

**IMPLICATIONS OF GENDER STEREOTYPES IN  
THE SELECTED BASOTHO TRADITIONAL  
*KHATI* SONG ‘KOOKO!’ AND GAMES:  
*KHOTSOANE, MANTLOANE AND MOKALLO***

**By**

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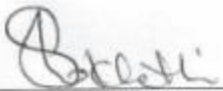
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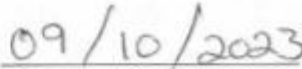
## DECLARATION

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I declare that **IMPLICATIONS OF GENDER STEREOTYPES IN THE SELECTED BASOTHO TRADITIONAL *KHATI* SONG ‘KOOKO!’ AND GAMES: *KHOTSOANE, MANTLOANE AND MOKALLO*** is my work and that all sources that I have used or cited have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## SUPERVISOR'S RECOMMENDATION

Approved and recommended for acceptance as a partial fulfilment of the requirement of M.A. Degree.

Supervisor

Date

A rectangular area containing a handwritten signature on the left and a handwritten date '09/10/2023' on the right. A horizontal line is drawn across the signature area.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study discusses ways in which gender stereotypes are implied in the Basotho traditional *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and the selected games: *khotsoane*, *mantloane* and *mokallo*. The study identified some gender stereotypes in the Basotho traditional *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and the selected games. These identified gender stereotypes seem to be the embodiment of values expected later in children as adults. The values are instilled in children through their participation and performance of the song and the games selected for this study. Basotho traditional games and songs discussed in this study reveal some gender stereotypes where a society expects males and females to perform certain roles and responsibilities from a tender age. The study further demonstrates that certain cultural practices and rites of passage performed on either a boy and a girl-child at birth inform some gender stereotypes. Parents and grandparents are also found to be the contributing factors to these gender stereotypes as they dictate the children’s roles and responsibilities from the early stages of development.

The findings also show that most of these gender stereotypes have positive impact towards attitudes and behaviour expected by the society in the children. It is therefore concluded that there are societal expectations on gender roles and responsibilities in children from a tender age. The introduction of games and songs to the children dictates different roles for boys and girls on how they have to conduct themselves in their society in future.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces the study and presents how the study has been conducted. It covers the following: background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions and hypotheses, purpose of the study, significance, scope, literature review, theoretical framework, methodology and organisation of the study.

### 1.1 Background to the Study

The Basotho are amongst the African nations that use traditional games and songs in the upbringing of their children. They introduce the children to the traditional games and songs from a tender age. These games and songs reflect the cultural norms and values of a society, the cultural environment, the Basotho cultural modes of telling people who they are and their gender roles (Ntšihlele, 2003: 28). The Basotho traditional games and songs help the children to understand their society's way of life. Wanderi (2011: 14) and Amlor (2016: 63) assert that traditional games and songs teach and give the children an in-depth understanding of who they are; they also measure the aesthetic value of their culture. Wanderi and Amlor indicate that the African traditional games and songs have been transmitted from one generation to another through the use of memory, oral communication and specific activities, such as playing and singing.

In addition, Malobola-Ndlovu (2018: 1) states that the African children in the African communities and societies participate in different traditional games and songs. These children even know different kinds of games and songs, which they have learnt orally from each other, such as, fairy tales, riddles, rhymes and other traditional games and songs (Malobola-Ndlovu, 2018: 1). To maintain what these different scholars have said, each African country has to follow and stick to its tradition. Tradition is a situation where the society stayed almost the same from generation to generation (Graburn, 2008: 7). Graburn (2008:7) further says that the African society maintains its status and identity if it holds onto its language, stories, games and memories. UK essays (2018: 1) adds that tradition has been the foundation that gives people meaning and purpose in their social lives. It is further said that tradition serves as a guide to

people's beliefs, values and behaviours. Looking at what the two scholars say about the tradition, the Basotho society is not an exception in how they follow their tradition to instil roles and responsibilities in children through traditional games and songs.

Edward *et al.* (2001: 809) define traditional games and songs as activities through which the children explore their environment and perform different social roles. They point out that the boys prefer the roles of a father, brother, husband or a traditionally male occupation whereas the girls choose the roles of a mother, sister, wife or what they see as a female occupation. Another important point that they put forward is that, during participation in the traditional games and songs, the children begin to identify themselves as boys and girls from early stages. They develop an identity system and decide who, what, how and where they will play as most Basotho traditional games and songs have specific times and places to be performed. In games such as *mantloane* 'small houses', young girls play alone except in the case where boys are around as they are expected to herd calves, kids and lambs or do pottery. *Mantloane* is one of important games for girls to perform and learn about different social roles such as house chores and parenting.

Edward *et al.*'s (2001) definition of traditional games and songs is more detailed and relevant to issues about gender stereotypes. The definition highlights different social roles between boys and girls, which are the expectations of the society. From the traditional games and songs activities, it is concluded that the Basotho children have plenty of gendered games such as *mantloane* 'small houses' for the girls while the boys make animals out of clay (Segoete, 2015: 18). As observed, Segoete emphasises that these gendered games enhance gender stereotypes from a tender age.

Few scholars define gender stereotypes, and their central definition is that gender stereotypes are the social expectations of the society from different groups of people based on being male or female. The scholars' definitions are mainly focusing on the children or people whose gender is associated with their natural sex assigned at birth, which is the focus of this study. For instance, a boy-child is expected to herd the animals and hunt for food. A girl-child is also expected to take care of family chores such as cleaning and preparing food.

Machobane (1996: 34) defines gender stereotypes as unreal images portrayed by the society about any particular type of person, thing or group of people based on male

and female. Zuhro (2018: 125) asserts that the gender stereotypes are determined by the conception of tasks, functions and roles attributed to women and men in society and the public. The researcher adopts Zuhro's definition of gender stereotypes as a working definition for this study as it highlights the roles and responsibilities expected from males and females by society, which is the focus of this study.

It is therefore, the intention of this study to discuss the contributing factors to the development of gender stereotypes. Moreover, the study seeks to, identify and discuss gender stereotypes reflected in the *khati* song 'kooko!' and discuss the intended and expected values in the children, which resulted from the gender stereotypes instilled in children through the Basotho traditional *khati* song 'kooko!' and the selected games: *khotsoane*, *mantloane* and *mokallo*.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The study is prompted by the observation that Basotho traditional games and songs played an important role in the upbringing of Basotho children. In the past, the Basotho society introduced different traditional songs and games to serve different purposes, and to embrace their culture. The performance of these songs took place during village gatherings and family ceremonies. Some of the games took place during the day and in the evening when the children have completed their tasks at home. The society also used games to entertain their children and instil moral values from a young age. Society expects every child to grow up knowing who she or he is through these traditional games and songs. It is the traditional games and songs that inculcate the expectations of society in which a boy and a girl-child perform different roles and responsibilities.

Scholars such as Masiea (1973) and Ntšihlele (2003) have examined Basotho traditional games and songs. On the one hand, Masiea (1973) focused on the classification and linguistic structure in Basotho traditional games while on the other hand, Ntšihlele (2003) examined the incorporation of music and the adoption of Western music in traditional games. Basotho traditional games and songs have values that can teach children about roles and responsibilities. However, both scholars were not concerned about different gender roles and responsibilities implied in some of the Basotho traditional games and songs which this study intends to interrogate. The primary question that emerges is: What gender stereotypes are there in the Basotho

traditional games and songs that can instil values in a Mosotho child? Therefore, in order to address this question, the study intends to find out the contributing factors to the development of gender stereotypes, as well as to identify the gender stereotypes implied in the *khati* song ‘kooko!’ *khotsoane*, *mantloane* and *mokallo*. Finally, the study aims to discuss the intended and expected values instilled in children through the *khati* song ‘kooko!’, *khotsoane*, *mantloane* and *mokallo*.

### **1.2.1 Research Questions**

- (a) What are the contributing factors to the development of gender stereotypes reflected in the Basotho traditional *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and the selected games?
- (b) What are the gender stereotypes identified in the Basotho traditional *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and the selected games?
- (c) What are the intended and expected values instilled in children through the Basotho traditional *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and the selected games?

### **1.2.2 Hypotheses**

- (a) The Basotho traditional practices, rites of passage, parents and grandparents contribute to the development of gender stereotypes identified in the *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and the selected games.
- (b) The gender stereotypes identified in the Basotho traditional *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and the selected games are preparation and provision of food, nurturing, babysitting, sharing, protection, courage, endurance and self-control.
- (c) The intended and expected values instilled in children through the *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and the selected games are good marriage relations, motherhood, humanity, self-confidence, perseverance and faithfulness.

## **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to discuss the gender stereotypes reflected in the Basotho traditional *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and the selected games:

- (a) To find out the contributing factors to the development of gender stereotypes identified in the *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and the selected games.
- (b) To identify the gender stereotypes implied in the *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and the selected games.

- (c) To discuss the intended and expected values instilled in children through the *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and the selected games.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The study is anticipated to be an eye-opener to other Basotho. For example, the traditional games and songs are the embodiment of tradition, norms and values that contribute to the development of character and behaviour in the children from a tender age. As a result, Basotho have to conserve traditional games and song for future generation. In addition, the study may be an eye-opener to the Basotho and non-governmental organisations in that different traditional practices performed from the birth of a child to adulthood and some rites of passage contribute to the development of gender stereotypes. The study may also conscientious the parents and grandparents that their way of raising the children may contribute to the development of gender stereotypes.

The study also anticipates sensitising different people such as the parents, guardians and villagers that the gender stereotypes can have a permanent negative influence on the children if they are not cautious about the children’s natural differences. The study may also be a plea to the National Curriculum Development Centre to include the traditional games and songs in the teaching of Sesotho in primary and secondary schools. Furthermore, other literature scholars may use this study as their reference.

#### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

The present study limited itself to discussing the gender stereotypes in the selected traditional Basotho *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and games: *khotsoane*, *mantloane* and *mokallo*.

#### **1.6 Literature Review**

This section reviews related literature from earlier scholars. It focuses on what the earlier scholars have done concerning gender stereotypes. The literature for this study follows a thematic approach, and it is categorised into three themes. The first theme focuses on the gender stereotypes in the Sesotho language. The second theme is based on the traditional games and songs while the last theme is on some factors contributing to gender stereotypes.

### ***1.6.1 Gender Stereotypes in the Sesotho Language***

Machobane (1996), Rapeane (2003), Molapo (2005) and Morojele (2012) based their works on gender stereotypes in the language of Sesotho.

Machobane (1996) has outlined some Sesotho proverbs which associate men with certain attributes, such as strength, endurance, bravery, secretiveness and wisdom. She has pointed out that society treats men and women differently through the use of the Sesotho proverbs, which seem to elevate positive attitudes towards men but not women. She has further indicated that the proverbs, such as, *Monna ke nku h'a k'a lla* (Sekese, 2002: 135) translated as 'A man is a sheep, he does not cry' (Mokitimi, 1997: 17) and *Monna ke tšepe e ntšo* (Hlalele, 1972: 14) translated as 'A man is a black iron' (Mokitimi, 1997: 17), depict men as strong and capable of withstanding pain. Machobane (1996) has indicated that men have unique qualities such as strength that differentiate them from women through the use of proverbs.

