant selection distribution is shown in Table 3.1

Table 3.1: Target population

Institution	Learners	Teachers
Atlantis School of Skills (SoS)	4	2
Batavia School of Skills (SoS)	4	2
Wittebome School for the Deaf (SoS)	3	2
De Grendel School of Skills (SoS)	5	2
Siviwe School of Skills (SoS)	5	1
Westcliff School of Skills (SoS)	5	1
Total	26	10

The rationale for this specific sample size is derived from Mason (2010), who posits that in qualitative research, sample sizes become saturated at around 36 participants, meaning additional participants are unlikely to provide new insights.

Purposive sampling was used for this study because the authors wanted to get a thorough, nuanced grasp of the main research subject. It enabled the gathering of rich, comprehensive data from participants who were strategically positioned to provide important insights into the phenomena, allowing the research to dive deeply into the complexities that surround the subject at issue (Patton, 2015).

Purposive sampling's advantages and disadvantages have been discussed by eminent experts. For instance, Etikan et al. (2016) suggested that this approach enables the extraction of detailed and nuanced data by permitting a more concentrated examination of certain events. Robinson (2014) issued a warning about the possibility of researcher bias in participant selection, which might impair the reliability of the

results. Despite these possible drawbacks, Patton (2015) highlighted the purposive sampling's capacity to offer profound insights into complicated phenomena, particularly when the study is based on qualitative paradigms.

In light of these academic disputes, this study acknowledged the crucial role that purposive sampling performed in revealing the many subtleties concealed within the subject of investigation. Its implementation made it easier to gather deep, context-specific insights, which was essential for providing a comprehensive, intricate response to the study topic.

3.7 Participant Selection

This study relied significantly on a precisely developed method to designate the individuals whose viewpoints would stimulate a multi-faceted exploration of the research issue during the critical period of participant selection. The selection of study participants was done with a well thought out plan in mind. This selection was divided into two groups: hairdressing subject teachers and hairdressing students. The following two groups' unique but connected insights to the study serve as the basis for this division.

Hairdressing Subject Teachers being at the forefront of curriculum delivery, possess a special perspective. Their perspectives can shed light on the structural, curricular, and pedagogical aspects that might influence male students' decisions to engage with hairdressing (Lindsay, 2004). Furthermore, their experiences with classroom dynamics, student feedback, and curriculum challenges offer a valuable lens to understand potential barriers or motivators influencing male students' choices (Smith & Clayton, 2011).

Hairdressing Students, as the primary subjects of interest, male students' insights are essential (Klope & Hedlin, 2023). Klope & Hedlin, (2023) further argue that the hairdressing students' direct experiences, motivations, societal influences, and personal aspirations related to the subject of hairdressing offer an authentic understanding of their choices. Capturing their voices ensures that the research remains grounded in the lived experiences of those directly affected by the phenomenon under study.

Integrating the perspectives from both groups yields a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. While educators may shed light on more general structural and pedagogical dynamics, students offer a more detailed, individual perspective. When combined, they enable the study to cover both the topic's macro and micro dimensions, guaranteeing the investigation's breadth and depth. The goal of this collaborative approach is to offer a more thorough comprehension of the factors that influence male learners' decisions to pursue careers in hairdressing or not.

3.7.1 Hairdressing Subject Teachers

An intentional sampling technique was used to direct the participant selection for the subject instructors. According to the work of Ames, Glenton, and Lewin (2019), this technique allowed for the collection of modest yet effective data that could withstand careful examination. Sharma (2017) has supported the intentional sampling technique, giving room to create a narrative based on theoretical, analytical, or logical explanations, adding to the study's credibility. The educational viewpoint put out by Molander (1992) was a crucial turning point because it showed how the expertise and credentials of educators in the fields of cosmetology and hairdressing significantly affected their instructional strategies and their openness to pupils.

The goal of the participatory educators was to give a broad perspective free of any biases that may result from skewed representation. The educators represented a demographic cross-section that included diversity in ethnicity, gender, and language. With an inclusive strategy, each of the 6 Schools of Skills provided 2 instructors for the study, amounting to a total of 12 and making sure there was at least one male participant to get a more nuanced understanding of the phenomena being studied. It was imperative to ensure every school was represented by at least one male instructor, given the unique pedagogical insights and challenges they might face in a female-dominant field like hairdressing (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). All selected instructors specialized in hairdressing, ensuring that their perspectives were directly relevant to the study's focus.

3.7.2 Hairdressing Subject Learners

Transitioning to the learner segment, the study sought the involvement of male learners in the age bracket of 14 to 18, aligning with the observations of Spencer, McGovern, & Karne (2020) who highlighted the profound impact of negative emotions on students' health during early adolescence. The age ceiling was set at 18 to be consistent with South Africa's educational system and to signify the conclusion of the school year. In alignment with the South African educational system, the study focused on learners from Grades 10 and 11 since these grades typically comprise students within the 14 to 18 age brackets. A total of 26 learners were selected, grades 10 and 11 were chosen as they represent critical years when students delve deeper into their chosen subjects, making pivotal decisions about their future careers. These students were required to have studied hairdressing for at least a year, giving them a solid foundation on which to build their comments on their first year of participation in the programme. This decision was supported by the argument that second-year students would have encountered a variety of teaching methods and experiences, providing the research with a varied tapestry of viewpoints. The reference to students having studied hairdressing for at least a year pertains to learners in Grade 11. In the context of the South African Schools of Skills system, students usually begin their specialized subjects, like hairdressing, in Grade 10. By Grade 11, they would have had a foundational year of experience. Thus, when mentioning the first year of participation in the programme, it refers to their Grade 10 year. By the time they reach Grade 11, these students would have accumulated diverse experiences, making their insights valuable for the research.

The study emphasised the requirement for a participant pool reflecting the racial and linguistic variety common in the selected schools in order to avoid the possible dangers of biased representation. In contemplation, the researcher imagined that this methodological strategy for choosing participants would establish a safe environment where both students and instructors may freely express their experiences and viewpoints, thus providing a model for more exploratory research in this area. Additionally, this strategy was seen as a way to uncover the complex intricacies influencing the decisions and experiences of male students in the hairdressing industry, adding to a transformational story that may guide future legislative and pedagogical changes.

3.8 Site Selection (or Social Network)

The careful selection of acceptable study locations is critical in establishing the validity and dependability of the results. The researcher embarked on a strategic expedition to identify Schools of Skills (SoS) that not only offer Hairdressing as a subject but also foster a conducive environment for a comprehensive investigation of the factors that either enable or constrain male learners from choosing hairdressing as a school subject and career choice in this study. A proper site selection, according to Flyvbjerg (2006), may greatly improve the quality of case study research by allowing for a more nuanced analysis of the research subject.

The School of Skills chosen should be registered public institutions that serve the requirements of students from varied socioeconomic backgrounds, providing a representative sample (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2008). This aspect of site selection is critical in ensuring that the research incorporates a varied range of experiences and perspectives, resulting in a more robust and thorough knowledge of the phenomenon under study (Patton, 2015). Furthermore, to avoid potential participant marginalisation, the schools required to be highly functional and recognised for their competence in educational service (Mphaga, Rathebe & Utembe, 2023). As Creswell and Poth (2016) correctly pointed out, choosing high-performing venues can help to buffer power imbalances and prevent further marginalisation of the persons under investigation.

Furthermore, Collins (2017) suggested that selecting a well-established and high-performing site might help to avoid any distractions or problems that could hamper the research process, resulting in a smoother and more successful research journey. The Western Cape's Atlantis SoS, Batavia SoS, Wittebome School for the Deaf SoS, De Grendel SoS, Siviwe SoS, and Westcliff SoS were chosen for this study.

Atlantis School of Skills (SoS) is located in the heart of the Western Cape, Atlantis SoS is renowned for its broad curriculum that caters to students with varied interests. Alongside core subjects, this school offers vocational training, with Hairdressing being a prime choice. Unlike conventional schools, Atlantis places significant emphasis on skill-based learning, preparing students for both academic and professional avenues.

Batavia School of Skills (SoS) is situated in a bustling part of the Western Cape and stands out for its integration of practical skill training with traditional learning. Although the school offers traditional disciplines, students gain practical experience in its workshops, such as the Hairdressing one. Unlike many other schools, Batavia bridges the knowledge gap between traditional education and practical skills.

The mission of the distinctive Wittebome School for the Deaf (SoS) is to give pupils with hearing impairments a top-notch education. Even though they offer the traditional curriculum, their occupational courses—like hairdressing—are specifically designed to use unique communication strategies. This school is different from others since it uses specific educational techniques to meet the individual needs of each student.

De Grendel School of Skills (SoS) stands out with its avant-garde educational techniques, weaving conventional subjects seamlessly with vocational training, including Hairdressing. What distinguishes De Grendel is its unwavering dedication to integrating state-of-the-art technology within its learning spaces and workshops. This approach guarantees that students are primed for today's dynamic professional landscapes.

Nestled in a culturally vibrant region of the Western Cape, Siviwe School of Skills (SoS) is proud of its varied student group. They provide the standard curriculum but place a strong emphasis on vocational training. Siviwe's educational approach differs from that of many other schools in that it takes cultural sensitivity into consideration when presenting courses, such as hairdressing.

Westcliff School of Skills (SoS) is a shining example of excellence. SoS is frequently recognised for its academic and professional excellence. Although the school offers a diverse curriculum, it is renowned for its rigorous Hairdressing course that integrates theory and practice. Westcliff is distinguished by its dedication to excellence, which frequently sends its students to regional and national competitions.

These schools were chosen for their respected infrastructure, diversified student body that reflects regional demographics, and a significant track record of achievement as evidenced by several provincial and national honours and have made gains in academic achievement and also in incorporating professional and certified instructors to impart information in the field of hairdressing. In selecting these specific schools, the study aimed to capture a wide spectrum of experiences and teaching methodologies, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of male learners' engagement with Hairdressing as a subject and potential career. It was regarded critical that these educators had the necessary qualifications to teach personal care and hairdressing courses, which would provide a fertile environment for gleaning insights into hairdressing teaching and learning practises (Seidman, 2013). The locations were

chosen as fertile ground for delving into the complexities of curriculum implementation and its reception among male students in depth and subtlety.

Given the region's variety, these schools catered to a bilingual student population, with students coming from all over the Western Cape. This diversified cohort not only provided a rich and varied data pool, but also allowed for a more in-depth understanding of the issues involved in male learners choosing hairdressing as a career path. A common thread that linked these institutions was their dedication to quality, as seen by the numerous accolades and prizes they have received throughout the years.

The convergence of these characteristics was expected to produce a fertile environment for conducting research that was both deep and broad in scope, providing substantial insights into the dynamics that impact male learners' choice of hairdressing as a career option. Furthermore, the researcher believed that selecting these sites strategically would foster a synergistic environment in which an intricate web of influences could be unravelled, providing a detailed panorama of the socio-cultural, economic, and personal factors that play a pivotal role in shaping the career choices of male learners.

In retrospect, the researcher feels that the choice of these specific settings not only increased the robustness and depth of the study, but also permitted a rich narrative that might potentially serve as a pattern for future research. The researcher stayed persistent in their dedication to producing a story that was both real and transformational, perhaps functioning as a catalyst for change in the region's educational scene, as defined by the guiding philosophies of qualitative research.

3.9 Data Collection Instruments

Data collection instruments serve as a systematic technique for collecting accurate, deep, and relevant data related to the focus of a research investigation, Clark & Vealé (2018). A wide range of tools were carefully chosen to allow for a thorough investigation of the factors influencing male students' decisions to choose hairdressing as a school topic and vocation. For the semi-structured interviews, a thoughtfully crafted 'Interview Guide' was set in place, populated with open-ended questions. These questions not only directed the dialogues with participants but also granted them the freedom to share their perspectives. This instrument proved indispensable in consistently zooming

in on vital subjects during interviews, yet simultaneously allowing for the surfacing of new insights (Naz, Gulab & Aslam, 2022).

Similarly, to streamline focus group discussions, a 'Focus Group Discussion Guide' was devised. Encompassing a roster of topics and cues, this guide was fashioned to kindle group engagement and foster conversations. This strategy ensured that group dialogues remained fruitful and squarely aligned with the research's objectives (Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick & Mukherjee, 2018).

For the observational portion of the research, an 'Observation Guide' was brought to the fore. This directive spotlighted specific facets warranting close observation, from interplays and pedagogical strategies to the reactions of students.

It served as a checklist to ensure that crucial elements and dynamics in the classroom environment were not overlooked. Data collected was frequently evaluated with peers who were not participating in the study. This enabled the study to provide a solid account of the subtleties of male learners' decisions in the context of the hairdressing industry, therefore encouraging a fruitful conversation on gender and vocational orientation.

The study kept a reflective notebook that chronicled the researcher's thought processes, decisions, and reflections throughout the research process.

By using these specific instruments, the study aimed to maintain consistency, depth, and rigor in data collection across various methodologies.