Machobane's (1996) study has highlighted that the society expects men and women to carry out different roles and responsibilities based on their biological and physical differences. Therefore, her study informs the present one on how the society expects men and women to perform different roles in the family. Even though Machobane (1996) has tried to show the gender stereotypes found in the Basotho proverbs, she did not indicate that men and women are naturally different, both biologically and physically. Men have more muscles than women, that is, the physical make-up that allows them to perform heavy jobs and become protectors of their families. As a result, the present study intends to find the contributing factors to the development of the gender stereotypes and discuss the gender stereotypes identified in the *khati* song and the selected games. It even discusses the intended and expected values instilled in children through some of the games discussed in this study.

In line with Machobane (1996), Morojele (2012) has discussed the constructions of gender in the context of the country's policy of Free Primary Education. Morojele has asserted that the Basotho language, whether written or spoken, has been found to promote unequal gender relations in a great way. For instance, he has discovered that some proverbs promote male dominance by depicting the males as strong while the women are portrayed as weak. The proverbs such as *tsoho la monna ke mokolla* (Machobane, 1996: 35) translated as 'a man's hand is the marrow of spine', meaning

that without a man's assistance, the women and society will be completely helpless. Morojele, like Machobane has used the proverbs that elevate men and has shown women's dependency on men. He has even associated the women's weaknesses by citing the proverbs, such as *ke mosali h'a nyaloa* 'she is an unmarried woman' (Sekese, 2002: 166), expressing something that is useless and cannot be relied upon.

Similar to Machobane (1996), Morojele (2012) has focused on the proverbs about men and ignored the fact that men and women are naturally different. Machobane's and Morojele's interest to use the proverbs that show women's strength, such as *'M'angoana o tšoara thipa ka bohaleng* 'The mother of a child holds the dagger on the sharper edge' (Maisela, 2005: 63), is a clear indication of how biased their studies are. However, Morojele's study has pointed out that the gender stereotypes are influenced by the society's perception of gender roles and responsibilities between the men and women.

Machobane (1996) and Morojele (2012) have used a qualitative research method, which the researcher has employed in this study. The researcher has used the qualitative method to gather relevant information related to the study. The information has helped the researcher to find out the contributing factors to the development of gender stereotypes. It also assisted the researcher to identify the gender stereotypes in the *khati* song 'kooko!' and the selected games. As well as, to discuss the intended and expected values instilled in children through some of the games discussed in this study.

On the hand, Rapeane's (2003) study has been based on difference between language and gender. She focused on how male and female speakers use Sesotho language, the expectations of the society on the two sexes and the culture behind Sesotho. She has argued that comparing the males and females based on what they can or cannot do is based on personal preferences. She has further mentioned that, generally, men have more muscle power than women, thus making it easier for them to handle muscle-demanding tasks. However, the same strong man is not capable of giving birth, because naturally, he does not have child-bearing organs. She has further indicated that there are gender stereotypes where certain traits, such as, endurance, caring and power are associated with certain gender due to their natural differences. She has added that women are also powerful based on their biological sex differences.



Rapeane has used a qualitative research method that the present study adopted. As they have been adopted in this study, her methods of data collection using written Sesotho materials and Sesotho dictionaries to check the vocabulary and the prescribed words assisted the researcher to find the contributing factors to the development of gender stereotypes.

Rapeane's (2003) study has highlighted relevant factors, such as different abilities between men and women that force them to perform different roles. It has also touched on the values required for men and women. However, her conclusion that the stereotypical behaviour associated with male and female natural differences perpetuates sexism has left major gaps that the researcher needs to fill up. As a result, the present study intends to find out the contributing factors to the development of gender stereotypes. As indicated, it also discusses the gender stereotypes identified in the *khati* song 'kooko!' and the selected games. It further discusses the intended and expected values instilled in children through the *khati* song 'kooko!' and the selected games.

Similarly, Molapo (2005) has examined patriarchy and its ramification in the Basotho culture and civil society. Her study encompasses the status, role and position of the Basotho women in different spheres. Molapo has asserted that language plays a pivotal role in strengthening the power of patriarchy. She has also emphasised that the daily use of language under the *hlonepha* rule of showing respect by a newly-wedded woman depicts the gender stereotypes resulting in male dominance. A newly-wedded woman is expected not to call her father-in-law and all the paternal in-laws by their names. According to Molapo, language symbolises gender stereotypes and patriarchal power.

Molapo (2005) has employed anthropological approach, where she focused on biological and cultural perspectives to look into the behaviour, roles and status of men and women. This approach has helped the researcher to find the contributing factors of gender stereotypes, which is the focus of the study. She has also managed to draw the difference on how men and women use language to discipline their children. Nevertheless, Molapo has not shown how the use of language can instil values in children.

### ***1.6.2 Traditional Games and Songs***

This sub-section discusses other scholars' work about different traditional games and songs. It reviews the works of Ntšihlele (2003), Wanderi (2010), as well as, Fauziah and Sulistyanningtyas (2018).

Scholars such as Wanderi (2010) and Fauziah and Sulistyanningtyas (2018) have explored how different games contribute to gender stereotypes amongst the children. Fauziah and Sulistyanningtyas (2018) have contended that the traditional games and songs for the children are shaped by the local culture and environment in each society. The children adopt the behaviour and attitude that they are exposed to from the early stages of development. They have also discovered that the traditional games and songs are closely related to the people's lives and are an important part of childhood as the children imitate the lives that they observe in their society. Wanderi (2010) have concurred with the above scholars in that, to understand how and why some individuals in certain environments behave in a particular way, it is important to understand the social and cultural settings in which they have been raised and socialised. Based on the discovery of Wanderi (2010) and Fauziah and Sulistyanningtyas (2018), the gender stereotypes do not develop in a vacuum, but they are enhanced by the traditional games and songs that children are exposed to at a tender age.

Wanderi (2010) and Fauziah and Sulistyanningtyas (2018) have shown that the children learn different skills from the traditional games and songs in the early stages of development. They have also mentioned that the traditional games and songs include physical activities and require co-operation and intellectual engagement. Their findings have highlighted the skills obtained from the traditional games and songs and the expected values instilled in children through the *khati* song "koko!" and the selected games that a researcher intends to discuss. Even though Wanderi's (2010) and Fauziah and Sulistyanningtyas' (2018) studies have detailed information about the traditional games and songs relevant to this study, their studies discussed the traditional games and songs in their Kenyan and Indian culture, respectively. However, their studies lay a foundation for the present study by indicating that there are important skills that the children learn through the traditional games and songs, which contribute to the children's development. Therefore, the present study intends

to discuss the intended and expected values instilled in children through some Basotho traditional *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and the games chosen for this study.

Ntšihlele (2003) has examined the incorporation of music and the adoption of Western music in traditional games and songs. She has also examined the multifaceted nature of the children’s games and songs and the role that they play in the educational development of a Mosotho child. She has classified the games and songs according to different categories, such as, education, identity, games for infants, games and songs that deepen and broaden some aspects of oral and material culture. She has further mentioned that some games such as *mantloane* ‘small houses’ reflect the cultural norms, values of the society and cultural environment. Ntšihlele has further found out that the division of labour amongst the Basotho results from separate games, such as, *khati*, *khotsoane*, *mantloane* and *mokallo* that the boys and girls play from the early stages of their development.

Furthermore, Ntšihlele (2003) has discovered that the Basotho traditional games and songs help the children to develop different skills, such as, counting, cooking, cleaning and knowing them. The games and songs are also educational in character building and learning, and they have a formative influence on the development of a child. However, Ntšihlele (2003) has left some gaps that the present study intends to fill up. Her study did not go in-depth to show if some games and songs triggered certain values resulting from the gender stereotypes, which is the focus of this study. She has used a qualitative research method, which the researcher has adopted. Regardless of the difference between the two studies, the Ntšihlele’ study followed the qualitative method, which in this study has enabled the researcher to collect the relevant information from different source to carry out this study. The information gathered from Ntšihlele’ study is used as a stepping stone towards the discussion of the factors contributing to the development of gender stereotypes. As well as, the intended and expected values instilled in children through some Basotho traditional *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and the games selected for this study.

Wirdze (2021) has examined the concept of intelligence, and how the African indigenous games can facilitate the acquisition of intellectual skills in children. Wirdze has outlined that in the indigenous games, the children learn various aspects of academic, moral, social and interpersonal skills. He has even uncovered that the

development of intelligence in the children does not only depend on the interaction with direct biological parents, but also on the whole social structure, the entire community and the environment in which such a child finds themselves. He has further mentioned that the social and interpersonal skills can be acquired in schools while other children acquire them from their active involvement in the life of families and communities.

Wirdze (2021) has concluded that within the African cultures, knowledge, skills and values that constitute intelligent behaviour which the children learn, are massed together as an integral part of the social interaction, cultural life, adapting to the local environment, economic activities, moral obligations and daily routines. Wirdze also concluded that the children do not only acquire intelligence through some formal education, but also informally through peer interaction, guided participation, modelling, observation and imitation. Through the participation in indigenous games, the children develop a lot of academic, social, moral and interpersonal skills.

Wirdze's (2021) findings are one-sided. Wirdze (2021) has put more emphasis on issues about intelligent behaviour that the children acquire from indigenous games. He has not elaborated on other important roles such as gender roles that the children acquire from the indigenous games and how such games instil values in children. Again, Wirdze (2021) used a mixed method in his research whereas this study has employed a qualitative method to discuss the contributing factors to the development of gender stereotypes. It further helped to discuss the intended and expected values instilled in children through the Basotho traditional *khati* song 'koko!' and the selected games.

However, Wirdze's study tackled some important issues, such as, the culture, environment, family and parents, which are some of the focal issues in the present study. Wirdze's results have assisted the researcher in developing an understanding that the children observe and imitate some roles such as domestic chores, preparing food, herding and hunting from the family and community that they grow up in.

### ***1.6.3 Factors Contributing to Gender Stereotypes***

Endendijk *et al.* (2013) and Hussain *et al.* (2015) are amongst the scholars who have examined some contributing factors to the gender stereotypes.

Endendijk *et al.* and Hussain *et al.* have conducted studies on gender stereotypes, and they have discovered that a family, environment, community and different roles given to the children contribute to the development of gender stereotypes. They have postulated that children from as early as 10 months old can detect the gender-related categories due to the kind of toys that they use to play. The authors have further stated that as the children grow, they prefer different toys depending on their sex as a boy or a girl and tend to play separately rather than together. Sometimes their families contribute to this gender stereotype behaviour by buying different toys.

Specifically, Hussain *et al.* (2015) revealed that the gender stereotyping and gender role formation are sociocultural and relational constructs that are developed and inculcated in the institutional network, social interaction and social relationships, particularly in a family. Both Endendijk *et al.*'s (2013) and Hussain *et al.*'s (2015) studies have employed the qualitative method that the present study has also used. Their studies have helped the researcher to obtain information about the children's behaviour and attitude, which result from the gender stereotypes. Moreover, Endendijk *et al.* (2013) have employed the Gender schema theory, which is the same theory that the present study has adopted. The way they have used the theory to interpret issues on the gender stereotypes has helped the researcher to have an idea of the intended and expected values instilled in children through Basotho traditional *khati* song "kooko!" and the selected games.

Despite the similarities between Endendijk *et al.*'s (2013) and Hussain *et al.*'s (2015) and the current one, there is still a remarkable difference. Their studies have focused on the contribution of the family, environment and community in the Western Region of the Netherlands and Pakhtun culture, respectively. On the contrary, the present study intends to discuss the contributing factors to the development of gender stereotypes. It also intends to identify the gender stereotypes and discuss the intended and expected values in instilled in children through Basotho traditional *khati* song 'kooko!' and the selected games.

This section discussed literature from the African and non-African scholars. Some scholars works reviewed were based on the gender stereotypes in Sesotho language. Other scholars focused on the importance of traditional games and songs while other scholars examined gender stereotypes in their culture. Some scholars have indicated

that Sesotho language is the major contributing factor to the development of gender stereotypes. Other scholars further indicate that the Basotho use language to show different roles and responsibilities performed by the males and females. Some scholars argue that the family, environment and community are some of the contributing factors to the development of gender stereotypes.

Furthermore, various scholars used in this study have highlighted that children learn different skills that prepare them for future roles through the performance of traditional games and songs from a tender age. For that matter, the literature used in this section has helped to guide this study to find the contributing factors to the development of gender stereotypes. It also helped the researcher to identify the gender stereotypes implied in the Basotho traditional *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and the selected games. It further helped to discuss the intended and expected values instilled in children through the Basotho traditional *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and the games selected for this study.

## **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

This study employed the Gender schema theory. According to Martin and Dinella (2002: 210), schemas are patterns of thought that children develop from an early age. They are also the organising structures that help to simplify and categorise new information. The theory has been used to discuss the contributing factors to the development of the gender stereotypes, identify the gender stereotypes implied in the *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and the selected games and discuss the intended and expected values instilled through some games discussed in this study.

### ***1.7.1 Gender Schema Theory***

The Gender schema theory was introduced by a psychologist, Sandra Bem, in 1981. The theory originates from the school of psychology. It provides an understanding of how mental representations of gender development in early childhood influence amongst others, attention, perception and behaviour. It is a social cognitive theory about how people and society become gendered from an early age (Bem, 1981, 1983). According to Stan and Zubriggen (2016: 4), Bem developed the theory to investigate and focus on how the society creates and enforces the categories of gender. They add that Bem was interested in individual differences and was even aware that some

people are not concerned about gender differences between a man and a woman. Other pioneers of the Gender schema theory are Carol Martin and Charles Halverson (1981). They proposed that the children begin to form sex-related schemas as soon as they realise that the people are organised into different sexes.

To discuss the gender stereotypes reflected in the *khati* song ‘koko!’ and the selected games, this study employed the following principles of Gender schema theory: the children develop and learn about their behaviour and attributes linked to their sex from the weight that society puts on gender and that the prevalent gender-stereotyped messages that the children are exposed to in their environment contribute to the development of gender stereotypes. This principle is found applicable to this study as it touches on the contributing factors on the gender stereotypes. It indicates that the society and environment in which the children are born and raised instil the intended and expected values in children. Another principle says that ‘children adjust their behaviour to align with gender norms of their culture from the earliest stages of social development’ (Christen & Zurbriggen, 2017: 568). This principle is used to explore the intended and expected values instilled in children through some games discussed in this study. Both principles indicate that the gender stereotypes are not inborn in the children, but some factors influence the children to behave according to the expectation of the society.

This theory has been found relevant to this study as it helps the researcher to interrogate issues related to the intended and expected values instilled in children through the *khati* song ‘koko!’ and the selected games for this study.

## **1.8 Methodology**

This section discusses a research methodology. Khotso (2017: 64) defines a research methodology as a compass that helps the researcher to plan how the research will be carried out. Therefore, methodology can be defined as a logical plan that the researcher intends to follow to have a concrete outcome. The discussion in this section includes the research design, data collection and sampling.

### **1.8.1 Research Design**

A research design is an arrangement of procedures and methods of a research study that includes sampling and data collection (Moloi, 2010:7). The research design is

employed in this study to collect relevant information and discuss it accordingly. This section, therefore, provides sampling and data collection.

The study employed a qualitative research method, which Hancock *et al.* (2009: 7) explain as a research method that is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena and seeks to answer questions about people's behaviour, opinions, attitudes, cultures and practices. As a result, this method is appropriate for this study as the researcher needs to understand the children's behaviour and attitudes informed by culture and traditional practices instilled in children through the *khati* song 'kooko!' and the selected games.

#### *1.8.1.1 Data Collection*

Data collection methods are all the methods used by the researcher to collect relevant information for this study. Kabir (2016: 202) defines data collection as a process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses and evaluate outcomes. The researcher sourced information from the documented recordings and compact disk that defines and discusses the Basotho's traditional games and songs. Garderen (2007: 1) asserts that, 'recorded materials can act as a proxy for the event by communicating information and allows the person to experience specific details or characteristics of the event'. The method allowed the researcher to replay the recordings for further understanding and have an imaginary picture of their performance. The study collected data from WhatsApp group, as one of media platform of Sesotho teachers. The WhatsApp is used in this study as one of the netnographic method which is very fast and reliable. The WhatsApp group assisted the researcher in getting the appropriate information quickly from any teacher available online. A telephone interview was used to consult far away Sesotho experts from the researcher's vicinity. Kumar (2011: 137) affirms that telephone interviews allow a researcher to have freedom to decide on the format and content of questions to be asked, choose appropriate wording, decide the way questions are asked and select the order in which they are to be asked. Textual method of data collection was also used in this study. Data was accessible through textual method of data collection for the researcher to carry out the task. Caulifield (2020:4) asserts that textual data method often explores potentially unintended connection between different texts, asks



what a text reveals about the context in which it was written and seeks to analyse a classic text in a new and unexpected way. Also, Sesotho dictionaries were used to define some Sesotho terms and phrases.

#### 1.8.1.2 Sampling

Sampling is one of the techniques used by the researcher to select a suitable representative part of a population in order to determine the characteristics of the whole population (Mugo (2002: 1). In this study, the researcher used purposive and volunteer sampling. In a purposive sampling, a researcher relies on her judgement to whom or what can provide the best information to achieve the objectives of the study (Kumar, 2011:189). Under purposive/judgement sampling, the collection of *Lipapali tsa Basotho* from Matšela (2002) was sampled from the collection of Sesotho text books. The collection of *Lipapali tsa Basotho* is available in public domain such as bookshops and school library. For this reason, it was easy for the researcher to access the collection of “*Lipapali tsa Basotho*”. The researcher selected the Basotho traditional *khati* song “kooko!” from the collection of songs sung by girls during the *khati* game. The *khati* song ‘kooko!’, *khotsoane*, *mantloane*, and *mokallo* were selected from Matšela (2002) collection of *Lipapali tsa Basotho* because of their merits as they reflect different gender stereotypes needed by the researcher to carry out the study. Only three Sesotho experts were contacted through telephone for their expertise in the field.

Purposive sampling was also used where the three Sesotho experts were selected. The three Sesotho experts have been Sesotho teachers for many years and have thorough knowledge about Basotho traditional games and songs. Volunteer sampling was used to collect information from active members available online at a time of discussion. Hassan (2022:1) concurs that in volunteer sampling participants self-select themselves to participate in a study. This form of sampling allowed the researcher to select and use only the relevant responses from the Southern Sesotho teachers WhatsApp group. The concept asked by the researcher was discussed thoroughly until the online members reached consensus. The Southern Sesotho teachers WhatsApp group was selected for its active participants on the Sesotho subject. The researcher also had some knowledge of some of the girls’ games such as *khati* and *mantloane*, which make it easier to sample the appropriate games.

### **1.8.2 Ethical Considerations**

The researcher adhered to ethical norms by acknowledging all the sources used to avoid any plagiarism that may be reflected in this study. The researcher was aware that the text book of *Lipapali tsa Basotho* used in this study is accessible to every individual: therefore, using it in this study does not violate any ethics. The researcher made sure not to ask questions that may be against the participants or their beliefs. The interviewees were informed that participation in this research was voluntarily and that they have a right to participate in the research or withdraw. The researcher respected the opinion and responses of the participants from the WhatsApp group. The researcher also adhered to confidentiality by removing the names of the participants in the study.

### **1.9 Organisation of the Study**

The study is organised into five chapters. The first chapter is an introductory chapter consisting of the introduction, background of the study, statement of the problem, hypotheses, purpose of the study, rationale and scope of the study, literature review, theoretical framework, methodology and organisation of the study. Chapter two discusses the contributing factors to the development of gender stereotypes. Chapter three identifies gender stereotypes implied in the *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and the selected Basotho games. Chapter four discusses the intended and expected values instilled in children through the *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and some games discussed in chapter three. The last chapter provides the conclusion, which comprises the summary of the study, findings and recommendations.

## CHAPTER 2

### CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF GENDER STEREOTYPES

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses factors contributing to the development of gender stereotypes as reflected in the Basotho traditional *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and the selected games. The following factors have been identified from the *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and the selected games: Basotho traditional practices carried out at the birth of a boy and a girl-child, the activities performed to mark the puberty stage of a girl-child, *kuruetso ka khoeli* for a boy - and a girl-child ‘the rite of passage’, and involvement of parents and grandparents in the upbringing of children.

#### 2.1 The Basotho Traditional Practices

The Basotho perform different traditional practices to mark different stages of the development of a child. Amoo *et al.* (2019: 2) assert that traditional practices are the reflections of values and beliefs held by the members of the community that have spanned a generation. In this study, traditional practices are understood as the Basotho customary practices that influence behaviour, attitude and beliefs of a particular community. This section discusses the traditional practices of announcing the birth of a boy and a girl-child to a father and the activities performed at the adolescent stage when a girl-child experiences her first menstrual cycle.

##### 2.1.1 *The Announcement of the Birth of a Boy-Child to his Father*

The birth of a child is awaited in anticipation by most family members, especially fathers. Once a child is born, the assistant mothers, who have helped the expectant mother to deliver, inform a father. According to custom, the assistant mothers may inform one of the family members to deliver the news to the father. Sometimes the father receives the news while at home or away from home.