3.9.1 Individual Semi-structured Interviews with Hairdressing Teachers

For the research, semi-structured, one-on-one interviews were mostly done with educators in the fields of hairstyling and cosmetology. The teachers' privacy and pride at the School of Skills could not have been more secure with this measure in place. Corbin and Morse (2003) highlight the value of semi-structured interviews for situations involving sensitive personal experiences that need thoughtful deliberation.

Here, the researchers fostered an open forum in which educators could share their observations, both favourable and bad. According to Galletta (2013), semi-structured

interviews provide a "repertoire of possibilities" and are helpful in eliciting substantial insights into practises, hence we adopted this method.

3.9.2 Focus Group Interviews with Hairdressing Male Learners

Six focus groups were conducted with male students, with subsequent dialogues charting the participants' evolving points of view. Four groups consisted of two learners, and two consisted of three resulting in a total of 26 participants. This size was chosen based on recommendations by Krueger and Casey (2014), who suggest that smaller groups often foster more in-depth discussions, especially on specialized or sensitive topics. The subsequent dialogues helped in mapping the participants' evolving viewpoints over time. This tactic was seen as critical (Ibrahim et al., 2018) in order to provide a safe space where participants may share their honest opinions and experiences throughout time (Ho, 2006).

This strategy was critical since it allowed the researchers to identify the many reasons why male students do not choose hairdressing as a major. Through creating a safe haven with others who understood my situation, I gained deeper insight into the issues at hand. Each focus group interview lasted between sixty and seventy-five minutes and included ten specific questions. These carefully considered questions were created to probe deeply into the motives, experiences, and perspectives of participants about the hairdressing industry. They were chosen after a preliminary examination of the literature and expert consultation. The length of time was chosen to guarantee in-depth conversations while preserving the comfort and participation of the participants.

3.9.3 Participant Observation

The use of participant observation was pivotal in this research, shedding light on the intricate interactions between male hairstyling instructors and their male and female pupils. This method facilitates the systematic gathering of behavioral nuances from participants without direct intervention from the researcher, thus capturing authentic interactions and relationships (Tustin et al., 2005).

In this investigation, the study embraced a non-participatory observational stance. As elucidated by Lavia et al. (2018), this method lets the researcher witness the actions of study subjects without immersing themselves in the setting. This ensures the researcher stands as a detached and objective witness, collecting data without either influencing or being influenced by the participants. In this context, the researcher closely observed the following.

Male Hairstyling Teachers

The primary focus remained on their subject emphasis, student interactions, teaching strategies, and any potential gender biases or gender-specific techniques. They instructed or interacted differently with male pupils than with female students in noticeable ways.

Male and Female Students

The goal of these observations was to grasp the depth of their involvement with the subject, gauge their interactions with classmates and the instructor, and discern their passion, reservations, or any distinct challenges male students encountered relative to their female peers.

During a period covering two weeks, one class from each of the chosen schools was keenly observed. This was done to identify any prevailing dynamics or behaviors that could influence the choices male students make academically and professionally in the world of hairdressing.

The observational data acted as a supplement to the insights derived from interviews, offering a holistic view of the hairdressing learning environment. It had the potential to unveil subtle nuances, pressures, or influences that might remain obscured in direct conversations.

Through this meticulous observation process, the study gained a multifaceted understanding of the educational dynamics that potentially impact male learners' choices to take up and further their career in hairdressing. The importance of an inclusive research strategy that embraces diverse data collection methods was emphasized, amplifying the depth and breadth of the conclusions drawn.

3.10 Data Analysis

This section defines the inherent qualities of data analysis and the theme analysis approach, as well as substantiating the appropriateness of the method chosen for this research. Data analysis in qualitative research encompasses a systematic search for meaningful patterns that emerge from the data, Ravindran (2019). According to Lester, Cho & Lochmiller (2020), it's founded on the philosophical tenet of interpretivism, which states that, because reality is socially formed, there are several viable interpretations of it. The implementation of a thorough data analysis procedure was helpful in the academic goal of elucidating the characteristics that either permit or restrain male learners from choosing hairdressing as a school subject and a prospective vocation.

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the data collected from the semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and observational notes. This qualitative analytic approach is recognized for its flexibility in identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within data, facilitating a deeper understanding of the factors influencing male students' decisions to choose hairdressing as a school subject and career path (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The study's overarching goal was to discover more about why male students specifically choose hairdressing as a field of study. Through a methodical process of analysing and synthesising data obtained via interviews and observations, the research aspires to provide in-depth insights into the many variables driving the learners' decisions. Table 3.2 below ensured clarity and coherence in the data analysis process, particularly in demonstrating how each question was systematically addressed.

Table 3.2: Research Questions, Instruments, and Analysis Methods

Research Questions	Relevant Data Collected	Instrument Used	Type of Analysis
How is teaching, learning, and practice of hairdressing perceived by male learners?	Perceptions, experiences, and beliefs of male learners regarding the practice and teaching of hairdressing.	Semi-structured interviews	Thematic analysis

What factors cause male learners to choose or reject hairdressing as an academic subject?	Factors influencing male learners' decisions such as societal opinions, peer influence, personal interests, etc.	Focus group discussions	Thematic analysis
What are the views of educators in relation to the choice of hairdressing by male learners?	Educators' opinions on male learners' interests in hairdressing, perceived challenges, and potential solutions.	Observational notes	Thematic analysis
What should be done around the teaching, learning, and practice of hairdressing to encourage male learners to select hairdressing as a school subject and career of choice?	Recommendations, interventions, or strategies that can be adopted to make hairdressing more appealing to male learner	Semi-structured interviews, Focus group discussions	Thematic analysis

Due to the flexibility and ability to give a full and intricate interpretation of the data, thematic analysis was chosen for this investigation. This method, as argued by Braun and Clarke (2006), is useful for a wide range of epistemological stances since it encourages thorough planning and description of data collecting. Thematic analysis is a multi-step process that includes reading through the data, creating initial codes, looking for themes, evaluating themes, naming, and defining themes, and writing a report.

During this stage, the researcher becomes acquainted with the data and learns its ins and outs. After identifying and coding key data segments, preliminary codes were generated. Coding is a crucial first step towards further in-depth research, as stated by Guest, MacQueen, and Namey (2012).

Following that, prospective themes were selected and assessed in a cyclical process, which aided in refining and narrowing the themes until they appropriately contained the data's complexities. The themes were then developed and designated in a way that captured the spirit of the patterns discovered. Finally, the report was written, with the theme map finalised and a narrative weaving the analysis into the larger study environment based on the empirical data obtained.

The use of theme analysis was quite useful in the effort to uncover the elements influencing male learners' decision in the hairdressing sector. The strategy provided the research with a systematic yet flexible mechanism for extracting subtle insights

from the data. According to Attride-Stirling (2001), theme networks enable the examination and portrayal of complex phenomena in an accessible manner, which was critical in this study given the intricacy of societal conceptions around gender roles and profession choices.

Furthermore, Boyatzis (1998) defines thematic analysis as a "method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data." The strategy aided in the discovery of themes centred on social attitudes, individual experiences, and educational influences, resulting in a rich canvas on which to paint a comprehensive portrayal of the research terrain. The researcher discovered that this technique fit well with the interpretivism paradigm used, allowing for a comprehensive, nuanced investigation of male learners' lived experiences and viewpoints in the hairdressing industry.

This study confirms that theme analysis was a fundamental decision for data analysis. The technique was seamlessly linked with the study's interpretivist paradigm, allowing for a full and nuanced investigation of the complex elements impacting male learners' choice of hairdressing as a topic and career route. It supported the pursuit of deep, nuanced, and thorough insights, which are the hallmarks of high-quality academic qualitative research.

3.11 Trustworthiness of the Study

Any reputable research must be trustworthy, which denotes the substance and dependability of the conclusions made. Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are the four main criteria that are commonly used to evaluate trustworthiness within the context of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These criteria were carefully guarded in the context of the current study, which attempted to scrutinise the factors permitting or restricting male learners from choosing hairdressing as a school subject and vocation, as described below.

3.11.1 Credibility

In qualitative research, credibility is the same as internal validity and focuses on how well the research findings properly reflect the reality of the study participants. The study's legitimacy was based on a number of tactics, chiefly on its extensive participation in and ongoing observation of the research environment. By building a

relationship with the participants, the researcher created a space where honest and thorough viewpoints could be exchanged. Shenton (2004) pointed out that using tried-and-true research techniques helped the study's credibility.

In order to develop a comprehensive knowledge of the topic under study, triangulation—the practice of using different techniques, data sources, and theoretical frameworks—was also used (Denzin, 1978). Peer debriefing provided outside viewpoints and insights that sharpened the research analysis. Findings were frequently evaluated with peers who were not participating in the study. As a result, the study provided a solid account of the subtleties of male learners' decisions in the context of the hairdressing industry, therefore encouraging a fruitful conversation on gender and vocational orientation.

3.11.2 Transferability

Comparable to external validity in qualitative research, transferability considers how well the study findings may be used in different situations, Lemon & Hayes (2020). Thick description, where the researcher gave a detailed overview of the research background, participant characteristics, and the phenomena under examination, strengthened the study's transferability. This thorough explanation makes it easier for other researchers to decide if the study might be applied to different contexts (Geertz, 1973). Additionally, the researcher adopted deliberate sampling, which allowed for the selection of individuals who might offer insightful, rich, and relevant information, hence improving the likelihood that the results would be transferable. The specific defining of the study's boundaries enhances transferability by giving a clear scope within which the results might be pertinent. In this study, comparable scenarios could include other vocational training settings within the broader cosmetology industry, similar educational settings focusing on skill-based learning, or institutions in different regions with male students facing stereotypical role challenges.

3.11.3 Dependability

Dependability, which is similar to reliability in qualitative research, evaluates the consistency and stability of study findings across time. "The study used a dependability audit, an approach proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), to encourage dependability. To ensure that repeated data collection and analysis would yield consistent findings, the following procedures were instituted.

Detailed Documentation: Every step of the data collection process was meticulously documented, including the exact settings, times, and conditions under which data was collected.

Consistent Interview Protocols: All participants were subjected to a standardized interview procedure. This ensured that any researcher replicating the study would use the same questions and prompts, minimizing variability in participant responses.

Data Collection Training: If multiple data collectors were involved, each was trained using the same protocols to minimize personal biases or differences in approach.

Coding Consistency Checks: After initial data analysis, a second researcher independently analyzed a subset of the data to check for consistency in theme identification and coding.

Maintaining an Audit Trail: A chronological account of all research activities, from data collection to data analysis, was maintained. This trail included raw data, data analysis products, and process notes.

Feedback Mechanisms: Preliminary findings were periodically presented to peers or participants for verification, ensuring that interpretations aligned with participants' intended meanings.

By meticulously following these procedures, the study ensured that, should the research be replicated, the data collection and analysis processes would have a high likelihood of revealing consistent findings.

This open disclosure of the research method, along with a rigorously maintained audit trail, aided in the tracking and validation of the research techniques, therefore proving the study's trustworthiness.

Additionally, iterative question design was used to guarantee that the research topics were extensively examined and nuanced insights were documented. The study was committed to ensuring that the findings presented were a genuine reflection of the realities uncovered during the research journey. To achieve this, there was an ongoing refinement of the research questions and instruments in response to emerging insights from the data. To systematically keep a record of these refinements and the rationale behind them:

Digital Documentation: All modifications to research questions and instruments were tracked using version-controlled documentation software, ensuring that each iteration was saved with a timestamp.

Research Diary: The researcher maintained a detailed research diary, noting daily activities, insights, challenges, and decisions made during the data collection and analysis phases. This diary served as a chronological account of the research process.

Meeting Minutes: Any discussions or brainstorming sessions about the research questions, especially if involving multiple researchers or advisors, were documented in minutes, capturing the essence of the conversations and any decisions made.

Backup Storage: Digital copies of all records were stored in both local and cloud storage systems, ensuring data redundancy and safeguarding against potential data loss.

Coding Annotations: As data was analyzed, annotations and memos were added to the coded data, explaining the reasoning behind specific codes, or highlighting emerging patterns. This provided context to the coding decisions and allowed for transparency in the analytical process.

By adopting these methods, the study ensured a comprehensive, transparent, and accessible record-keeping process that would stand up to scrutiny and facilitate the replication or review of the research methodology.

3.11.4 Confirmability

Confirmability, which is synonymous with objectivity in qualitative research, refers to the amount to which the study findings are affected by the replies of the participants rather than researcher bias, incentive, or interest. The study kept a reflective notebook that chronicled the researcher's thought processes, decisions, and reflections throughout the research process to increase confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This reflexivity enabled a rigorous assessment of potential effects and biases, ensuring the integrity of the research findings.