Announcement of the birth of a boy-child is done in two different ways. When a Mosotho boy is born, a society has a specific way to announce the birth of such a child to a father, which at the same time symbolises the roles and responsibilities

expected from the child. According to Gender schema theory, gender roles stem from the culture in which a person is brought up rather than being inborn (Bem, 1984: 186). Therefore, in this way, the boys are not born with roles and responsibilities but adopt these traditional norms from as early as they are introduced to their fathers at that tender age and are expected to behave and conduct themselves accordingly in future when they are old.

First, a child is introduced to a father by whipping him with a stick. The use of a stick symbolises that a boy-child is born into this family to carry out some roles and responsibilities related to his gender. The use of a stick to inform a father about the birth of a boy-child indicates that the society expects this boy-child to use a stick to herd animals and perform other roles such as hunting and protecting his family. Lesitsi (1990: 53-54) asserts that, '*ha e le ngoana oa moshanyana, banna ba motse ba shapa monna ka lithupa e be ba re, "ke ngoan'a moshanyana ntho eo"*'. 'if it is a boy-child, the village men whip the father with sticks and say, "it is a baby boy that thing"'. The stick also indicates that the presence of a boy-child in the family adds value to that particular family as his birth symbolises more responsibilities expected from him. The significance of smashing a father with a stick is emphasised by the words, which are used to describe the sex of a child. One of the traditional roles denoted by the use of the stick is that a boy-child is expected to become a warrior who is responsible for the protection of his family and his country against invading enemies. A boy-child is expected to use a stick to fight and protect him during his childhood game of *mokallo*.

Furthermore, a boy-child is not expected to be lazy, but to be engaged in the production of food where he is expected to use a stick for hunting. The use of a stick to announce the birth of a boy-child to a father is also a reminder to a boy-child that at some point in his life, he will have to use a stick to control the animals in the veld when herding them and ploughing in the field.

Again, words such as *ho hlaba le pele* 'it is the front spear that pierces' (Lesitsi, 1990: 54), are words uttered to a father to denote that a warrior is born with a lot of expectations. Ashton (1952: 29) notes that this phrase refers to the 'spear', which is a future weapon and symbol of the status of the boy. According to Ashton, a boy is expected to use a spear as a weapon to fight his battles and protect his nation.

Therefore, the use of a stick and the words uttered to announce the birth of a boy-child to a father are signs that a boy-child has important roles that his community expects him to carry out as he grows up and in future when he reaches adulthood. It is also a reminder that he is a protector and a provider, which are two gender roles reflected in the game of *mokallo*.

### **2.1.2 The Announcement of a Girl-Child to her Father**

According to the Basotho customs, when a girl-child is born, the assistant mothers break the news to her father. One of the assistant mothers approaches a father with a bucket of water to splash him. In other instances, where a father is far away and cannot be reached by the assistant mothers, a close family member is informed to perform the traditional practice on their behalf to introduce a child to her father accordingly. Sekese (2002: 9) asserts that one of the reasons the father may be far away from the place that a child is born is that customarily, the expectant mother delivers her first child at her natal home. As a result, the practice is performed even if the father is not in the same village where his wife delivers.

Announcement of a birth of a girl-child to her father is done according to the custom to symbolise the roles and responsibilities that a girl-child is expected to perform when she is old. Splashing a father with water is followed by the words, '*ke ngoana oa ngoanana ntho eo*' 'it is a baby girl' (Lesitsi, 1990: 53). In this case, the use of water symbolises birth. A girl-child is expected to give birth when she reaches adulthood. Molapo (2004: 61) contends that 'if a woman gives birth to a girl-child, the literal meaning of the customary announcement of her birth symbolises that a woman has given birth to a baby girl who will in future also bear children'. As mentioned by Molapo, water is associated with continuation of life in the Basotho culture.

Furthermore, splashing a father with water highlights other significance of water in a life of a girl-child, which is continuation of life as noted. This is marked when the girl-child reaches maturity and is an expecting mother. At the time she is about to give birth, the water referred to as *ho phuma nkho* in Sesotho breaks. Sekese (2002: 7) refers to *ho phuma nkho* as an awkward situation in a life of a newly married woman when a clay pot falls from her head and the water splashes. The clay pot represents a woman's womb, which Rakotsoane (2001: 30) refers to as *letša* 'lake'; hence, the Basotho have a saying that *ngoana o tsoa letšeng* 'a child comes from the deep

marshes of the lake'. A child has been living in the water in a woman's womb; thus, water is said to be a symbol of life. The process of *ho phuma nkho* from the head of the woman is compared to the rupture of the amniotic sac when a woman is about to give birth and the spilled water symbolises life. The rupture of the amniotic sac symbolises that a child is on its way to being born, and the assistant women should be ready to welcome a newborn baby. Therefore, the birth of a girl-child is very important in the Basotho culture as it symbolises a continuation of life and an increase of family offspring.

The custom of splashing a father with water also denotes that a father has a girl-child whose role will be to help in the running of the family.

### **2.1.3 Traditional Practices at the Adolescent Stage of a Girl-Child**

There are the traditional practices performed at the adolescent stage of a girl-child that mark her growth. Motalingoane-Khau (2007: 16) defines adolescence as a developmental stage that spans the period from puberty into young adulthood and is characterised by transition, physical and emotional development changes. The researcher agrees with this definition and adopts it for the discussion in this study. The researcher adds that a girl-child experiences some changes as she moves from a childhood stage into an adulthood stage. Depending on one's gender and culture, this stage may be accompanied by certain cultural practices or rituals that are meant to mark the beginning of the stage and to introduce a child into the new stage. In the Basotho culture, certain cultural practices or rituals are supposed to be performed on every child as an introduction to that child into the adolescent stage. It is against this background that this part discusses the following traditional practices: splashing a girl with the spring water, smearing a girl with red ochre and sitting on the *moiteli* 'dry and loose dung'. These traditional practices are carried out at the adolescent stage of a girl-child when she experiences her first menstrual cycle. A girl's menstrual cycle is an integral stage in a girl's life as it marks her new journey into womanhood.

According to Gender schema theory, the gender roles and responsibilities are influenced by the culture in which the children are brought up (Bem, 1984: 186). When a girl-child is splashed with water, smeared with red ochre and sits on the *moiteli* when she experiences her first menstrual period, symbolise duties that the society expects a girl to perform. A girl-child is expected to get married, to have

children and help in the family business. A girl understands that this transitional change from childhood to womanhood comes with more responsibilities that entail maturity and change of behaviour as she is expected to conduct herself properly. Above all, now that she is initiated into womanhood, she is expected to avoid sexual conduct with men as that can lead to out-of-wedlock pregnancy. At this stage, a girl's body has reached maturity; hence, she is guided by the rules based on her traditional norms on how to behave and what to eat to avoid food that may result in high libido.

First, an older girl who has passed the puberty stage accompanies a young girl who is experiencing her first menstrual cycle to the spring. When they get to the spring, an older girl is expected to pour a younger girl with water three times with the belief that the act will minimise the number of days of menstruation. Lesitsi (2002: 75) asserts that one of the purposes of splashing a girl with water is to shorten the number of days that a girl is expected to take on her menstruation. As a girl is splashed with water, she is expected to startle to accomplish the purpose of reducing the number of days. Even though menstruation is an important phase in a life of a Mosotho girl, it has to be shortened to allow a girl to carry on with the house chores activities and other important family businesses. Splashing a girl with water is also a symbol that a girl's body is mature and ready to conceive (Mokuoane, 2018: 56).

When the girls come back from a well, a young girl who has just experienced her first menstrual cycle is smeared with red ochre as a symbol that she is initiated into womanhood (Mokuoane, 2018: 56). DuPlooy (2006: 136) sustains that the red colour is associated with the final stage of the initiation process for the Basotho girls and is a sign of sexual maturity and beauty. From this view, smearing red ochre on a girl's body is a symbol that she has completed her childhood stage and moved into adulthood stage where she is now considered a young woman. It is at this stage that the girls are encouraged to refrain from eating high-protein food like eggs. They are also discouraged from roaming around the village at night without the supervision of the parents as that may result in pre-marital sex. It is worth noting that as a way of containing their behaviour, games such as *khotsoane* are used to help them resist temptations until they are married.

The last activity performed on the day that a girl experiences her first menstrual cycle is to stay indoors and sit flat on *moiteli* 'dry and loose dung' for a short period

(Matšela, 1990: 24). Matšela (1990: 24) asserts that ordering a girl to sit flat on *moiteli* ‘dry and loose dung’ during her menstruation period is a reminder to a girl-child that one day she will be a nursing mother, and she will be expected to stay indoors for a period of three months or more depending on one’s culture. As a nursing mother, she is not expected to do anything except for taking care of her newly born baby, to use *moiteli* ‘dry loose dung’ to absorb the excretion of a child, and to keep a child warm. For that matter, a girl is not allowed to do or touch anything in the family when she first experiences her menstrual cycle. This traditional practice is a reminder to a girl-child that she is going to be a nursing mother in future and is expected to pay attention to the growth and development of her child.

The Basotho raise girls to be future wives and mothers, and they achieve this purpose through the use of taboo expressions, such as, warning girls not to eat eggs because it will snow on their wedding day, and to avoid arriving home after sunset as that will destroy family traditional security (Qhala & Thetso, 2014: 199). The implication given is that the Basotho girls are discouraged from eating eggs and sheep’s offal because they are believed to be rich in protein. For that matter, the girls’ bodies may develop prematurely and lead the girls into the temptations of getting into pre-marital sex. The menstrual circle signifies maturity in a girl, and that her body is ready for procreation. As a result, she is supposed to behave like a young responsible woman who is expected to hold a family together in future.

## **2.2 Kuruetso ka Khoeli**

*Kuruetso ka khoeli* is one of the Basotho’s traditional practices performed when a child is at least two months old. Dowling (2020: 1) defines the traditional practice as ideas, principles or beliefs that have been the foundation of the society for centuries and have been passed down from generation to generation. The researcher adopts this definition for discussion of *kuruetso ka khoeli* for a boy and a girl-child. There are three different types of *kuruetso* in the Basotho culture that mark the stages of development of a Mosotho child: *kuruetso ka khoeli*, *kuruetso ka mohami oa likhomo* and *kuruetso ka pula*. Obioha and Tšoeunyane (2012: 251) affirm that ‘there are changes which take place for one to be considered to be at a certain stage of a life cycle. These changes occur as one grows older and enters into another stage of human life cycle’. In this study, *kuruetso ka khoeli* marks the growth and development of a



Mosotho child from the childhood stage to another phase of their life. It is against this background that the researcher discusses the activities performed during *kuruetso ka khoeli* of a boy and a girl-child to indicate how they inform the gender stereotypes reflected in the games selected for this study.