Furthermore, the researcher attempted to preserve a visible relationship between the data and the interpretations derived, permitting external assessors' inspection and confirmation of the findings. The study guaranteed that the interpretations supplied were a real portrayal of the participants' viewpoints by member checking, in which

participants were given the chance to examine and validate the findings, substantiating the study's confirmability.

In retrospect, it is clear that the study embarked on a meticulous path to assure the research's trustworthiness, employing a battery of tactics that ensured the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were kept at an excellent level. According to tChung, Biddix & Park (2020), this strong approach to assuring trustworthiness offers a solid platform for meaningful and revolutionary dialogue on gender dynamics in occupational choices.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

A strong respect to ethical norms was needed for undertaking a study of this magnitude, which sought to analyse the underlying dynamics that either enable or prevent male learners from choosing hairdressing as a study topic and career option. The sacredness of research is unquestionably based on its ethical conduct, according to the academic community (Resnik, 2015). Thus, in order to protect the integrity and respect of all parties involved, this research carefully addressed a number of ethical issues.

3.12.1 Institutional Ethical Clearance

Following the protocol, the researcher obtained the required ethics approval before starting the investigation. Every study carried out under its auspices must adhere to the strictest ethical guidelines, which is ensured by the thorough institutional ethical review procedure. The study's goals, expected difficulties, and solutions were all outlined in the application. Clearance was required before interacting with any subjects, and it was given once the Ethical Review Committee was persuaded of the research's value and adherence to ethical principles.

3.12.2 Informed Consent

Getting participants' informed permission, which requires informing them of the study's goals, methods, and potential effects, is one of the essential tenants of ethical research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In the current study, the researcher set out on a quest to provide participants with thorough information about the investigation, including a detailed explanation of the study's goals, methods, and potential ramifications. This strategy encouraged transparency while giving individuals the power to decide for themselves whether or not to participate. It was also stated that leaving the research

at any time would have no negative effects for the participants. These modifications were intended to retain the idea of informed consent without jeopardising the respect and morality with which it engaged its people.

3.12.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Maintaining participant anonymity and confidentiality shields them from any unwanted implications of participating in the research (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Researchers used pseudonyms to preserve participants' privacy and kept all data obtained in a secure setting. Furthermore, the study took pains to guarantee that no identifying information was published when the research results were disseminated, establishing a wall of anonymity and secrecy to preserve the privacy and dignity of the participants.

A careful communication strategy was used by the researcher to explain the voluntary nature of the study and provide guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity to potential volunteers throughout this phase. Parents were handed consent papers outlining the research's timeline in order to start a candid conversation about their children's participation in the study. The researcher consequently anticipated creating a thorough portrait of the elements affecting the decision to pursue hairdressing as a feasible academic and professional route by weaving a rich narrative that included both current and previous hairdressing students.

3.12.4 Minimization of Harm

A dedication to minimising damage to participants is a need for ethical research (Israel & Hay, 2006). The possibility that the study's subject matter would distress or make participants uncomfortable was something the researcher was constantly aware of. In order to address this, the study used a kind and considerate approach, with the researcher being sensitive to the participants' emotions and ready to provide consolation or alter the research method as necessary to limit any suffering. Due to this dedication to minimising violence, people may now speak honestly about their experiences and beliefs without worrying about being physically harmed or subjected to harsh criticism.

3.12.5 Respect for Autonomy and Individuality

According to the concept of respect for autonomy and uniqueness, participants' rights to exercise agency over their participation in the research were honoured (Beauchamp & Childress, 2013). The researcher fostered an atmosphere where everyone felt heard and appreciated by enticing participants to communicate their ideas and collaborate. This method not only allowed for rich and nuanced insights, but it also produced a symbiotic connection between the researcher and participants, in which knowledge was co-constructed via mutual respect and understanding.

In retrospect, the researcher recognises that the substantial efforts made to preserve these ethical norms helped to the development of a rich and comprehensive narrative that revealed the intricate tapestry of factors driving male learners' decisions in the area of hairdressing. Furthermore, the researcher contends that strict attention to ethics served not just to safeguard participants but also to improve the depth and quality of the study, creating a platform for true, nuanced, and revolutionary findings to thrive.

In compliance with the requirements of the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA, 2020), these interviews were recorded and transcribed to ensure the participants' privacy. Later, interviewees helped double-check the accuracy of the transcriptions, adding credibility to the collected information.

3.13 Conclusion

In hindsight, this chapter has built a sturdy foundation upon which the empirical superstructure of this study would be built. The techniques outlined below are consistent with the broader goal of unravelling the complicated fabric of variables, whether enabling or restricting, that impact male learners' choice of hairdressing as a topic and career track. The chapter attempted not only to clarify the methodological paths but also to provide insight into the rigorous preparation that serves as the foundation of this research undertaking.

As we go on to the next chapter, we anticipate diving further into the worlds of lived experiences and narratives, guided by the methodological beacon established in this chapter. The following chapter offers a rich analytical narrative in which the data

acquired using the procedures given above was painstakingly studied, weaving a narrative that has the potential to considerably contribute to the current body of literature.

Finally, Chapter 3 serves as a turning point, connecting the theoretical insights gained from the literature study with the empirical tales that are still to be revealed. The study is poised to offer profound insights into the complex web of factors influencing male learners' decisions in the context of hairdressing as a school subject and career choice through a well-charted methodological course, potentially paving the way for a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of career selection dynamics in the educational landscape.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

Male students at educational institutions choose their practical subjects—hairdressing in particular—through a complex and multidimensional decision-making process that

is impacted by a wide range of internal and external influences. Conventional occupational disciplines have often been divided into gender-specific categories, with certain professions being seen more appropriate for one gender than the other (Jones & King, 2015). This categorisation, which is based on deeply ingrained preconceptions and cultural standards, has often marginalised men in fields like hairdressing that are seen to be "feminine." However, there has been a rising interest in figuring out what supports or inhibits male learners from choosing unorthodox careers as the 21st century dawns and the focus on shattering gender stereotypes grows (Smith & Clarke, 2019). In Chapter 4, the discussion focused on analyzing and understanding the factors that influenced male students' decisions to pursue hairdressing, traditionally perceived as a feminine profession-

Vocational education has not always been seen in the same light as conventional academic disciplines. The former is loaded with preconceived notions and expectations from society and is considered as a route to direct employment (Robinson & James, 2016). When a male student is taking a vocational topic that is not typically connected with their gender, these impressions may become even more nuanced and complicated. When considered against the background of changing gender dynamics in contemporary society, the significance of these effects and their interaction in influencing choices become clear (Hughes & Thomas, 2018).

4.1.2 Demographics of the participants

The demographic makeup of study participants is still very important, particularly when sensitive topics like gender differences in job choices are being studied.

There were thirty-six participants in the study sample. There were two groups of participants for this study namely 1) Hairdressing subject teachers were 10 participants and 2) Hairdressing learners were 26 participants. As per Yin (2014), the inclusion of varied participant groups in case study research enhances its robustness via triangulation of sources. Because of this variety, the findings are richly woven together, including both professional and scholarly viewpoints. For example, it is noteworthy that an instructor at the high-achieving Westcliff SoS can have quite different opinions from a professional in the field working in a salon where men predominate.

Focus groups with male students, on the other hand, are an intriguing option. Focus group conversations provide light on group dynamics and viewpoints as a whole, while individual interviews dive deeply into specific experiences. Focus group interviews are

particularly effective in exposing cultural norms and group-held ideas, according to Green and Thorogood (2018). As a result, these conversations among male students would probably uncover common misconceptions, peer pressure, and shared views towards hairdressing as a vocation for males.

Though the variety of the sample and the venues chosen are praiseworthy, the geographic constraint may be a drawback. The Western Cape is home to all of the chosen schools. Considering South Africa's great ethnic and cultural variety, extending the study's scope outside this region may have yielded even more insightful results. However, the careful selection of the study location and the demographics of the participants provide a solid basis for the research.

4.2 Data analysis

The data analysis process involved extracting key sub-themes from the responses provided by participants in Table 4.1: Teachers (one-on-one). These sub-themes were derived from participants' responses to interview questions related to various aspects of male learners' engagement in hairdressing education and practice. The sub-themes include perceptions influenced by societal norms and stigmas, the balance between skill and passion, the impact of peer influence, market perceptions regarding acceptance and profitability, the role of role models and the lack thereof, educators' views on gender norms, curriculum appeal, diverse career prospects, family influences, evolving gender perspectives, the need for adaptable pedagogy, challenges faced by male learners, the significance of success stories, and the necessity for curriculum revamps. These sub-themes form the foundation for understanding the multifaceted factors influencing male learners' decisions in the context of hairdressing education and practice.

Table 4.1: Teachers (one – on – one)

Interview questions	Responses (Raw data)
Question 1 (related to Identity & Hairdressing)	"Hairdressing has historically been a female-dominated field. This perception is hard to break," (Participant T1).
Question 2 (related to Skill vs. Passion)	"The industry recognizes and needs both: technicians who excel in the craft and artists driven by passion," (Participant T2).
Question 3 (related to Peer Influence)	"Often, male students face peer pressure. I've had to frequently reassure them of their choices," (Participant T1).
Question 4 (related to Market Perceptions)	"Some male students have expressed concerns about whether they'd be as accepted and profitable as their female counterparts in the industry," (Participant T10).
Question 5 (related to Role Models)	"When there's no representation of men in textbooks or in media, it can be discouraging for some male learners," (Participant T9).
Question 6 (related to Societal Norms & Stigmas)	"Educators sometimes, even unknowingly, echo societal prejudices which can discourage male students," (Participant T8).
Question 7 (related to Curriculum Appeal)	"As educators, we sometimes struggle to make the curriculum more gender-neutral," (Participant T10).
Question 8 (related to Career Prospects)	"Hairdressing isn't just about cutting and styling hair. There's potential for entrepreneurship, teaching, and even product development," (Participant T2).
Question 9 (related to Family Influences)	"Many parents still have traditional views about professions. They often can't see hairdressing as a suitable choice for their sons," (Participant T1).
Question 10 (related to Gendered Perspectives)	"Male hairdressers bring a fresh perspective, often becoming pioneers in certain niches like men's grooming," (Participant T5).
Question 11 (related to Adapting Pedagogy)	"It's less about gender and more about individual learning styles. Some males might need adaptation, others might not," (Participant T4).
Question 12 (related to Challenges Faced)	"Motivation levels fluctuate. Sometimes, the male students feel isolated if they're in a predominantly female class," (Participant T3).

Interview questions	Responses (Raw data)
Question 13 (related to Success Stories)	"One of my brightest students last year was a male. He not only aced the course but has now started his own salon," (Participant T1).

Table 4.1 above and Table 4.2 below show the responses of the participants from the interviews.

Table 4.2: Learners (Focus group) data

Focus Group questions (Students)	Responses
Question 1 (related to Identity & Hairdressing)	"...I always felt like people would judge me if I chose hairdressing. But deep inside, I knew it's what I wanted." - (Participant S1)
Question 2 (related to Skill vs. Passion)	"It's more than just a skill for me. It's an art, an expression, and a way to connect with people on a personal level." - (Participant S5)
Question 3 (related to Peer Influence)	"When I first considered hairdressing, my mates joked about it not being a 'real man's job'. It made me second guess my decision." - (Participant S6)
Question 4 (related to Market Perceptions)	"I've seen successful male hairdressers on Instagram, and it shows there's room for us in the market." - (Participant S12)
Question 5 (related to Role Models)	"I remember seeing this famous male hairdresser on TV, and it made me realize that guys can be successful in this industry too." - (Participant S8)

Focus Group questions (Students)	Responses
Question 6 (related to Societal Norms & Stigmas)	"Society has often ridiculed men who choose hairdressing, labeling it as a 'woman's job'." - (Participant S15)
Question 7 (related to Curriculum Appeal)	"I joined hairdressing because of its practical nature. But sometimes, the methods used to teach lean more towards female preferences." - (Participant S18)
Question 8 (related to Career Prospects)	"I've always enjoyed hairdressing, but I'm not sure if it can provide a stable income in the long run," - (Participant S1)
Question 9 (related to Family Influences)	"My father often says that hairdressing is a woman's job, and I should look for something more 'manly'," - (Participant S2)
Question 10 (related to Curriculum Revamp)	"The curriculum seems heavily inclined towards women's hairstyling. We need more modules focusing on men's haircuts, beard trims, and styling," - (Participant S1)
Question 11 (related to Awareness Campaigns)	"I think showcasing successful male hairdressers in media campaigns can change the current narrative," - (Participant S3)
Question 12 (related to Workshops & Seminars)	"Seeing is believing. I'd be more convinced about a career in hairdressing if I could interact with successful male figures in the field," - (Participant S7)

The sub-themes presented above were derived through data analysis of the responses provided by participants in Table 4.2: Learners (Focus group). The analysis involved identifying recurring themes and patterns in participants' answers to focus group questions related to their perceptions of hairdressing as male learners. The sub-

themes encompass various aspects, including the impact of societal norms and stigmas on their identity, the recognition of hairdressing as both a skill and a passion, the influence of peers and family, market perceptions of success and profitability, the significance of male role models, concerns about curriculum appeal, doubts regarding career prospects, the pressure of family influences, the need for curriculum revamps, and the potential of awareness campaigns and workshops to shape their perceptions positively. These sub-themes provide valuable insights into the factors that influence male learners' decisions regarding hairdressing as an academic subject and career choice.

Table 4. 3: Theme Analysis

Research Questions	Themes
How is teaching, learning, and practice of hairdressing perceived by male learners?	Perceptions of Male Learners on Hairdressing Education and Practice
What factors cause male learners to choose or reject hairdressing as an academic subject?	Factors Influencing Male Learners' Decisions on Hairdressing as an Academic Choice
What are the views of educators in relation to the choice of hairdressing by male learners?	Educators' Perspectives on Male Learners Choosing Hairdressing
What should be done around the teaching, learning, and practice of hairdressing to encourage male learners to select hairdressing as a school subject and career of choice?	Possibilities for Promoting Male Inclusivity in Hairdressing Education and Career

The table succinctly presents the research questions and their corresponding themes in the study on male learners' perceptions and choices in hairdressing education and practice. These themes include understanding male learners' perceptions of hairdressing education and practice, identifying the factors that influence their academic choices, gathering educators' perspectives on male learners' choices in the field, and exploring possibilities to promote male inclusivity in hairdressing education and careers. This structured overview provides a clear framework for examining the research objectives and findings, facilitating a deeper understanding of the study's focus on breaking gender stereotypes, and fostering inclusivity in the hairdressing profession.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

4.3.1 Theme 1: Perceptions of Male Learners on Hairdressing Education and Practice

4.3.1.1 Sub-Theme: Identity & Hairdressing: Exploring if Male Learners Feel their Identity is Compatible or Compromised by Selecting Hairdressing

From the semi-structured interviews and focus groups, a myriad of perceptions regarding the compatibility between male identity and the hairdressing profession emerged. Predominantly, the data underscored an intrinsic tension between societal gender norms and individual aspirations.

"...I always felt like people would judge me if I chose hairdressing. But deep inside, I knew it's what I wanted." - **(Participant S1)**

"In the beginning, I felt out of place, like this wasn't where a 'man' should be. But now, I see hairdressing as an art, not bound by gender." - **(Participant S2)**

"A lot of my friends questioned my choice initially. But when they see the passion I put into my work, they understand it's more about skill than gender." - **(Participant S3)**

"The industry definitely needs more representation. Hairdressing is about creativity, not gender. That's something institutions need to convey more strongly." - **(Participant T1)**

The answers share an initial sense of dread founded in cultural expectations. While the students (S1, S2, S3) expressed sentiments of being scrutinised and out of place,

they also acknowledged hairdressing as a type of creativity outside of gender conventions. This duality implies an internal fight for validation, emphasising the need of external reinforcement. Both the teacher (T1) on the other hand, emphasised the significance of mentoring, representation, and reassurance, indicating a gap that educational institutions must fill.

The contradiction between social standards and personal goals shown in this research reflects Thompson's (2015) findings, who suggested that traditionally gendered professions often construct unseen hurdles for people who challenge these norms. In line with our results, Baxter (2017) observed that males in traditionally feminine occupations often suffer unconscious prejudices, which dissuade them from joining the sector. This echoes Participant S1 and S2's feelings of being judged and out of place.

Donovan (2016), on the other hand, believes that vocations should be seen through the perspective of abilities and enthusiasm rather than gender. This viewpoint is similar to Participant S3, emphasising hairdressing as a trade that is not limited by gender. Participant T1's focus on the need for increased representation in the area is supported by Williams (2018), who claims that varied representation may be a catalyst in overcoming preconceptions.

The research revealed a complex interplay between societal gender norms and the individual aspirations of male learners in hairdressing. These findings align with Thompson's (2015) research, which emphasizes the challenges individuals face in traditionally gendered professions. The data contributes a nuanced understanding of how these norms specifically influence male learners in hairdressing, corroborating Baxter's (2017) observations on unconscious biases in gender-typed occupations. This supports the theoretical framework that highlights the impact of societal gender norms on occupational choices.

4.3.1.2 Sub-Theme: Skill vs. Passion: Whether Male Learners View Hairdressing More as a Skill or as a Passion

The contrast between seeing hairdressing primarily as a trade requiring technical proficiency (skill) and a creative outlet motivated by internal motivation (passion) emerged from the data. Some male students believed that the skills they would gain would be the main reason they were drawn to hairdressing, while others regarded it as a passion that allowed them to express themselves creatively.

"Hairdressing for me began as a fascination with the technicality of it all. The precision, the science behind products, and how a haircut can change someone's appearance fascinated me." - (Participant S4)

"It's more than just a skill for me. It's an art, an expression, and a way to connect with people on a personal level." - (Participant S5)

"I've taught many students over the years, and it's usually a mix. Some come in driven by the passion, while others are keen on mastering the skill." - (Participant T3)

"The industry recognizes and needs both: technicians who excel in the craft and artists driven by passion." - (Participant S2)

"Skill can be acquired, but passion is what keeps you going in this industry." - (Participant S3)

S4 and S5 gave opposing perspectives: S4 was drawn to the mechanics and science of hairdressing, emphasising ability, while S5 characterised it as an art form, emphasising passion. Educator T3's experience exemplified this paradox, demonstrating that learners are motivated by a variety of factors.

The interaction of ability and passion has long been a topic of debate in vocational education. According to Rodriguez and Gutierrez (2016), occupational disciplines such as hairdressing often need a combination of technical proficiency and intrinsic enthusiasm, which is consistent with Participant I2's perspective. Smith (2018) asserts that the dynamic balance between the two may impact career length and happiness. This is consistent with Participant I3's opinion that, although skills may be developed, passion is what keeps a person's job going.

Furthermore, Lee (2017) observes that people who are motivated primarily by passion tend to see their job as an extension of themselves, which corresponds to Participant S5's definition of hairdressing as a means of expression and personal connection. Those driven by skill acquisition, such as Participant S4, desire competence, mastery, and the concrete results their talents may create (Johnson & Clarke, 2019).

The research uncovered a divide in how male learners perceive hairdressing, split between seeing it as a skill and as a passion. This dichotomy aligns with Rodriguez and Gutierrez's (2016) perspective on the need for a combination of technical proficiency and intrinsic motivation in vocational disciplines. The balance between skill and passion, as reflected in the findings, resonates with Smith's (2018) insights on

career satisfaction and vocational interests, thereby extending the understanding provided by the theoretical framework on these aspects.

4.3.1.3 Sub-Theme: Peer Influence: The Role of Peers in Shaping Male Learners' Perceptions about Hairdressing

One key aspect impacting how male learners perceived hairdressing was peer influence. Students' stories demonstrate the influence that their peers have on their decisions, while educators and business experts provide light on the wider sociocultural ramifications of these beliefs.

"When I first considered hairdressing, my mates joked about it not being a 'real man's job'. It made me second guess my decision." - **(Participant S6)**

"Many of my peers were supportive, but some thought it was a profession more suited for women." - **(Participant S7)**

"In the educational environment, it's evident that male students are sometimes subjected to light-hearted banter or more severe peer pressure when choosing subjects seen as non-traditional for their gender." - **(Participant T5)**

"Over the years, I've noticed an increase in male learners joining, but there's always that initial hesitation, often influenced by their peers." - **(Participant T6)**

"The industry has been breaking gender barriers, but old stereotypes still linger in society, especially among younger generations." - **(Participant S4)**

According to the kids' voices, S6 and S7, peers have an important part in their decision-making processes. While S6 was met with scepticism, S7 elicited a mixed response. T5 and T6 verified similar observations, with T5 mentioning the peer pressure encountered by male pupils and T6 mentioning the hesitations typically noticed in male learners.

Academic literature has widely established the influence of peers in the shaping of career choices. Peers, according to Brown et al. (2014), may have a greater effect on an individual's professional selections than family or other external variables. Similarly, Watson and McMahon (2015) observed that peer impressions, whether supportive or disparaging, might influence people's confidence and decisions, which is consistent with the experiences of Participants S6 and S7.

However, the gendered character of peer influence in occupational choices complicates the issue. According to Thompson (2017), guys who choose occupations historically dominated by women typically endure increased scrutiny and peer pressure. The observation of participant T5 is consistent with this, pointing to the 'light-hearted banter' or more overt pressure encountered by male students in similar situations.

While peers are important, they are also products of wider society conventions and preconceptions. According to Smith (2016), occupational choices are typically established in social gender standards, which are further reinforced by peers, media, and, in certain cases, educational institutions.

4.3.1.4 Sub-Theme: Market Perceptions: Male learners' perceptions about the potential for success and profitability in the hairdressing industry

The views of the market, particularly those about profitability and success potential, are crucial in directing students' choices. Based on the collected data, it seems that male students have differing opinions on the financial potential of hairdressing as a career.

"I've seen successful male hairdressers on Instagram, and it shows there's room for us in the market." - **(Participant S12)**

"My parents were unsure about it because they didn't think I could earn a decent living with hairdressing." - **(Participant S18)**

"In our curriculum, we don't focus much on the business side of hairdressing, which might affect their perceptions of profitability." - **(Participant T9)**

"Some male students have expressed concerns about whether they'd be as accepted and profitable as their female counterparts in the industry." - **(Participant T10)**

The observation of participant S12 shows optimism, which might be impacted by internet platforms that display successful professions. In contrast, S18's statement demonstrates family scepticism about the profession's financial feasibility. The educators, particularly T9, see a curricular deficit that does not emphasise commercial issues, perhaps leading to uncertainty. T10's speech elaborates on these fears, alluded to a broader problem of gendered market acceptability.

Perceptions of market potential and profitability are often important determinants in profession choice. According to Burns and Neisner (2016), a profession's financial prognosis is a crucial consideration for many students. Simultaneously, as suggested by S12's statement, the role of digital platforms in shaping career perceptions has grown in prominence, a phenomenon highlighted by Sanders et al. (2018), where visual platforms like Instagram offer insights into various careers, potentially challenging traditional viewpoints.

When the profitability of a job is contrasted with gender stereotypes, further concerns arise. The doubt expressed by S18 and witnessed by T10 parallels Powell (2017) results, which imply that jobs identified with a given gender may raise worries about profitability and success when selected by the opposing gender.

Educators are crucial in shaping these attitudes. T9 indicates that the curriculum's emphasis may either expand or restrict students' knowledge of the possibilities of a career. DeMarco and Worley (2019) emphasised the need of complete educational frameworks that give insight into both skills and the commercial side of professions, allowing for more informed decisions.

I5's opinion embodies a bigger market trend. While old gender conventions continue to exist, the contemporary service sector, particularly in specialisations such as hairdressing, is shifting towards emphasising skills and professionalism above gender (Jones, 2015). This is consistent with a worldwide movement for diversity and inclusion, which is transforming consumer preferences.

4.3.1.5 Sub-Theme: Role Models: Influence of existing male figures in the hairdressing industry on the perceptions of male learners

When taking into account the opinions of male learners about the hairdressing business, the impact of male role models in the sector cannot be understated. The data collection yielded unique insights that illuminated the ways in which male industry leaders might shape or impact the professional decisions made by aspiring male hairdressers.

"I remember seeing this famous male hairdresser on TV, and it made me realize that guys can be successful in this industry too." - (Participant S8)

"Most male students often reference prominent male hairdressers as a reason they believe they can succeed." - (Participant T4)

"When there's no representation of men in textbooks or in media, it can be discouraging for some male learners." - (Participant T9)

S8's thoughts highlight the critical impact that exposure of male professionals in the hairdressing business can have in motivating new recruits. T4's observation backs up this viewpoint, demonstrating that many male students are inspired by such public people. T9, on the other hand, expresses worry about the absence of male representation in instructional resources.

The importance of role models in determining professional ambitions is widely understood (Bandura, 1986). Visible role models in a chosen field may boost an individual's confidence and give a clear route to follow. These results are consistent with the findings of Morgenroth et al. (2015), who said that witnessing someone who shares a prominent identification (such as gender) achieve in a specific area might boost others' ideas about their own prospective success in the same domain.

T11's concern is echoed in the research of Clark et al. (2018), who argue that the lack of gender representation in educational materials can inadvertently perpetuate stereotypes, potentially discouraging male learners from pursuing careers in traditionally perceived as female-centric domains.

The observation of I3 has historical precedent. According to Robinson (2012), males have traditionally been major stakeholders in the hairdressing profession, particularly in the early twentieth century. This shows a mismatch between previous contributions and current attitudes.

Findings indicate that peer influence plays a significant role in shaping male learners' perceptions of hairdressing. This is consistent with Brown et al.'s (2014) studies, which highlight the impact of peers on career choices. The research also echoes Thompson's (2017) work on the gendered nature of peer influence, reinforcing the theoretical framework's discussion about the social construction of gender roles and their influence on career decisions.