### **2.2.1 *Kuruetso ka Khoeli of a Boy-Child***

A family waits for the period when the moon is full before *kuruetso ka khoeli* can take place. *Kuruetso ka khoeli* involves performances by small boys to denote the expected roles and responsibilities of a boy-child. The performance is followed by the shouting of words that imply the expected role of a boy-child when he is mature. The family informs the villagers about the intention of showing a boy-child the moon so that the small boys can prepare for this traditional practice on time.

First, the small boys are expected to bring along some of the equipment, such as, knobkerries, fighting sticks, shields and arrows that are used for hunting and fighting to demonstrate the roles and responsibilities that a boy-child is supposed to perform in future. The tools and weapons indicate different stages that they are going to be used by a boy in his life starting from a young stage when he is expected to herd the animals until he reaches adulthood when he becomes a warrior.

According to the Gender schema theory, the performances of different activities during *kuruetso ka khoeli* symbolise the gender roles and responsibilities influenced by the culture in which a boy-child is brought up (Bem, 1984: 186). The Basotho children grow up in a society where the boys and girls have different roles and responsibilities instilled in them from birth. A boy-child is introduced to different roles associated with aggressive behaviour needed through the weapons and performances of small boys. From what the young boys demonstrated during *kuruetso ka khoeli*, a boy-child grows up with the mentality that he is supposed to be aggressive as a warrior and a man to win his battles. He also understands that his roles are to protect his family and country, and to hunt to provide food for his family.

Lesitsi (1990: 54) highlights demonstrations and performances that are made by small boys and the tools that they bring along during the *kuruetso ka khoeli* of a boy-child as follows,

(1) *Ngoana ha e le moshanyana, bana ba bangata ba bashanyana, ba tla tla ba le melangoana, likoto, lithejana le marungoana le seka likoakoa, joale ba lekise ntoa. Ba tla futuhelana, ba kharametsane, ba betsane le ka lisu, ba potapotisane ho fihlela ba khathala ebe ntoa ea bona ea lala. Sena ba se etsa ka sepheo sa ho ruta ngoana hore hosasa o tla loanela naha e le mohlabani kapa mohale oa marumo.*

‘If a child is a boy, many boys will bring with them small fighting sticks, knobkerries, small shields and spears and something like a war axe and imitate a fight. They will attack one another, throw dry cattle dung at one another and move around in circles until they get tired, then they stop fighting. They do this with the purpose of teaching a child that he is expected to become a warrior who will fight for his country in future’.

From the above-cited excerpt (1), Lesitsi (1990) outlines the weapons that a boy-child is expected to use to fulfil some of his obligations of becoming a warrior and a respected family man. The activities also indicate that a boy-child is not expected to surrender during a fight, but to keep on fighting until he wins or loses the fight. This is demonstrated when the boys use everything that they have to fight, from the weapons to dry cow dung during the performance, and they only rest when they feel tired. The demonstrations show how a boy-child is expected to hold the weapons and fight his opponents as a warrior to accomplish his goals in future. Some of the weapons used during the demonstrations are used for hunting; a boy-child is expected to hunt the animals for food and make clothes from animal skins for his family.

After the demonstrations performed by the small boys during *kuruetsa ka khoeli*, the second stage is when a boy-child is shown the moon followed by the words, *kurrrueeee! Molekane oa hau ke eane! ‘kurrrueeee! There is your partner!’* These words add to the roles and responsibilities of a boy-child reflected in the performances of the small boys. The moon is referred to a boy-child as his ‘wife or partner’ (Lesitsi, 1990: 54; Sekese, 2002: 9). The words are said as a reminder to a boy-child that at some point in his life, he is expected to have a wife as his partner. A boy-child is expected to get married when he is old and have a woman to have children with. Showing a child the moon is also associated with pregnancy in a woman; hence, the expectation that a man will have someone with whom he will build a family together and have children. This is in line with the Basotho beliefs that

a complete Mosotho family is the one with offspring as a real man is expected to prove his potency by impregnating a woman.

A person lives a life that they learn from their family and surroundings, and Ngubane (2010: 19) maintains that a person can assimilate the culture of the society where they grow up. From this view, a boy-child adopts the behaviour that he is exposed to from a young age. In this case, the activities that take place during *kuruetso ka khoeli* reflect special roles and responsibilities such as protection and hunting to provide food. These are what the society expects from a boy-child to perform when he reaches maturity. The roles are instilled in a boy-child at a tender age when he can easily assimilate new knowledge. Therefore, *kuruetso ka khoeli*, through the performance of different activities and words said, reflects the societal expectations from a boy-child when he reaches adulthood stage.

### **2.2.2 *Kuruetso ka Khoeli of a Girl-Child***

*Kuruetso ka khoeli* for a girl-child is marked with specific activities related to the sex of a child. During *kuruetso ka khoeli* of a girl-child, the moon is referred to a girl-child as *thaka* 'age-mate' (Sekese, 2002: 9). Lesitsi (1990: 54) asserts that,

(2) *Kuruetso ka khoeli, e etsoa ho hopotsa ngoana hore ke thaka likhoeli, hobane ho tloha khoeling ea letlali ho baloa ho fihlela khoeli ea borobong ha joale a tla be a fihla lefatšeng e le moeti ea babatsehang.*

'*Kuruetso ka khoeli* is performed to make a child aware that they are of the same age with months because the pregnancy is counted from the first month of conception until the last month of delivery when a child is born as an important guest'.

When a woman conceives, the menstruation period stops to give way to the development of a child. This is the period when the women's pregnancy starts, and it is marked from the first month of conception until the last month of delivery. *Kuruetso ka khoeli* marks an important stage in a life of a girl-child, her family and the entire community as her presence highlights the continuity of life. A girl-child is expected to get married in future and have children. The activities and performances during *kuruetso ka khoeli* for a girl-child also align with the Gender schema theory

(Bem, 1984: 186), which advocates that the children are born without roles, but the culture in which they are brought up dictates how they are going to behave and act. Apart from showing a girl-child the moon, the small girls perform activities related to the roles and responsibilities expected from a woman. In excerpt (3) below, Lesitsi (1990: 54) asserts that,

(3) *Ngoana ha e ba ke ngoanana, bana ba banyenyane ba banana ba tlile le lipitsanyana, mangetana, mollo, lipatsinyana le matlakala. Ho mesemenyana, mafielo, liphoofo le meroho. Ho bapaloa mantloane [,] ke lerata hoa pepeakoa ho monate. Sepheo ke ho hopotsa ngoana hore ka moso e tla ba 'malelapa ea tla ba le lisebelisoa tsohle tsa lapeng la hae.*

‘If a child is a girl, young girls bring along small pots, pieces of broken pots, matches, wood and bits of straw or grass. They have mats, brooms, mealie meal and green vegetables. They start playing *mantloane*, it is noisy and the young girls move up and down with jubilation. The purpose of *kuruetsa ka khoeli* is to remind a girl-child that she is expected to be a responsible mother who will have all the essential utensils in her family in future’.

From extract (3) above, *kuruetsa ka khoeli* indicates that a girl-child is expected to prepare food, clean and stay at home to take care of the family. She is also expected to keep the family warm by keeping the fire burning. All the utensils and essentials brought by the young girls on the day of *kuruetsa ka khoeli* reflect what the society expects a young girl to become and do. It is assumed that a girl starts to prepare for adulthood roles at *mantloaneng* where she learns some of the responsibilities of being a grown woman.

Moreover, staying at home or being around the family is depicted by the young girls when they bring *meseme* ‘mats’ during *kuruetsa ka khoeli*. The act shows that a girl-child is expected not to roam around, but to take care of family businesses. During this traditional practice, the presence of *meseme* ‘mats’ is a reminder to a girl-child that at some point in time, she will get married, join her in-laws and become a nursing mother who will sleep on the mat with her child. All these stages symbolised by the display of *meseme* during *kuruetsa ka khoeli* imply the following gender roles: childbearing and nurturing of children reflected in the *khati* song “kooko!” and *mantloane* ‘small houses’ to be discussed in chapter three. Therefore, one can safely

say that *kuruetso ka khoeli* highlights some of the roles that the society expects a girl-child to perform when she reaches maturity.

### **2.3 Contribution of Parents and Grandparents**

This section discusses different ways in which parents and grandparents use in the upbringing of children that contribute to the development of gender stereotypes as reflected in the *khati* song “kooko!” and the selected games. In a typical Basotho family, the parents and grandparents work together in the upbringing of the children and they have special roles that they perform. Obioha and Tšoeunyane (2012: 252) assert that the Basotho family encompasses relatives who live together in one big compound or extended lineage space composed of the intergeneration of grandparents, parents and children. The researcher agrees with the definition of the family because it includes relatives which are grandparents in this case. For this reason, the researcher adopts this definition of a family for this discussion.

#### **2.3.1 Parents**

Parents are the closest relatives that children bond with before any other members of the family. Qhala and Thetso (2014: 198) assert that it is the responsibility of every parent in the African societies to mould the future of a child. In the Basotho culture, the biological parents are not the only responsible parents to nurture and raise the children, but the entire community. It is against this background that the discussion here focuses on how the parents reinforce the gender stereotypes in the children. In most cases, when the children are born, the first people whom they are introduced to as the family members are their biological parents. The children spend most of their infant stage with their parents who monitor their growth and development. At this infant stage, the children easily learn, absorb and believe the first-hand information given to them by their parents.

The way the parents behave towards their children is in line with the Gender schema theory since the children’s behaviour is influenced by the society’s cultural knowledge of being a man and a woman (Bem, 1984: 186). The Basotho children are raised in such a way that they are assigned the roles and responsibilities from birth through the traditional practices performed. As the children develop, the parents introduce them to different games that require specific toys. It is from this time that

the boys develop a mentality that to be real boys, they are supposed to play with cars and guns or any toys that are believed to define who they are and prepare them to be protectors. The girls are also not exceptions in this case as they are prepared for the future role of motherhood through the specific toys including dolls that their parents buy for them.

The parents shape children's preferences by rewarding desired toy choices and communicating gender-related knowledge and expectations about the toys to their children as they raise them Freeman (2007: 358). This view emphasises that the parents have a huge contribution to the development of gender stereotypes through the choice of toys that they buy for their children at early stages of development. This is a critical stage in the development of children as they are vulnerable to any information presented to them and can easily assimilate new knowledge.

The parents introduce their children to different games and toys that are related to their gender. They buy tea sets and make or buy dolls for girls. They buy plastic cars, guns, animals and other toys that are associated with a boy-child. The cars and guns raise self-confidence in a boy-child, which is a gender role needed for him. A boy-child feels that he is a protector through the use of a gun, and he understands his key role of protecting his family and country. The society also expects a boy-child to grow up into a man that can fight his battle, and this is instilled in a child from a tender age through the use of plastic guns. Through the use of the gun, a boy learns how to pull a trigger at the right time and manoeuvre to avoid being hurt as reflected in the game of *mokallo*. The same thing applies to the girls; they play with the dolls and tea sets that instil in their minds that they are expected to take care of the family by preparing food and taking care of the children. These gender roles introduced to girls at this young age by their parents are further learned at *mantloaneng* and identified in the *khati* song "kooko!".