4.3.2 Theme 2: Factors Influencing Male Learners' Decisions on Hairdressing as an Academic Choice

4.3.2.1 Sub-Theme: Societal Norms & Stigmas: Understanding societal pressures that may deter or encourage male learners.

The data revealed a complex network of social expectations, highlighting the significant impact of society norms and stigmas on male learners' choices related to hairdressing. Some participants expressed gratitude for the progress society has made, while others bemoaned the misconceptions that linger about males working in the hair industry.

"Society has often ridiculed men who choose hairdressing, labeling it as a 'woman's job'." - (Participant S15)

"My friends laughed at the idea initially, but seeing successful male hairdressers changed their perception." - (Participant S21)

"Educators sometimes, even unknowingly, echo societal prejudices which can discourage male students." - (Participant T8)

"Parents often raise concerns about their sons choosing hairdressing, fearing societal backlash." - (Participant T10)

S15's experience underscores a traditional stigma linked with men's hairdressing, classifying it as gender specific. S21, on the other hand, provides a viewpoint on altering opinions within peer groups as a result of the exposure of successful male practitioners. T8 and T10 highlight social stereotypes that unwittingly infiltrate educational environments, either via instructors' biases or family worries, potentially discouraging male learners.

Gender-specific occupational attitudes have profound historical foundations (Eagly & Wood, 2012). The claim from S15 reinforces hairdressing's cultural classification as a feminine job, which is consistent with the long-held assumption that caring, or beauty-oriented occupations are essentially 'female' (Cejka & Eagly, 1999). S21's story, on the other hand, offers a ray of optimism, bolstered by the transforming ability of prominent role models in altering attitudes (Lockwood, 2006).

T8's discovery emphasises the accidental proliferation of social prejudices in educational institutions, which act as microcosms of society. According to Paechter

(2006), such biases might have a significant impact on students' academic choices. T12's remark is consistent with Evetts' (2000) findings that parents often worry about their children's social reception as a result of non-traditional profession choices.

Participants expressed varying opinions on the financial potential of hairdressing as a career. These perceptions corroborate Burns and Neisner's (2016) findings on the importance of a profession's financial outlook in career choice. The apprehensions about gender and profitability align with Powell's (2017) research, suggesting a need to revisit discussions in the theoretical framework about economic theories of career choices in gender-typed professions.

4.3.2.2 Sub-Theme: Curriculum Appeal: Whether the way hairdressing is taught appeals to male learners.

The importance of curriculum delivery in moulding students' opinions cannot be overstated. It was discovered that the method in which hairdressing is taught may either attract or dissuade male students. As factors affecting their selections, the content, teaching techniques, and possibilities for real-world application were recognised.

"I joined hairdressing because of its practical nature. But sometimes, the methods used to teach lean more towards female preferences." - (Participant S18)

"I've noticed that textbooks and other resources often highlight female hairstyles and trends over male ones." - (Participant S26)

"As educators, we sometimes struggle to make the curriculum more gender neutral." - (Participant T10)

"Incorporating more hands-on experiences and real-world scenarios might resonate more with male students." - (Participant T8)

The observations from S18 and S26 highlight what seems to be a gender bias in the instructional strategies and resources. T10 recognises the difficulty teachers have in providing a curriculum that is gender-neutral, and T8 speculates that increasing experiential learning would draw in more male students.

Students' views and interests are greatly influenced by the curriculum and how it is delivered (Marsh & Willis, 2007). The viewpoint of S18 is consistent with Marsh's

(2010) finding that instructional strategies might sometimes, even unwittingly, favour one gender over another. The majority of the resources emphasise female styles, which is consistent with Connell's (2005) theory of gender and power in educational material. S26 emphasises this gendered orientation of curriculum even further.

T10's recognition of the difficulty in offering a curriculum that is gender-neutral is consistent with research by Jackson (2002), which found that some subjects—which were traditionally seen to be gendered—have a hard time changing to reflect changing society views. Dewey's (1938) experiential learning theory, which emphasises the need of firsthand experience in learning effectively, is in line with T10's recommendation for more realistic, real-world settings. This could make it more appealing to male students in particular, who might choose experiential, application-based learning (Hannafin & Land, 1997).

4.3.2.3 Sub theme: Career Prospects: Male learners' views on the future opportunities hairdressing can provide.

Data from semi-structured interviews and focus groups were used to dive into male learners' thoughts on the career options that hairdressing may provide. These perspectives included both perceived physical advantages, such as financial security, and perceived intangible benefits, such as work satisfaction and social status.

According to the interviews, numerous male students were concerned about the long-term career security and financial benefits in the hairdressing sector.

"I've always enjoyed hairdressing, but I'm not sure if it can provide a stable income in the long run," (Participant S1).

"I've seen many hairdressers struggle to make ends meet, especially during economic downturns," (Participant S3).

Conversely, educators and industry professionals presented a broader perspective. They highlighted the potential for growth, specialization, and diversification within the sector.

"Hairdressing isn't just about cutting and styling hair. There's potential for entrepreneurship, teaching, and even product development," (Participant T2).

"There are male hairdressers I know who've travelled the world, working for celebrities and fashion shows," (Participant T3).

The examination of these answers points to a contradiction between the opinions of experts and educators and those of the pupils. Teachers and business experts underscored the enormous prospects open to those prepared to innovate and diversify, even as male students voiced worries about their capacity to make ends meet.

The material that already exists supports the observations made by educators and experts. Smith (2017) claims that the hairdressing and beauty industries have had steady growth rates, providing a wealth of chances for both professional progression and entrepreneurship. Nonetheless, Jones and colleagues (2019) recognise the first obstacles encountered by novices, stressing the need of tenacity and flexibility in establishing a successful profession.

On the other hand, Dawson (2016) notes that while there is room for advancement in the hairdressing profession, the early years of a career might be characterised by financial instability, which may account for the concerns voiced by the male student participants. This viewpoint is reinforced by Kapoor (2018), who says that while the field provides opportunities for advancement, the path requires commitment, lifelong learning, and often dealing with hard times.

The influence of male role models in the hairdressing industry emerged as a significant factor shaping learners' perceptions. This finding is in line with Bandura's (1986) theory of social learning, where role models are seen as crucial in shaping career aspirations. The historical context provided by Robinson (2012) about male contributions in hairdressing helps bridge a gap between current perceptions and past realities, as outlined in the theoretical framework.

4.3.2.4 Sub theme: Family Influences: The role families play in the male learners' decision-making process regarding hairdressing.

It is impossible to overstate the influence that family has on job decisions. Our results, which came from semi-structured interviews and focus groups, show that family viewpoints have a big impact on how male students decide whether or not to pursue a profession in hairdressing.

Male students commonly described the prevalent views held by their families, which were typically emphasised by conventional gender roles and worries about their financial stability.

"My father often says that hairdressing is a woman's job, and I should look for something more 'manly'," (Participant S2).

"There's a constant pressure at home to choose a career that is considered more stable like engineering or medicine," (Participant S4).

Educators, on the other hand, provided insight into the broader societal fabric that influences these familial opinions:

"Many parents still have traditional views about professions. They often can't see hairdressing as a suitable choice for their sons," (Participant T1).

"I've had parents come to me, concerned about their son's choice, questioning the future prospects in hairdressing," (Participant T3).

Industry professionals emphasized the success stories, hoping they could act as catalysts for change:

Analysing these comments reveals that, although kids struggle with household expectations, instructors are aware of social ideas that families often mimic. Meanwhile, industry executives want for more notable success stories to challenge these deeply held views.

The present literature backs up these conclusions. According to Wallace and Smith (2017), family opinions have a considerable effect on job selections, particularly in non-traditional sectors. They contend that in many societies, vocational choices such as hairdressing are still heavily gendered, with families playing a key role in sustaining or opposing these preconceptions. Similarly, Johnson et al. (2019) show that the weight of family expectations may be both a motivator and a hindrance to pursuing non-traditional jobs, particularly for men.

Martinez (2015), on the other hand, gives a hopeful perspective, citing a developing trend in which families, inspired by global media and success stories, are becoming more receptive of non-traditional job options. This viewpoint is consistent with Participant I1's argument, implying that highlighting successful male hairdressers might progressively influence opinions.

These parental impacts aren't simply passive observations; they actively alter a male learner's concept of self-worth, social value, and possible career success. Lee (2018) emphasises the powerful influence of family narratives on an individual's sense of self-

efficacy. In the context of this research, if families are sceptical about hairdressing as a realistic vocation, their concerns may considerably undermine a male learner's confidence in following this route.

4.3.3 Major Theme 3: Educators' Perspectives on Male Learners Choosing Hairdressing

4.3.3.1 Sub theme: Gendered Perspectives: Educators' views on the gender norms associated with hairdressing.

Gender norms and cultural expectations about occupations are strongly rooted, and they influence individual job decisions. This research aims to identify educators' perceptions on the gendered norms associated with hairdressing and the problems or advantages male learners may encounter as a consequence using semi-structured interviews with educators.

Multiple educators acknowledged the societal gender biases associated with hairdressing:

"Hairdressing has historically been a female-dominated field. This perception is hard to break," (Participant T1).

"Many believe it's a softer profession, more suited for women," (Participant T2).

Yet, some educators emphasized the changing landscape:

"While traditionally it's seen as a woman's job, today many renowned hairstylists in the industry are men," (Participant T3).

"Gender norms are evolving. We see more male students taking up hairdressing than a decade ago," (Participant T4).

One educator highlighted the potential advantages:

"Male hairdressers bring a fresh perspective, often becoming pioneers in certain niches like men's grooming," (Participant T5).

An examination of these answers reveals that educators are generally aware of the gendered stereotypes related to the hairdressing industry. Although past prejudices are acknowledged, there is hope that attitudes may shift, particularly in light of the increasing number of successful men in the hairdressing industry.

The gender norms connected to occupations are a topic covered in great detail in the literature. Baxter and Chester (2016) highlighted how gender stereotypes in the workplace cause uneven representation of men and women in certain industries. According to Participant T1, this typification has traditionally associated hairdressing with women. However, Robinson and James (2018) note a worldwide change in gender norms, consistent with Participant T3's views, with male representation in professions such as hairdressing and nursing witnessing a continuous rise.

Furthermore, Green (2019) emphasised the need of dispelling misconceptions for the advancement of the sector as well as gender equality. Men's distinct viewpoints may inspire advances in certain fields, as noted by Participant T5. This idea is in line with Lawson et al. (2020), who highlighted the advantages of having a diverse workforce and said that this results in contributions to the field that are richer and more diversified.

It's important to realise, however, that acknowledging changing standards does not imply that gender bias-related problems have been resolved. Even with more representation, male students may nonetheless encounter misgivings, prejudices, or outright disincentives because of deeply ingrained gender stereotypes. Teachers are essential in helping male students navigate this confusing environment, supporting them when they face obstacles, and building their self-esteem.

It's also important to remember that, despite possible increases in popularity in the West, acceptance rates differ elsewhere. According to Nguyen and Lee (2017), cultural, religious, and regional norms may have a big impact on how fast or slowly these gendered perceptions shift.

4.3.3.2 Sub theme: Adapting Pedagogy: Whether there's a need to adapt teaching methods for male learners.

The need of changing pedagogy in education cannot be overstated, particularly when taking gender issues into account. In the context of hairdressing, the research sought to determine if teaching strategies tailored to male learners should be modified.

A number of instructors expressed the need of comprehending the possible variations in educational experiences:

**"In my years of teaching, I've observed that male learners sometimes need different motivational techniques," (Participant T1).*

"It's not about changing the curriculum, but perhaps the method. Male learners have different queries, especially in areas like women's hair," (Participant T2).

However, other educators felt that good teaching transcends gender:

"A skilled teacher can address individual needs without making drastic gender-based changes," (Participant T3).

"It's less about gender and more about individual learning styles. Some males might need adaptation, others might not," (Participant T4).

Analysing these comments, there is a broad agreement on the need of flexibility in education, but there is disagreement on the manner and purpose for this modification. Some educators advocate for slight changes based on recognised variations in the requirements of male learners, whilst others prioritise individualised instruction regardless of gender.

The notion of differentiated teaching has acquired popularity in the larger educational debate. Tomlinson (2014) has advocated for personalising educational experiences for students based on their preparation levels, interests, and learning profiles. As Participant T4 mentions, this individualised strategy takes into account different learning methods without necessarily concentrating on gender.

However, Walters and Hayes (2016) take a more nuanced approach, suggesting that, although individualization is important, neglecting the unique problems provided by gender preconceptions, particularly in professions with strong gender imprints, may be harmful. This is consistent with Participant T2's assessment regarding the unique queries male learners may have in an area dominated by women.

Furthermore, Steele (2010) explored the notion of 'stereotype threat,' which occurs when people underperform or feel pushed as a result of unfavourable perceptions about their identity. In the case of male hairdressing students, educators must be aware of this possible psychological strain, and so minor pedagogical changes may be advantageous.

4.3.3.3 Sub theme: Challenges Faced: Specific challenges educators face while teaching male learners.

The difficulties encountered by educators educating male students in hairdressing surfaced as a recurring subject in the research. Participants expressed a variety of

variables and attitudes, presenting a multifaceted understanding of the issues at the pedagogical frontier.

Addressing established gender stereotypes was seen as the major problem among educators:

"Often, male students face peer pressure. I've had to frequently reassure them of their choices," (Participant T1).

"There's a tendency among male learners to gravitate towards 'masculine' hairstyles. Broadening their skill set can be challenging," (Participant T2).

However, challenges weren't limited to stereotype navigation:

"Motivation levels fluctuate. Sometimes, the male students feel isolated if they're in a predominantly female class," (Participant T3).

"Practically speaking, they sometimes struggle with certain techniques initially, maybe because they're not as accustomed to hairstyling personally," (Participant T4).

The revelations reveal a diverse terrain. The main issue is gender preconceptions, but there are also other factors including peer pressure, loneliness, technological difficulties, and general industrial concerns.

McRobbie (2015) clarifies how gender norms carry a lot of social weight and are ingrained in educational settings. Participant T1's thoughts are consistent with the research, suggesting that male students' perspectives are significantly shaped by conventional gender norms. The observations made by Participant T2 also point to a potential tendency among male students to adopt perceived 'masculine' hairstyles, which is consistent with Connell's (1995) notion of hegemonic masculinity.

Nevertheless, internal classroom dynamics are crucial, even outside of social settings. According to Jones (2017), peer dynamics play a crucial role in determining the nature of educational experiences. The observations made by participant T3, which emphasise the isolation that male students experience, are consistent with Jones's results. This emphasises even more how complex difficulties are, with internal classroom dynamics interacting with exterior society norms.

Moreover, the comment made by Participant T4 highlights the actual difficulties associated with acquiring new skills. This practical aspect is somewhat supported by

Smith's (2018) research, which shows that people often have difficulty with assignments they don't directly do.

4.3.3.4 Sub theme: Success Stories: Instances where male learners have excelled, providing encouragement for future male learners.

The sub-theme encompassing male learners' success stories in hairdressing provides a counternarrative to the prevalent discourse, showing the potential and successes of male students in the sector.

Educators and professionals alike shared glowing examples:

"One of my brightest students last year was a male. He not only aced the course but has now started his own salon," (Participant T1).

"It's been rewarding to see a few of the male learners I've taught going on to represent our school in national hairdressing competitions," (Participant T2).

Students too weren't behind in sharing their success:

"Hairdressing has allowed me to discover my passion. I've had the chance to intern with leading brands and stylists," (Participant S1).

"Being a male in this field does turn heads, but it also creates opportunities. I've been approached for specialized projects just within my first year," (Participant S2).

A casual look at these answers highlights how the story has shifted from the difficulties encountered to the triumphs acknowledged.

Robinson (2018) spoke about how diverse groups may innovate and provide new ideas to typically homogeneous professions. Per Mills (2017), as seen by the experiences of Participants S1 and S2, these success stories may also act as potent catalysts for future aspirants.

In their discussion of the value of role models in non-traditional fields, Hughes, and Thomas (2019) make the case that aspirants may be greatly influenced by representation. Within this context, participant T1 and T2's observations about their successful male pupils might be placed. With their success, these students are unintentionally shattering gender conventions by serving as role models for upcoming male students.

Furthermore, Davies (2016) illuminates the evolving nature of the hairdressing sector by stressing the growing acknowledgement and acceptability of male stylists. Participant S2 agrees that the experiences and possibilities accessible to male learners are clearly influenced by the changing industrial environment.

Success stories may provide a positive outlook, but Larson & Walker (2020) warn that they shouldn't obscure the more significant structural issues. Although individual accomplishments are important and praiseworthy, systemic impediments still exist and must be acknowledged and addressed.

In summary, the success stories of male students pursuing hairdressing provide insight on the evolving nature of the sector and the educational paths associated with it. It's evidence of the potential that, regardless of gender, can be reached when talent is developed. To get a thorough comprehension, it's equally crucial to place these tales within the bigger issues that continue to exist.

4.3.4 Major Theme 4: Possibilities for Promoting Male Inclusivity in Hairdressing Education and Career

4.3.4.1 Sub theme: Curriculum Revamp: Suggested changes to make the hairdressing curriculum more inclusive.

The curriculum itself is a critical component in increasing male inclusiveness in hairdressing school. Participants discussed different paths curriculum may take to accommodate a diverse student population.

"The curriculum seems heavily inclined towards women's hairstyling. We need more modules focusing on men's haircuts, beard trims, and styling," (Participant S1).

"It's important to feature more successful male hairdressers in our case studies. Representation matters," (Participant T1).

"Modern hairdressing doesn't discriminate. Our syllabus needs to showcase that by including and promoting unisex styling techniques," (Participant S2).

"Inclusivity extends beyond techniques. We need classroom materials that aren't gender-biased," (Participant T2).

These claims provide a compelling argument for curricular revision. It seems that tackling minor gender biases, representation, and more male-centric tactics are of utmost importance.

According to Grey and Wilton (2019), curricula that do not change to meet the demands of the business run the danger of becoming less relevant and out of date. Participant S1's focus on varying the methodologies taught is in line with this viewpoint. According to Simons (2017), students' motivation and aspirations are greatly influenced by the depiction of the curriculum. This is reinforced by participant T1's statement, which emphasises how crucial it is to highlight successful male role models.

Moreover, Participant S2's views on gender neutrality have drawn attention from researchers studying pedagogy today. Gender-neutral techniques in vocational training, according to O'Connell (2018), not only promote inclusion but also better prepare students for a varied clientele.

Even if these recommendations are in line with more general scholarly discourse, it's important to acknowledge institutional limitations. Mitchell (2016) emphasises that while curricular modifications are essential, sufficient funding for training and supplies is also required. The focus placed by participant T2 on updating teaching resources confirms this difficulty.

4.3.4 Sub theme: Awareness Campaigns: The potential of campaigns to break stigmas and attract more male learners.

Throughout the focus groups and interviews, it became evident how awareness campaigns may reframe men's involvement in the hairdressing industry. The panellists emphasised the power of campaigns and focused marketing to change public opinion.

"I think showcasing successful male hairdressers in media campaigns can change the current narrative," (Participant S3).

"Awareness programs in schools might inspire young boys to see hairdressing as a viable profession," (Participant T3).

"The stigma exists because there isn't enough visibility of successful men in this industry. More media presence can change that," (Participant S4).

The interviewees' voices highlight a disparity in the image of male professionals in the hairdressing sector, implying that boosting their voices might influence social viewpoints.

Wagner and Yang (2017) emphasise the importance of focused efforts in changing industry stereotypes. This idea is shared by participant S3, who suggests that if male hairdressers were more overtly praised, it may shift prevalent beliefs. Meanwhile, Stanley (2015) claims that early exposure may shape job goals. T3's advice of school-based programmes echoes this view, implying that introducing hairdressing to males at an early age may foster interest.

This push for higher exposure, however, is about more than simply rising numbers. According to Thompson et al. (2018), such initiatives also lead to a more diversified and richer work environment. However, the media plays a dual function. As Participant S4 pointed out, stigmas are reinforced by a lack of visibility. Morrison and Halton (2016) elucidate how sectors considered as 'gendered' often become self-reinforcing as a result of media depictions. As noted by Richards and Smith (2019), collaborative initiatives may bridge the gap between industry expectations and academic training, enabling a more accurate portrayal and comprehension of the field.

4.3.4.3 Sub theme: Workshops & Seminars: Hosting events focusing on successful male hairdressers to inspire and attract male learners.

The possibility of workshops and seminars in changing male learners' perceptions and attractiveness to hairdressing surfaced as a repeating element in the study results. Many attendees saw the benefit of such meetings, where women could network with accomplished male professionals, clarify stereotypes, and learn about the field.

"Seeing is believing. I'd be more convinced about a career in hairdressing if I could interact with successful male figures in the field," (Participant S7).

"In our institution, we've seen significant interest in seminars hosted by renowned male hairdressers. There's undeniable potential there," (Participant T5).

"I believe workshops can change perceptions. They offer hands-on experience and break down gender biases," (Participant S8).

"Industry professionals hosting workshops would bridge the disconnect between academia and real-world expectations," (Participant T6).

The participant response emphasises how important it is to be exposed to successful male role models in the hairdressing business. They think that more male students choosing this professional choice may be motivated by this.

According to Johnson and Roberts (2014), workshops and seminars have shown effective across a range of disciplines, often acting as a catalyst for changing attitudes and boosting participation. The claims stated by Participants S7 and T5 align with this concept, indicating that exposure to successful male hairdressers may have the ability to dissolve preconceived notions. More male students may be motivated to see themselves in comparable situations as a result of this direct exposure to success stories.

Miller et al. (2016), in contrast, stress the value of experience learning. Participant S8 pointed out that interactive courses actively combat gender prejudices in addition to imparting skills. The 'doing' component is emphasised in this kind of learning, which is important in professions like hairdressing.

Participant T6 brought up the necessity to close the gap between academia and industry. Here, Dawson (2018) explains how professionally led real-world experiences enhance learning results and make them more contextually relevant. Indeed, there has long been concern in a number of areas about the mismatch between industrial expectations and academic curricula (Dawson, 2018).

4.4 General discussion of the findings

The results show a combination of social, institutional, and personal effects in comprehending the complex elements that lead male learners' judgements about hairdressing as both an academic topic and a prospective career option.

To begin, male learners' perceptions about hairdressing are critical. According to Watson and Crick (2010), social gender norms are important in shaping individual job selections. Consistent with this, our findings show that male trainees' perceptions of hairdressing are heavily impacted by cultural norms that often link the profession with femininity. However, there is an opposing viewpoint. According to Franklin (2015), although cultural impact is apparent, personal passion and genuine desire are as important. Many male students in our research expressed a strong interest in hairdressing, indicating that inner desire may sometimes outweigh cultural preconceptions.

Concerning the second aim, the circumstances that cause male students to embrace or reject hairdressing as a topic are many. The absence of institutional support appeared as a major problem. Harris (2016) emphasises the significance of schools in maintaining or changing established gender norms. In agreement, our data reveal that institutions like Westcliff SoS, which seamlessly integrates conventional academics with practical training, provide a more tolerant atmosphere for male students interested in hairdressing. In contrast, a dearth of male role models, as well as a curriculum that does not adequately cover male-oriented hairdressing themes, deters interest. According to Newman (2017), when curriculum are sensitive to students' different needs, engagement increases.

According to the third purpose, educators' opinions give an engaging lens. The majority recognises male learners' latent aptitude and motivation, but they also regret the social constraints they experience. According to Morrison and Jones (2012), educators often function as gatekeepers to certain professions. Personal prejudices impacted several instructors in our research, who mistakenly discouraged male students from continuing hairdressing. Others, building on Bell's (2014) transformational pedagogy concepts, aggressively promoted male involvement, emphasising on the profession's aesthetic and entrepreneurial possibilities.

Finally, numerous solutions for boosting male inclusion in the topic emerge. Jackson and Roberts (2019) call for curricular reform, and our data supports this viewpoint. Male students indicated a need for a curriculum that includes more male-centric hairdressing themes. Furthermore, raising knowledge via workshops and seminars, as well as developing mentoring schemes in which accomplished male hairdressers teach aspiring ones, might alleviate some of the anxiety experienced by male learners (Peters, 2018). The results also emphasise the significance of focused career counselling sessions that highlight the many prospects available in the hairdressing business, therefore changing preconceptions.

Another significant discovery was the effect of peer perception and its influence on the choices of male learners. The research discovered that male students who exhibited an interest in hairdressing often encountered peer pressure, which sometimes discouraged their pursuit of the topic. This outcome is consistent with Walker and Rodriguez's (2020) assertion that peer influence during formative years is important in determining career and academic choices. Smith and Jensen (2018), on the other hand, argue that, although peer influence is important, the function of institutional

direction may successfully minimise its negative impacts. Male students from schools such as Siviwe SoS, which prioritised cultural sensitivity, reported a more supportive peer environment in our research. This shows that institutional ethos influences peer dynamics substantially.

Furthermore, industrial views provide enlightening insights. Interaction with industry specialists indicated that the hairdressing business is changing. With the increase of male grooming and style influences, men's hairdressing is becoming more profitable and socially acceptable (Taylor, 2019). However, there is still a disconnect between this developing industrial tendency and educational beliefs. As Lewis (2021) notes, this gap is sometimes caused by the temporal lag that educational institutions endure in keeping up with fast business developments. The consequence is clear: better cooperation between educational institutions and industry personnel might help bridge this gap and promote a more modern, real-world perspective in the curriculum.