Based on these given examples, it is clear that the parents inculcate gender stereotypes through the way they channel the behaviour of the children through the use of different toys.

### 2.3.2 Grandparents

The Basotho families have always involved the grandparents in the upbringing of children as it is believed that they provide protection and guidance to their grandchildren. Choi *et al.* (2016: 120) assert that the practice of extended family members participating in the care and raising of the children is a long-standing cultural tradition in many parts of the world. In Lesotho, the practice has been going on since ancient times. Ansell and Blerk (2004: 7) contend that living with the grandparents allows the children to learn more about their culture. They further opine that from the studies carried out in Lesotho and Malawi, the majority of children are residing with maternal relatives due to different reasons. These findings do not leave out the fact that even some paternal grandparents in Lesotho take care of their grandchildren. It is against this narration that the researcher intends to discuss different ways in which the grandparents from both maternal and paternal use story-telling to teach different tasks to their grandchildren, including herding the animals for the boys and cooking skills for the girls.

In most cases, in the Basotho culture, the children are weaned from the age of two or three years to stay with their grandparents. It is believed that at this age, a child is old enough to be separated from their parents (Demuth, 1986: 52). The children grow up under the guidance of the grandparents who watch them as they grow and are assigned different roles based on their sex. It is at this stage when the grandparents begin to teach young girls different domestic activities, such as, sweeping, cleaning dishes, washing light clothes, picking vegetables and other activities that are related to housekeeping. The small boys begin to accompany their grandfathers to the veld to learn how to tend the animals. They are also taught about light work that includes looking after calves, lamb and kids that they can help a family with at home.

According to the Gender schema theory (Bem, 1984: 186), the children's understanding of the roles and responsibilities is influenced by their background, where they are brought up. Even in cases where they are not raised by their biological parents, gender roles and responsibilities are culturally dictated. The grandparents teach and assign the boys and girls different roles according to their gender to prepare them for future life when they are mature. Under the supervision of a grandparent, a boy-child starts to learn how to herd the animals while a young girl observes her

grandparent and learns how to do house chores in the family. At this stage, the boys and girls develop the mentality that they are different and have different roles that define them as a boy and a girl.

Lesitsi (1990: 57) emphasises the roles and responsibilities that the boys and girls learn under the grandparents' guidance as follows,

(4) *Ngoana o kenya letsoho mesebetsing ea lelapa ka ho supisoa seo a lokelang ho se etsa lebitsong la lelapa, 'me o fua tataiso hore seo a se etsang, a tle a se phethe ka makhethe. Ngoanana o se a tšepeloa ho kha moroho, ho kha metsi le ho pheha lijo ka mefuta ea tsona. Moshanyana eena o qala ho alosa manamane, lipoli le linku: haa tloha moo o ea likhomong.*

'A child is involved in different family activities by being shown how to do things accordingly in the name of the family and is led to perform their work orderly. A girl-child is trusted to pick vegetables, fetch water and prepare different foods. A boy-child starts to herd calves, goats and sheep. At a later stage, he tends to the cattle'.

From extract (4) above, the roles are divided according to the gender of the children and each child is expected to perform the roles and responsibilities allocated to them. For instance, when the boys are still young, they receive guidance from the grandparents on how to look after the calves, kids and lambs. At the later stage of their development, they tend to the cattle as an indication that they are no longer young and are promoted to do more work that requires more skills and attention. A girl-child is also guided by her grandparent into activities that prepare her for womanhood. She learns all the activities related to the preparation of food, such as, fetching water, picking vegetables and performing other housekeeping activities. These roles highlighted in the excerpt (4) prepare the boys and girls for future responsibilities that are related to their way of living. A girl is prepared to be a real woman and a mother who will take care of the family and children by not starving them. The girls learn the cooking skills at home and at the game of *mantloane* from a tender age and extend to *khotsoaneng*, respectively, where they are further improved.

The grandparents are also trusted to watch the behaviour of young children so that they grow up into respectable men and women in future. To mould and maintain the acceptable behaviour of the children, the grandparents choose stories that are relevant



to nurture that behaviour. It is at this point that the grandparents narrate the stories as part of the children's learning that instils acceptable behaviour and correct the unacceptable behaviour of the boys and girls based on their stages of development. The boys' and girls' behaviour is expected to conform to the expectations of their society and culture. For example, the boys are expected to herd the animals and hunt whereas the girls are supposed to assist in domestic chores. In the Basotho culture, the grandparents take over the discipline of the children from a young age. After the children are weaned, both boys and girls sleep in separate houses where the grandparents attend to each gender separately to instil norms and values through story-telling. The Basotho expect the boys and girls to understand their roles in the family from a young age so that they become respectable men and women in future, as per the principle of the Gender schema theory used in this discussion.

Some scholars such as Ntšonyane (2004: 59) contend that the stories inform children about different roles and responsibilities. He further affirms that through story-telling, children learn about how to behave, how to overcome obstacles, how to obtain courage and sacrifice oneself. From this point of view, the story-telling by the grandparents helps to mould and shape the behaviour of the children as expected by society. The story-telling instil courage and resilience in children from a tender age as it is a critical age in the development of a child where a child can easily assimilate information provided to them.

The children grow up with this mentality that they have to perform different roles and responsibilities as expected by society. For that matter, the story-telling influences and shapes the development and instils values in children from a young age. From what they learn from the story-telling, children can build good relations with other children as they play together, *mantloane*, *khotsoane*, *mokallo* and *khati*. Good relations are not only reflected in these games, but are also extended to adulthood when the children show maturity as the members of the community. Therefore, the activities performed by the grandparents in the upbringing of the boys and girls in this chapter inform the gender stereotypes reflected in the games discussed in chapter three.

## 2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has found out that some traditional practices, such as, the announcement of the birth of a Mosotho child to a father, the traditional practices at the adolescent stage of a girl-child and the rite of passage of *kuruetso ka khoeli*, contribute to the development of gender stereotypes. The traditional practices and the stages of development of a boy and a girl-child reveal that the Basotho have the expected roles and responsibilities of the children from birth.

All the activities carried out during the announcement of a child to a father and during *kuruetso ka khoeli* indicate that gender roles differ depending on the sex of a child. This discussion has shown that the children are born without special roles, but the environment and culture in which they are brought up dictate the roles based on the sex of a child. For instance, the boys have specific roles, such as, herding animals, hunting and protecting their families and country while the girls are expected to take care of the family, prepare food and bear the children.

Other contributing factors to the development of gender stereotypes are the parents and grandparents. The parents contribute to the development of gender stereotypes by buying the toys that are related to the children's gender. These toys seem to dictate the behaviour of the children in future as adults. The grandparents also instil gender stereotypes by teaching and encouraging the boys and girls to do different tasks related to their sex from a tender age. They also narrate different stories that teach children about how to behave and perform different roles and responsibilities as expected by the society. From a young age, the children develop an understanding of how the society expects them to behave when they reach adulthood stage.

Even the scholars such as Machobane (1996), Rapeane (2003) and Morojele (2012) support that the society expects men and women to perform different roles and responsibilities. They assert that men and women are naturally different both biologically and physically. Therefore, men and women carry out the roles and responsibilities as expected by the society.

## CHAPTER 3

### GENDER STEREOTYPES REFLECTED IN THE *KHATI* SONG ‘KOOKO!’ AND THE SELECTED GAMES

#### 3.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the study discussed the contributing factors to the development of gender stereotypes. In this chapter, the researcher identifies and discusses the gender stereotypes reflected in the *khati* song ‘kooko!’, *khotsoane*, *mantloane* and *mokallo*. To discuss these gender stereotypes, this chapter is comprised of four sections, where the gender stereotypes are first identified and discussed in the *khati* song ‘kooko!’, *mantloane*, *mokallo* and *khotsoane* respectively. The discussion is guided by the Gender schema theory.

#### 3.1 Gender Stereotypes in the *Khati* Song ‘Kooko!’

This section discusses the gender stereotypes identified in the *khati* song ‘kooko!’. Matšela (1994: 21) defines *khati* as the Basotho traditional game that is played by young and old girls using a rope made from plastics or *teele* ‘weed iris’, *leloli* ‘rish’ or *molula* ‘tough love grass’ in summer. The researcher adopts this definition to be used in the discussion of the gender stereotypes identified in this section. This section discusses the following gender stereotypes: preparation of food, provision of food and nurturing of children. Before the discussion of these gender stereotypes, the researcher narrates how the *khati* song is performed to provide a clear picture of what happens during the performance. A summary and structure of the *khati* song ‘kooko!’ are provided before the discussion.

##### 3.1.1 Summary of *Khati*

*Khati* is a summer game that gives young and old girls the platform to be together. The game is played outside the village to give young and old girls an opportunity to play freely. Another reason for playing the game on the outer part of the village is explained by one informant during the interview that it brings bad luck by causing death to the village or misfortune. The girls prefer playing *khati* on a lawn quick-grass to avoid the rope from snapping off due to the hard surface. In some places where no suitable grass is available, the girls use a leather strap or make a plastic rope. They use preservative measures such as soaking *khati* in the water to protect it from wearing

away. They normally soak the rope after playing in the evening and collect it on the following day when they are about to play.

*Khati* can be played by more than four girls as the two girls swing the rope while others jump inside lifting two feet up and down depending on the styles preferred by the players. The rope must be heavy to swing with balance but not too light as it will sprain the arms of the two girls swinging it. The jumping and swinging of the rope are sometimes accompanied by singing. Mokhethi (2021: 8) asserts that “some songs are sung as an accompaniment of the swinging of the rope to mark the rhythm and at times for the performance of certain variations”. The girls sing the song that they have composed to go with the rhythm and performance of *khati* as they swing the rope.

### 3.1.2 *The Structure of the Song*

The *khati* song ‘kooko!’ is about a husband and a wife, and they are referred to as *monna* ‘man’ and *mosali* ‘woman’ in the song. Their conversation addresses the issues on the roles that a man and a woman have to perform in a family. During the game, as two girls swing the rope, the first girl jumps in representing a wife and waits for other girl to jump in as a husband. When they are both jumping, they face each other, and the conversation resumes as stated in the extract (5) of the song below.

Below is a structure of how the *khati* song ‘kooko!’ is performed. The first column represents the status of the participants followed by its translated version; the third column is the original Sesotho song while the last column is the translated version of the *khati* song “kooko!”