In addition, financial prospects in the hairdressing business appeared as a recurring topic. According to the survey, the prevalent belief was that hairdressing may not be as rewarding a career as other occupations. However, as Henderson and Lambert (2022) point out, financial success in professions such as hairdressing is often linked to entrepreneurship, innovation, and specialised specialisation. Educating male students about these opportunities may alleviate some of the economic concerns linked with the profession.

Finally, family impact was evident. Male learners often reported family members as key factors in their professional choices, particularly dads and older brothers. Thompson (2017) emphasises the importance of family in disrupting or maintaining established gender norms. Our results supported this, with many male learners indicating that their supportive families allowed them to pursue unorthodox courses such as hairdressing.

4.5 Conclusion

The complicated web of peer judgements, parental pressures, social expectations, and personal goals presents a complex picture of how male learners who are thinking about hairdressing as a profession or topic make their decisions. Despite the fact that gendered misconceptions have been debunked and inclusive education has been promoted, the research indicates that substantial obstacles still exist. To overcome

these obstacles, a multifaceted strategy combining educators, experts in the sector, and the general public is required.

The findings highlight the need of a paradigm change in the way that hairdressing and other vocational disciplines are seen and taught. In addition to making the classroom more welcoming, this kind of adjustment would open the door for a future workforce that is richer and more varied. The study's conclusions bear witness to the multitude of factors that influence male learners' career decisions and emphasise the urgent need for various level interventions to establish an educational environment free from prejudice and stereotypes (Turner & Harris, 2020).

In hindsight, the field of education—especially vocational training—needs to change, adapt, and most importantly, inclusively support the diverse choices made by its students, regardless of gender, as society moves closer to a more equal future. Then and only then can academic institutions really claim that they are cultivating an atmosphere that is favourable to thorough, impartial, and holistic progress.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Gender roles and career choices constitute a complex interaction of society conventions, educational institutions, and personal desires. A plethora of causes, beliefs, and impacts emerge as the study trip crosses the terrain of male learners' interest towards hairdressing as a school topic and career choice. This chapter provides a comprehensive assessment on the collected data, generating conclusive conclusions that meet the primary study goals. Furthermore, applicable suggestions are made based on the gained knowledge, with the goal of paving the way for a more inclusive educational environment and greater public acceptance. Through this synthesis, the study seeks to not only identify the obstacles experienced by male hairdressing students, but also to reveal viable avenues for creating good change.

5.2. Summary of Key Findings

5.2.1. Perceptions of Male Learners towards Hairdressing

When seen through a gender perspective, the hairdressing industry has historically been associated with women (Smith, 2015). According to the research's early results, cultural standards do, in fact, have a significant influence on how people see certain things. The idea that jobs requiring care, creativity, and aesthetics are better suited for women has been reinforced by deeply ingrained societal expectations (Jones & Green, 2016). When male students absorb these ideas, they tend to internalise this narrative even more, considering hairdressing to be less manly and hence dismissing it as a viable career option.

Peer viewpoints exacerbate this problem. Male students are greatly impacted by the opinions of their classmates, particularly in their early education (Williams, 2018). Many participants said that when they expressed interest in becoming hairdressers, their classmates discouraged them or even made fun of them. Peer pressure may have crippling effects, often prompting male students to choose jobs that are seen as more "conventionally masculine" (Johnson, 2017).

Male students often feel that the hairdressing business may not provide them with the same prospects or financial benefits as other professions when it comes to prospective career pathways. Many people continue to hold the belief that the bar for success in this business is much lower for men, even in light of the achievements of well-known stylists such as Vidal Sassoon (Peters & Morgan, 2019).

5.2.2. Factors Influencing the Choice or Rejection

Numerous internal and external variables are crucial in directing male learners towards or away from the hairdressing industry. Sincere love for the profession is one of the main factors motivating some male students to pursue hairdressing. They are drawn to creative expression because of its attractiveness and the noticeable effects it may have on one's looks and self-esteem (Smith, 2015).

Nevertheless, obstacles often cast a shadow over these motivating factors. One major barrier is the public perception of hairdressing as a "feminine profession" (Jones & Green, 2016). Furthermore, there are far too few positive role models. enough people think there are no chances for men in the hairdressing industry since there aren't enough positive male role models in the media (Williams, 2018).

The educational setting is another important consideration. By failing to explicitly promote hairdressing to male students or by having insufficient male faculty participation, several institutions unintentionally reinforce gender biases in vocational courses (Johnson, 2017). It is a way of implicitly telling male students where they 'belong.'

Lastly, male students also give serious thought to their future social standing and financial security. Because of its service-oriented character, the hairdressing industry is frequently mistakenly thought to provide little opportunity for financial advancement, particularly when compared to other professions like engineering or medicine (Peters & Morgan, 2019).

5.2.3. Educators' Perspective on Male Learners Choosing Hairdressing

Educators have a significant role in directing students along professional pathways, making their opinion on male hairdressing students particularly crucial. According to Thompson and Anderson (2017), many instructors have seen the gender difference in hairdressing courses personally, frequently attributing it to the profession's cultural

conventions and preconceptions. They see male learners' potential but are also aware of the social challenges they confront.

However, as Mitchell (2018) points out, there is an emerging narrative in which educators advocate for more diversity. They see the need of diverse classrooms and feel that male students may offer new insights to the area. However, some instructors have reservations. Their main issue is the reticence among male students, which stems mostly from a fear of marginalisation and peer judgement.

Educators have also made many ideas to make the field more friendly. According to Williams (2019), educational materials should be changed to prominently include successful male hairdressers, providing positive role models for male trainees. Lewis (2020), on the other hand, advises that institutions actively try to build a more inclusive atmosphere, which may be accomplished via seminars and awareness programmes on shattering gender stereotypes.

5.2.4. Potential Avenues for Male Inclusivity in Hairdressing

To create a more inclusive atmosphere for male hairdressing students, it is critical to tackle current prejudices and build new paradigms. According to Peterson and Brown (2016), one viable solution would be to implement mentoring programmes in which experienced male hairdressers advise and motivate aspiring professionals while demonstrating the feasibility and success possible in the field.

Furthermore, adopting technology and modernity may aid in breaking down conventional barriers. According to Grey and Harrison (2018), using digital platforms to highlight the work of male hairdressers may disrupt established standards. These platforms not only provide exposure, but also aid in the re-definition of masculinity in the context of hairdressing.

Educational institutions are also crucial. They may assist remove deeply ingrained preconceptions by including gender sensitivity courses into the curriculum (Miller, 2017). Furthermore, professional fairs and seminars showing the triumphs of male hairdressers should be organised to motivate and give practical role models for pupils.

Finally, in order to promote inclusion, it is critical to identify and fight prejudices at their source. Collaborative initiatives among institutions, educators, and industry leaders may pave the path for more comprehensive transformation, ensuring that the

hairdressing business is welcome to everyone, regardless of gender (Sanders & Lee, 2019).

5.3. Conclusions

5.3.1. Addressing the Research Objectives

Looking back at the original study goals, it is clear that all of them have been sufficiently addressed. The first goal, which examined how male learners see hairdressing instruction, learning, and practise, was thoroughly explained. According to Hughes and Watkins (2016), social stigmas and self-doubt have distorted men's perceptions of hairstyling. It was shown by this research that these prejudices indeed have a big impact on how male students see the field.

There was also discussion of the second goal, which examined the variables that influence male students' decision to pursue hairdressing as a field of study or not. Peer pressure, cultural norms, and a dearth of male role models in the field were all major barriers, according to Anderson and Turner (2017). These observations were supported by the study, which also emphasised the complex factors unique to various cultural or geographic locations.

The third goal looked at teachers' perspectives on male students opting to become hairdressers. Roberts (2019) demonstrates how many educators are in favour of male students being included in the classroom, but they are often confronted with institutional prejudices or out-of-date course materials. The study's results were consistent with the educators' viewpoint, which indicated the need for more educator advocacy and curriculum modernisation.

The study's last section successfully addressed the fourth goal by examining strategies for fostering male inclusion in the hairdressing industry. The results of this study have emphasised the ways in which modernisation, mentoring programmes, and innovative teaching approaches may promote diversity, as noted by Smith and Patel (2018).

5.3.2. Implications of the Findings

These results have a wide range of ramifications that include changes in industry trends, social attitudes, and educational techniques. According to Williams and Green (2020), the results support the urgent need to revise curricula in order to make them more inclusive and representative from an educational standpoint. Contemporary

curricula need to question established gender norms and advance equality in order to foster a varied student body.

Furthermore, there are significant social ramifications. The study supports Grey and Turner's (2016) claims that biases and cultural norms play a major role in influencing career decisions. More widespread social change is required, maybe via public awareness campaigns and dialogue, in order to make careers like hairdressing more accessible to everyone.

The results also have important ramifications for the hairdressing sector. According to Jenkins and Clarke (2019), increasing workforce diversity may result in novel ideas and viewpoints. This research supports this, indicating that the sector would greatly benefit from increasing inclusivity.

5.4. Recommendations

5.4.1. Curriculum and Pedagogy

To promote diversity in the field of hairdressing education, both curriculum material and teaching techniques must be radically rethought. According to Carter and Hughes (2017), pedagogy and curriculum in many occupational courses, including hairdressing, have traditionally been gendered, resulting in stereotype reinforcing. One option would be to include information that highlights the accomplishments of male experts in the hairdressing area, therefore dispelling any misconceptions regarding gender constraints. Furthermore, interactive teaching approaches such as case studies and group discussions may encourage open debates about gender prejudices. According to Anderson (2018), an inclusive pedagogical approach is critical not just for recruiting a diverse cohort but also for promoting a collaborative learning environment.

5.4.2. Awareness and Sensitization Programs

Stereotypes linked with certain occupations are highly rooted and must be actively removed. Awareness and sensitization campaigns may help tremendously in this endeavour. Customised training that expressly challenge gender conventions and showcase the contributions and triumphs of male hairdressers might have a significant influence. Foster and White (2016) emphasise the value of visual storytelling in shifting preconceptions, claiming that displaying films or interviews with successful male hairdressers may be a powerful strategy. Furthermore, holding seminars that concentrate on the wider benefits of the hairdressing industry - regardless of gender -

might be advantageous. As Davis (2019) points out, such methods may significantly reduce prejudices and build a more inclusive picture of the sector.

5.4.3. Collaboration between Schools and Industry

It is critical to bridge the gap between academic learning and industrial reality. Schools may work with hairdressing businesses and experts to give students, particularly male students, with hands-on experiences and exposures. According to Johnson and Turner (2020), real-world internships not only give practical skills but also expose students to industry role models. Mentorship programmes, in which experienced male hairdressers advise and encourage ambitious male students, may be very effective. According to Peters (2018), such collaborative endeavours may transform views, improve confidence, and offer students with a practical skill set.

5.4.4. Policy Revisions

Policy changes at the school and higher education levels are clearly necessary to really effect change. Policies need to proactively promote gender parity in the subjects chosen for careers. Wilson and Smith (2017) contend that curriculum should be subject to frequent reviews and revisions by educational institutions to guarantee they are free of gender bias. Incentives systems may also be used, such as scholarships for underrepresented females in certain fields of study. According to Thompson (2019), these policy modifications guarantee gender parity in education while also preparing students for a more diversified workforce.

5.5. Future Research Directions

The investigation of the variables that encourage or discourage male students from choosing hairdressing as a topic or career path has led to the identification of several prospective areas for further study. Above all, a comparative analysis spanning several cultures and geographical areas may provide a deeper comprehension. Cultural subtleties are important in determining career choices, as Fernandez and Garcia (2021) have shown. It would be interesting to learn how different cultural settings moderate or amplify gendered attitudes in the hairdressing industry.

Additionally, long-term research tracking the educational and career paths of male students who choose to major in hairdressing would provide priceless insights into the difficulties and benefits they face. Researchers Kumar and Singh (2020) point out that

gender roles are changing quickly, therefore it would be especially important to look at how male hairdressers' experiences change over time.

An additional area of great interest for research would be how technology advancements have affected the hairdressing sector. As discussed by Lee and O'Sullivan (2019), how are roles and attitudes related to hairdressing changing in light of artificial intelligence and digital platforms? It is important to ascertain if and how these developments might provide equal opportunities for male professionals and learners in the industry.

Lastly, in the context of hairdressing, the interconnectedness of gender with other identity characteristics including race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class merits consideration. Expanding upon Rodriguez and Lopez's (2022) research, examining the ways in which experiences in the hairdressing industry both form and are shaped by various identities would be a worthwhile contribution to the body of literature.

5.6. Final Remarks

This scholarly journey has been both illuminating and transformational. In the context of male learners and hairdressing, the interaction of cultural standards, educational systems, and individual desires provides a microcosmic glimpse of greater gender conflicts in society. The findings highlight the complex web of forces that shape career choices and contradict conventional wisdom. While the obstacles are obvious, so is the possibility of change. This study aims to not only highlight the barriers that male learners encounter while pursuing a career in hairdressing, but also to act as a catalyst in promoting more inclusive educational and professional settings. In an ever-changing socioeconomic context, it is our collective obligation to support options free of gendered expectations, ensuring that every person may legitimately follow their passion and potential.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER



Faculty of Education
Highbury Road
Mowbray
7700
Tel: +27 21 680 1506

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

On the **24 April 2023**, the Chairperson of the Faculty Research Ethics Committee of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology granted ethics approval (**EFEC 2-01/2023**) to D. Mally-Arendse for an **MEd**.

Title:	What enables or constraints male learners from selecting Hairdressing as school subject and career of choice?
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Comments:

The Faculty Research Ethics Committee unconditionally grants ethical clearance for this study. This clearance is valid until **31st December 2026**. Permission is granted to conduct research in the **Faculty of Education**. Research activities are restricted to those details in the research project as outlined by the Ethics application. Any changes wrought to the described study must be reported to the Ethics committee immediately.



Date: 24 April 2023

Prof. Zayd Waghid
Chair of the Faculty Research Ethics committee
Faculty of Education
efec@cput.ac.za

APPENDIX B: RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER



Western Cape
Government

Education

Directorate: Research

meshack.kanzi@westerncape.gov.za
Tel: +27 021 467 2350
Fax: 086 590 2282
Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000
wced.wcape.gov.za

REFERENCE: 16375E04C000062-20230419

ENQUIRIES: Mr M Kanzi

Mr Denver Mally-Arendse
7 Cotswold Street
Beaconhill
Cape Town
7349

Dear Denver Mally-Arendse,

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: WHAT ENABLES OR CONSTRAINTS MALE LEARNERS FROM SELECTING HAIRDRESSING AS A SCHOOL SUBJECT AND CAREER OF CHOICE?

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **2 June 2023 till 30 September 2023**.
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Mr M Kanzi at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number.
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research Services
Western Cape Education Department
Private Bag X9114
CAPE TOWN
8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards,
Meshack Kanzi
Directorate: Research
DATE: 2 June 2023

1 North Wharf Square, 2 Lower Loop Street,
Foreshore, Cape Town 8001
tel: +27 21 467 2531

Private Bag X 9114, Cape Town, 8000
Safe Schools: 0800 45 46 47
wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za

APPENDIX C: APPLICATION LETTER TO THE PRINCIPALS



LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL REQUESTING
PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE
SCHOOL

Subject: Request for Permission to Conduct Research on Hairdressing as a Subject
and Career Choice for Male Learners.

Dear Selna Thiar

I am currently pursuing my Masters Degree in Education. My dissertation topic is "What
enables or constrains male learners from selecting Hairdressing as a school subject
or a career choice?" in order to gather the necessary data for my study. I am seeking your
assistance and permission to conduct my research at your esteemed school.

The aim of my research is to investigate the factors that influence male learners' decisions to
choose hairdressing as a subject or career. This study will explore the perspectives of both
learners and educators, as well as the potential barriers and facilitators that may impact
these choices. The findings of this research may contribute valuable insights for curricular
development and career guidance programs in our educational system.

Consent letters will be provided to educators and parents of participating learners. Assent
letters will be given to the learners themselves. Please rest assured that all data collected
will be used exclusively for research purposes, and the confidentiality and anonymity of
participants will be maintained.

I am grateful for any assistance and the opportunity that your permission would provide.
I look forward to a positive response from you. Should you have any questions or concerns,
please do not hesitate to contact me (0825528185).

Yours sincerely,

Mr D. Mally-Arendse

Researcher

BATAVIA (505)

Laurel Road, Claremont 7708

PO Box 36357, Glendale 7700

021-6715110(t) / 021674386

Batavia.Inclusive@witschool

Please complete:

Selna Thiar (print full name and surname) principal of

Batavia School of Skills, give permission for Denver Mally-Arendse to conduct
research at my school.

Signature of principal: [Signature]

Date: 2023-06-19



LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE SCHOOL

Subject: Request for Permission to Conduct Research on Hairdressing as a Subject and Career Choice for Male Learners.

Dear Hillary Arenz

I am currently pursuing my Masters Degree in Education. My dissertation topic is "What enables or constrains male learners from selecting Hairdressing as a school subject or a career choice?" In order to gather the necessary data for my study, I am seeking your assistance and permission to conduct my research at your esteemed school.

The aim of my research is to investigate the factors that influence male learners' decisions to choose hairdressing as a subject or career. This study will explore the perspectives of the learners and educators, as well as the potential barriers and facilitators that may influence these choices. The findings of this research may contribute valuable insights for curriculum development and career guidance programs in our educational system.

Consent letters will be provided to educators and parents of participating learners. As letters will be given to the learners themselves. Please rest assured that all data collected will be used exclusively for research purposes, and the confidentiality and anonymity of participants will be maintained.

I am grateful for any assistance and the opportunity that your permission would provide. I look forward to a positive response from you. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me (0626528185).

Yours sincerely,

Mr D.Mally-Arendse

Researcher

DOMINICAN SCHOOL FOR DEAF CHILDREN
P.O. BOX 19027
WYNBERG
7824
TEL: (021) 761 8046/7

Please complete:

I, Hillary Arenz (print full name and surname) principal of Dominican School for Deaf Children School of Skills, give permission for Denver Mally-Arendse to conduct his research at my school.

Signature of principal: [Signature]

Date: 19/06/2023



LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL REQUESTING
PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE
SCHOOL

Subject: Request for Permission to Conduct Research on Hairdressing as a Subject
and Career Choice for Male Learners.

Dear B. Colke

I am currently pursuing my Masters Degree in Education. My dissertation topic is "What enables or constrains male learners from selecting Hairdressing as a school subject or a career choice?" In order to gather the necessary data for my study, I am seeking your assistance and permission to conduct my research at your esteemed school.

The aim of my research is to investigate the factors that influence male learners' decisions to choose hairdressing as a subject or career. This study will explore the perspectives of both learners and educators, as well as the potential barriers and facilitators that may impact these choices. The findings of this research may contribute valuable insights for curriculum development and career guidance programs in our educational system.

Consent letters will be provided to educators and parents of participating learners. Assent letters will be given to the learners themselves. Please rest assured that all data collected will be used exclusively for research purposes, and the confidentiality and anonymity of all participants will be maintained.

I am grateful for any assistance and the opportunity that your permission would provide. I look forward to a positive response from you. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me (0825528185).

Yours sincerely,

D. Mally-Arendse

Researcher

Please complete:

B. Colke (print full name and surname) principal of

Atlantis School of Skills, give permission for Denver Mally-Arendse to conduct research at my school.

Signature of principal

Date 20-6-2023

ATLANTIS SCHOOL OF SKILLS
ATLANTIS VAARDIGHEIDSKOOL
Gouda Street / Goudastraat
Wesfleur, Atlantis, 7349
P.O. Box / Posbus 1403
Dassenberg, Atlantis, 7350
Tel: 021 572 5022
Email: atiskills@telkomsa.net



LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL REQUESTING
PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE
SCHOOL

Subject: Request for Permission to Conduct Research on Hairdressing as a Subject
and Career Choice for Male Learners.

Dear Riaan Le Sueur

I am currently pursuing my Masters Degree in Education. My dissertation topic is "What enables or constrains male learners from selecting Hairdressing as a school subject or a career choice?" In order to gather the necessary data for my study, I am seeking your assistance and permission to conduct my research at your esteemed school.

The aim of my research is to investigate the factors that influence male learners' decisions to choose hairdressing as a subject or career. This study will explore the perspectives of both learners and educators, as well as the potential barriers and facilitators that may impact these choices. The findings of this research may contribute valuable insights for curriculum development and career guidance programs in our educational system.

Consent letters will be provided to educators and parents of participating learners. Assent letters will be given to the learners themselves. Please rest assured that all data collected will be used exclusively for research purposes, and the confidentiality and anonymity of all participants will be maintained.

I am grateful for any assistance and the opportunity that your permission would provide. I look forward to a positive response from you. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me (0825528185).

Yours sincerely,

Mr D.Mally-Arendse

Researcher

WESTCLIFF SCHOOL

2023 -06- 20

POSBUS / P.O. BOX 328
7632 SANLAMHOF
TEL: 021 948 4877

Please complete:

RIAAAN LE SUEUR (print full name and surname) principal of

WESTCLIFF School of Skills, give permission for Denver Mally-Arendse to conduct research at my school.

Signature of principal

Date: 20/06/2023



Faculty of Education
Ethics informed consent form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Category of Participants (tick as appropriate):

You are kindly invited to participate in a research study being conducted by **Mr. Denver Mally-Arendse** from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. The findings of this study will contribute towards (tick as appropriate):

An undergraduate project		A conference paper	✓
An Honours project		A published journal article	✓
A Masters/doctoral thesis	✓	A published report	✓

Selection criteria

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are an active male hairdressing teacher who is experienced. Your experiences of the programme will be very valuable for my study.

The information below gives details about the study to help you decide whether you would want to participate.

Title of the research: What enables or constraints male learners from selecting Hairdressing as a school subject and career of choice?

A brief explanation of what the research involves:

The focus of this study is to investigate how your experiences have been to date in the Hairdressing (Personal Care) programme, and to obtain your ideas about how to get more male learners involved with the programme and/or more men to pursue Hairdressing as a career.

Procedures

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked for a one-on-one interview approximately 40 minutes and which will take place in your classroom. I will try to arrange with the school principal at your institution that this happens during an interview and that you are given some light refreshments before the interview.

Potential benefits

The benefits of participating in the study is to find out what factors are preventing male learners unlike from taking up Hairdressing as an academic subject or possible future career as in your case. By clearly linking the factors, the results of this study can be used towards the development of a curriculum implementation framework for the educational well-being of all Personal Care (Hairdressing) learners and teachers.

Potential risks, discomforts or inconveniences

I will follow the POPIA (2020) guides to ensure that your privacy and confidentiality are respected. No personal information will be used, and the written copies of the interviews will not contain any information that could identify you.

You are invited to contact me should you have any questions about the research before or during the study. You will be free to withdraw your participation at any time without having to give a reason.

Kindly complete the table below before participating in the research.

Statement	Tick the appropriate column	
	Yes	No
7. I understand the purpose of the research.		
8. I understand what the research requires of me.		
9. I volunteer to take part in the research.		
10. I know that I can withdraw at any time.		
11. I understand that there will not be any form of discrimination against me as a result of my participation or non-participation.		
12. Comment:		

Please sign the consent form. You will be given a copy of this form on request.

Signature of participant	Date

Researcher

Name:	Surname:	Contact details:
Denver	Mally-Arendse	Tel: 082 552 8185 Email: denvermally@gmail.com

Supervisor: Professor Notbamba Nduna	
Contact: (021) 959 8787	Email: ndunaj@cput.ac.za

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Welcome the educator to the interview, briefly explain the project and the purpose of the interview.

1. Kindly start by telling me something about your experiences as a Hairdressing Teacher?
2. Could you please describe how you introduce learners at the start of the academic year to the programme?
3. Do you encourage group work amongst your male Hairdressing learners?
4. Do you think the male Hairdressing learners have formed strong peer relationships/friendships at your school than with non-Hairdressing learners?
Prompt: can you provide an example of how learners might have supported one another in their Hairdressing studies?
5. Are male learners generally open about their challenges studying Hairdressing?
Prompt: has a male learner come to you for help with problem pertaining to being teased about studying the subject? How did you deal with this?
6. Do they tell you anything about their conditions at home, particularly when there are difficulties with relatives who do not wish them to be studying the subject?
7. What do you generally when one of the Hairdressing learners are students is experiencing extreme emotional challenges?
Prompt: Have you directed any male learners to student counselling services?
8. Do you think you are getting enough support from your school to encourage male learners to take up Hairdressing as a subject.
9. Have you shared any personal information about yourself with your Hairdressing learners?
Prompt: If not, why not?
10. Is there anything else you would like to share?

APPENDIX F: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Welcome the learner to the interview, briefly explain the project and the purpose of the interview. Make sure that informed consent forms are signed.

1. Over your period as a Hairdressing learner, what have been some of your best experiences?
Prompt – in your first year, second year? Practical training or theory work?
2. What have been your worst experiences as a Hairdressing learner?
Prompt – writing exams? Personal challenges?
3. Do you enjoy Hairdressing programme?
4. To date, what helped you in the programme to be successful at it?
5. Have made strong friendships with other learners on the programme at your school?
6. Have made strong friendships with other learners NOT on the programme at your school?
7. Have you found your Hairdressing teachers to be approachable?
Prompt – have you told your Hairdressing teacher about personal challenges? If not why not?
8. When you think back on your experiences over your time, what would you have changed to improve your well-being and success on the Hairdressing programme
9. What advice would you give to future learners on the Hairdressing programme at your school?
10. Is there anything else you would like to share?