(5) Monna	‘Husband’:	<i>Kooko!</i>	‘Knock! Knock!’
Mosali	‘Wife’:	<i>Kena!</i>	‘Enter!’
Monna	‘Husband:	<i>Mosali!</i>	‘Woman!’
Mosali	‘Wife’:	<i>Monna!</i>	‘Man!’
Monna	‘Husband:	<i>Lijo li kae?</i>	‘Where is food?’
Mosali	‘Wife’:	<i>Ha li eo!</i>	‘There is none!’
Monna	‘Husband’:	<i>Bana ba kae?</i>	‘Where are the children?’
Mosali	‘Wife’:	<i>Ha ba eo!</i>	‘They are not here!’
Monna	‘Husband’:	<i>Ha u phehe!</i>	‘You do not cook!’
Mosali	‘Wife’:	<i>Ha u sele!</i>	‘You do not provide food!’

Monna	‘Husband’:	<i>Ha u phehe!</i>	‘You do not cook’
Mosali	‘Wife’:	<i>Ha u sele!</i>	‘You do not provide food’

### 3.1.1.1 Preparation of Food

The first gender stereotype identified in this song is the preparation of food by a woman. According to Muscato (2019: 1), food preparation is the process of getting raw ingredients and processing them to be ready for consumption. This definition is adopted by the researcher and is used in the discussion.

Preparation of food as a gender stereotype is identified in the *khati* song where it says, *lijo li kae?* ‘Where is the food?’ The male character in the *khati* song ‘kooko!’ demands food from the woman (the female character), implying that he expects her as his wife to have prepared some food, and she is expected to serve him when he arrives. In response, the woman depicted in the song tells the man who is also her husband that there is no food in the house, which is surprising to the man because in the Basotho culture, the males and females are assigned different roles and responsibilities. In this case, the man’s role or responsibility is to provide food for the family while the woman’s role is to prepare food.

According to the principle of the Gender schema theory, gender roles stem from the culture in which a person is brought up rather than from being inborn (Bem, 1984: 186). As indicated by the *khati* song ‘kooko!’, a woman is supposed to have prepared food as a role expected from her by her husband. In the Basotho culture, it is appropriate for a man to demand food from a woman when he arrives home since a woman is expected to have performed her role of preparing food. The *khati* song ‘kooko!’ highlights that a woman is expected to act according to her cultural practices of preparing food for her husband, which in this song she failed dismally.

Khotso (2017: 54) emphasises the roles expected from the Basotho men and women by saying,

Some of the roles expected from [the] Basotho women include looking after the [sic] home and [sic] [,] cooking and caring for children. [The] Basotho do not expect to see a man who cooks, carries a child on his back and cleans. They are also not expecting women to be doing tasks that they believe are supposed to be performed by men.

The afore-cited extract denotes that both men and women have strict roles that they are supposed to perform in a family. As indicated by Khotso (2017:54) above, there are specific roles such as preparing and cooking food that are associated with the women only in the traditional Basotho family. There is a stereotypical belief that the men are not expected to be seen performing the roles that are associated with the women, and also the women are supposed to refrain from doing tasks associated with the men as stipulated in the extract. As a result, a man depicted in the *khati* song 'kooko!' feels that it is within his rights as a Mosotho man to demand food from his wife. This gender stereotype is not only observed in the *khati* song 'kooko!', but also in the *kuruetso ka khoeli* of a girl-child, where young girls used to bring pots and food to demonstrate preparation of food and cooking.

### 3.1.1.2 Provision of Food

The second gender stereotype identified from the *khati* song 'kooko!' is the provision of food by men. Molapo (2005: 12) asserts that in the Basotho culture, the men are regarded as the heads of the households, and for that matter, they are responsible for providing food. The researcher agrees with Molapo's view on the provision of food by the men and adopts it to discuss the second gender stereotype identified in the song.

The second gender stereotype is reflected in the *khati* song 'kooko!' where it says, *ha u sele* 'you do not provide food'. A man in the *khati* song 'kooko!' is expected to provide food for the family. When the man depicted in the song asks for food, the woman responds to the man by telling him that there is no food. This is why the woman in the song further responds, *ha u sele* 'you do not provide food'. As used by the woman, the phrase *ha u sele* implies that the man failed to provide food, which is his responsibility to bring home to feed his family. For this reason, the woman depicted in the song is not expecting the man to demand food, which he is unable to provide for the family. The expected value of the man depicted in the song aligns with the theory used in this study that the gender roles stem from the culture in which he is brought up rather than being inborn (Bem, 1984: 186). The men grow up in a culture where it is instilled in them that they have to provide for their families. They are exposed to hunting and herding the animals as the ways of preparing for an important role of providing food for the family when they are older. They grow up in the

Basotho culture where the men are regarded as the providers: who can provide food and care for the welfare of the family members. Failure to provide food that feeds their families means that they are incapable of performing his traditional role related to the provision of food.

The predecessors such as Eagly and Wood (2012: 64) also affirm that the men are regarded as the primary family providers and are thought to be assertive and agentic, which prepares them for income-generating activities. From this view, the Basotho men are considered to be the providers of food required by their families. The Basotho culture bestowed power upon them as the heads of families as they are trusted to find means to feed their families and keep them healthy. However, the man depicted in the *khati* song ‘kooko!’ is the opposite of what a real man is supposed to be since the real Mosotho man is expected to fend for his family and fulfil his roles and responsibilities of providing food. This gender stereotype is noticed when young boys brought weapons used for hunting during *kuruetso ka khoeli* of a boy-child and when the stick is used to whip the father to announce the birth of a boy-child in chapter 2.

### 3.1.1.3 Nurturing

The last gender stereotype identified in this song is nurturing of the children by the women. Molapo (2005: 37) asserts that the women are responsible for the socialisation of the children because of their reproductive role and their assumed ability to nurture the children. The researcher agrees with this view about the women’s nature of nurturing the children and believes that it is within the man’s rights as the head of the family to inquire about the whereabouts of the children from his wife when he gets home.

This gender role of nurturing of children is identified in the *khati* song when the man depicted in the *khati* song says *bana ba kae?* ‘Where are the children?’ and expects the woman to know about the whereabouts of his children. Upon his arrival, the man depicted in the *khati* song ‘kooko!’ inquires about the children, *bana ba kae?* ‘Where are the children?’ A man expects a woman to give him information relating to the whereabouts of his children as one of the traditional roles for the woman is to take care of the children. However, the woman’s response indicates that she has no idea about the whereabouts of her children.

According to the Gender schema theory, the gender roles stem from the culture in which a person is brought up (Bem, 1984: 186), so a woman is expected to care for her children and understand her roles as a woman. From a tender age, the girls are introduced to activities that channel their behaviour to suit the expectations of the society. They practise and learn about how to take care of the children by playing with their dolls and their siblings. As a result, they develop a mentality that nurturing the children is the traditional role of the women.

Even the literature has raised the issue of nurturing. For instance, Kawata (2010: 34) contends that the girls develop a sense of nurturance through informal settings where they take care of the children during the day, and their experience is useful when they become parents. He further says that the experience of undertaking a temporary adult role makes a smooth transition for the girls from childhood to adulthood. This view emphasises that the use of the dolls and taking care of younger siblings by the young girls teach them actual child-caring skills that they are expected to apply as the mothers. This gender stereotype is also indicated by the presence of *meseme* 'mats' to symbolise that a girl-child is expected to stay at home and nurture her children during *kuruetso ka khoeli* of a girl-child in chapter 2.

It is therefore, it is appropriate for the man depicted in the *khati* song 'kooko!' to ask the woman about his children because in this case the woman is the primary caretaker. However, the woman portrayed in the *khati* song 'kooko!' fails to perform her traditional role of taking care of the children as the children are not at home under her watch

This section concludes that the *khati* song 'kooko!' has shown that there are different gender roles assigned to the males and females informed by the traditional practices and *kuruetso ka khoeli* discussed in chapter 2. From the song, the woman is supposed to prepare food for the family and nurture her children as her traditional roles whereas the primary role of the man is to be a provider and feed his family by providing food. The song encourages the gender stereotypes because as the children play the *khati* game, they repeatedly sing the *khati* song 'kooko!', and the lyrics stick in their memories throughout their childhood development.



## 3.2 Gender Stereotypes in the Game of *Mantloane*

This section discusses gender stereotypes reflected in the game of *mantloane* ‘small houses’. Matšela (2001: 59) defines *mantloane* as the Basotho traditional game for the young girls. The game is strictly played by the younger girls during the day. The definition of the *khati* game is important because it includes the girls as the main participants. The researcher regards *mantloane* as one of the Basotho’s traditional games that portray the gender roles and responsibilities for the Basotho girls from the tender age. It is against this background that the section discusses the following gender stereotypes identified in the game of *mantloane*: babysitting of the children, and sharing. The discussion first provides the summary of *mantloane*, which is followed by the discussion of gender stereotypes.

### 3.2.1 Summary of *Mantloane*

*Mantloane* ‘small houses’ is the Basotho traditional game for the young girls where they construct little houses using stones. Sometimes the stones are used with mud to build strong little houses. Before the game starts, the girls start first with the construction of *mantloane* ‘small houses’ by using small stones and mud. The game is played on the outskirts of the village to avoid unnecessary disturbances such as untidiness and unexpected fire. The small boys may join the girls if they are around as they are expected to be herding the calves, lambs and kids in the veld. Sometimes the young boys join the girls to ask for food or to imitate the fatherly role. *Mantloane* is played during the day when older girls are babysitting their siblings or in the afternoon when some house chore activities are done. Sometimes older girls behave as if the young siblings are their children as they act during the game. The game involves similar utensils used at home as it represents a real family. Amongst other roles and responsibilities that the girls perform are preparations of food and caring for the young ones at *mantloaneng*.

At *mantloaneng*, food to be used is referred to as *liselo* ‘food looked for’. In the context of this study, the word *liselo* emanates from the root verb *sela*, which is translated as ‘to seek food’. The girls try to get food from different sources; they may ask for food at home or go to *seotlong* ‘threshing floor’ (Mabille & Dieterlen, 2011: 414) where the process of threshing grain has taken place, or they can go into the fields to look for wild vegetables. *Mantloane* represents a real family where there is a

father, mother and children. Sometimes the children are sent to run a few errands such as collecting wood and calling 'mamolatasali' 'bogey to frighten children' (Mabille & Dieterlen, 2011: 229) when the food is ready. Calling 'mamolatasali' is done to send the younger children away so that the older girls can have a chance to finish delicious food (Matšela, 2001: 58). *Mantloane* also portrays real life where there is a day and night. A day is symbolised by cooking and performing other activities done during the day whereas a night is symbolised by sleeping and crowing of a 'roaster' to signal that the night is over.

### 3.2.1.1 Babysitting

The first gender stereotype reflected in *mantloane* is the babysitting of the young children by the older girls. Kawata (2016: 24) asserts that babysitting is usually restricted to activities such as putting a child to bed, playing with a child, feeding a child and other activities that involve taking care of the child to give it full attention. This definition is adopted by the researcher for its relevance and is used in this discussion.

The first gender stereotype identified in this game is embodied when the younger girls take their siblings whom they are babysitting with them and treat them as theirs at the game of *mantloane*. According to the Gender schema theory, as the girls develop, they learn about the society's cultural knowledge of being a woman (Christen & Zurbriggen, 2017: 568). What the young girls practise at *mantloaneng* reflects how the Basotho women are expected to behave towards their children. The Basotho women are responsible for watching over their children, and that is instilled in a girl-child from a tender age where she is expected to focus on the children and their happiness. She is raised to love the children through the games like *mantloane*, where she learns how to perform the motherly roles and responsibilities such as feeding her younger siblings, carrying them on her back and helping them to remain calm when their mothers are not around. When nursing mothers attend some family businesses, they leave their young children with their elder sisters to babysit them. It is at this point that the young girls take their siblings along with them to play *mantloane*.

This gender stereotype is also seen when parents buy and mend dolls for girls at the young age to learn how to play with them as highlighted in chapter 2. Playing with the dolls include taking care of them (washing them and their clothes, dressing them up

and feeding them). However at the game of *mantloane*, the younger siblings substitute dolls and become the children of the older siblings while the young girls are the ones who play with dolls and give them full attention like real children. It is from this game that a girl-child acquires caregiving skills to babysit young children.

Some scholars also believe that *mantloane* plays a vital role in teaching a girl-child the role of babysitting. Such researchers include Ntšihlele (2003: 128) who suggests that, “*mantloane* lays the foundation and training for adult life in which the girls learn to care for their siblings and carry them on their backs.” The afore-cited quotation indicates that *mantloane* introduces the young girls to the adult roles that the society expects them to perform when they are old. They learn how to use a blanket to carry their siblings on their backs and to tie them close to their bodies. Kammeyer (2010: 107) adds that the blanket is used so that a child would not fall, but remain close to the body. Sometimes another blanket is used to cover the head, but most importantly to put a child to sleep. This means that a girl becomes a nursing sister by learning all the responsibilities of helping her younger siblings to develop and accomplish all childhood developments. Even though babysitting the children may be strenuous, the young girls have to play and nurse their younger siblings; they learn how to multi-task and understand their expected role of babysitting from a tender age.

With all the responsibilities of taking care of the children by the young girls at *mantloaneng*, the researcher believes that *mantloane* enhances babysitting as the young girls grow up with the mentality that their role is to bear the children and take care of them. The girls develop an interest in the children and motherhood because they are exposed to the roles and responsibilities of taking care of the children at a tender age.

### 3.2.1.2 Sharing

Another gender stereotype identified in the game of *mantloane* is sharing of food by the girls. Mofuoa (2015: 6371) contends that sharing is showing some love, care and support to all the people regardless of their economy and vulnerability status in the Basotho community. This definition is adopted by the researcher and is used to discuss this role. In this study, sharing of food is reflected when the young girls cater for the needs of other girls by sharing evenly some of the cooked or raw food that

they brought from home before they start the game. This is done so that every household here at *mantloaneng* can prepare and cook the same food.

The girls come together at the time of playing when they are done helping their parents with family chores. They bring along utensils, pots, food and everything that they are going to use as they start a day. This gender stereotype is also noticed during *kuruetso ka khoeli* of a girl-child when young girls brought and share the utensils used at the game of *mantloane* to honour a new-born girl. Before they start to play, they make sure that all the participants have food that they are going to prepare and cook. According to the Gender schema theory, the children adjust their behaviour to align with the gender norms of their culture from the earliest stages of social development (Christen & Zurbriggen, 2017: 566). *Mantloane* socialises the young girls into sharing what they have with others. As they play the game, they borrow from each other and exchange some of the goods needed most by others. In the Basotho culture, the people live by sharing, hence the Basotho proverb *sejo senyane ha se fete molomo* (Mokitimi, 1997: 65), translated as 'little food may be shared by all'. The children adopt this strategy at the game of *mantloane* when they share equally the raw food before they start preparing and cooking food.

Amongst other things, the girls are expected to show sympathy and humanity towards other girls by taking care of their needs before the game of *mantloane* and by giving them food to prepare during the game. As they play the game, they borrow from each other and exchange some of the goods needed most by others without hesitation. From this game, the girls learn how to share and cater for the needs of others first.

The notion of sharing is also supported by Matšela (1990: 3), Mofuoa (2015: 6371) and Segoete (2015: 6) who opine that the Basotho have learned to work and help one another since the ancient times. Mofuoa (2015: 6371) points out that the Basotho practise *matsema* and *mafisa* as a way of boosting the economy and improving the livelihoods of other Basotho. The girls imitate this lifestyle and practise it at the game of *mantloane*, where they ensure that the participants are taken care of by sharing raw and cooked food to have the same meal. In doing so, the girls grow up understanding humanity through sharing, and what to do to become the real women with compassion in their society.

To conclude, babysitting the children by the young girls and sharing food with other girls are identified as some of the gender stereotypes found in *mantloane* game. Babysitting prepares the girls for adult roles and is surrounded by other responsibilities such as feeding and carrying the young children on their backs. From this game, sharing is a core of *mantloane*, where the children learn to share what they have with other children regardless of their different backgrounds. The game cannot resume if other girls have nothing to cook. It is from this game that the young girls learn the importance of sharing with one another, and the responsibility to ensure that others are treated with kindness and empathy.

### **3.3 Gender Stereotypes in the Game of *Mokallo***

Matšela (1994: 24) defines *mokallo* ‘stick fighting’ as the boys’ game played during the day when the boys are herding the animals in the veld. The researcher adopts this definition to be used in this discussion. The researcher’s focus is on the following gender stereotypes instilled in a boy-child by the game: protection and courage. Before the discussion of these gender stereotypes, a summary of the game is provided.

#### **3.3.1 Summary of the Game of *Mokallo***

*Mokallo* is played by two boys of the same age. Sometimes the challenge may be between boys of different ages especially when the older boys are training the young herd boys how to play the game. To play the game, the participants need two maize stalks or two sticks for *ho kallana* ‘to strike one another with a stick’ (Mabille & Dieterlen, 2011: 119). The participant has to hold the first maize stalk or stick on the right hand and another maize stalk or stick on the left hand. The right-hand side stalk or stick is used for striking the opponent while the left hand side stalk or stick is used for blocking the blows from the opponent. This second stalk or stick used for blocking the blows is called *sephethela* ‘a blocking stick’. Coetzee (2002: 5) affirms that a blocking stick is used to protect the body of a fighter from the opponent’s blow.

The other item used in this *mokallo* is a blanket wrapped around a hand holding *sephethela*. This blanket is called *moqolo* or *thoto*. It is used to cover the hand and to protect the nails from the blows of the opponent. There are various ways to play the game such as playing in pairs where two boys fight and are watched by other boys. Again, the boys can form different teams where they make two lines and play facing

one another. Sometimes the boys invite other boys from a different village to come and compete with them as a way of gathering courage. The participants are expected to follow the rules of the game as *mokallo* is not intended to cause any harm or loss of life. For instance, when the participants realise that the fighters are at risk of hurting one another, they use the Sesotho word *khaola* 'stop' to bring the game to an abrupt stop. When participants hear the word *khaola*, they understand that they have to stop the game. The game trains the Basotho boys with fighting techniques such as hitting on the right spot at the right time and means of manoeuvring when faced with real war.

### *3.3.1.1 Men as Protectors*

It has always been the intention of the Basotho to raise the boys who will protect their country and families against enemies. To achieve this intention, they introduce the boys to games such as *mokallo* to make them understand their expected role which is seen as one of the gender stereotypes. Block (2016: 32) asserts that the men have been characterised as the protectors from pre-colonial times. The researcher agrees with this view and adds that the Basotho boys are prepared for this role at a tender age through the game of *mokallo* where they are taught and learn about fighting skills that they can apply in future as warriors. As seen in chapter two, the essence of this gender stereotype is identified during *kuruetsa ka khoeli* of a boy-child when the young boys brought fighting weapons such as sticks, knobkerries and spears to demonstrate warfare. It is against this background that the discussion explores how the *mokallo* game prepares the boys to become the protectors.

The first gender stereotype instilled in boys by the game of *mokallo* regards the men as protectors. This gender stereotype is instilled in the boys through the striking and defence mechanisms that the boys learn from the game. The Gender schema theory contends that as the children develop, they learn about their society's cultural knowledge of being a man and a woman (Bem, 1984: 186). The Basotho boys are expected to protect their families and their country when they reach maturity. The training of the boys as the protectors starts in the veld when the young boys are introduced to the game of *mokallo* by the elder boys and through observing the elder boys when they play the game. The regular performance of the *mokallo* game trains the boys for self-defence and war. It also gives the boys an opportunity to learn

different techniques on how to use the right hand stick to hit the opponent at the right time and manoeuvre during the fight to avoid being hit. The boys can later use these fighting skills that they have learned from the *mokallo* game when they have reached the warrior stage and adulthood to protect their families and their country.

In support, Pitikoe and Preece (2017: 465) assert that the game of *mokallo* is a foundation on how the Basotho boys and young men can obtain the skills of self-defence and resilience to achieve the society's expectations of protecting them. From this view, it is clear that the game of *mokallo* is important in the upbringing of the Basotho boys. It prepares the boys and young men to become the respectable men by teaching them the skills that they can use to protect themselves against their enemies when faced with a real war. By receiving these skills, the boys and young men can perform the role of being the protectors as expected by the society. The Basotho boys are raised in a patriarchal society where they are taught about the expected roles for the boys from a young age. It is at this stage that the boys learn that their main obligation is to become the protectors of their families and country. Therefore, the game of *mokallo* trains them for future adult roles as the Basotho men to protect their loved ones.

#### 3.3.1.2 *Courage*

One of the expected character traits for the boys is courage. McIntosh (2013: 346) defines courage as the quality to control ones' fear in a dangerous or difficult situation. The researcher adopts this definition to be used for this study and explores how the game of *mokallo* instils courage in the boys from a young age.

In line with the birth of a boy-child, a father is beaten with a stick as a symbol that a boy-child will experience pain in future and is expected to face his fears by being courageous. Courage as one of the gender stereotypes identified in the game of *mokallo*, is instilled in the boys through their regular participation in the game where the boys gain courage by facing different opponents on different occasions. The Gender schema theory highlights that as the children develop, they learn about their society's cultural knowledge of being a man and a woman (Bem, 1984: 186). The Basotho boys are expected to look after the cattle in the veld from the early stages of development. As they are herding the cattle, they begin to play *mokallo* and enjoy their independence since they are away from parental supervision. Regular

participation in the *mokallo* game through competitions with the boys from different villages instils courage in the boys as they are forced by the game to face their opponents without fear.

The game also helps the boys to explore their manliness to fight their way up to the position of becoming '*Mampoli* 'the most important of a troop of boys' (Mabille & Dieterlen, 2011: 229). This leadership position obtained from this game encourages a boy to become fearless and wants to face more herders in a fight. When faced with their opponents, the boys are expected to use the defence mechanisms that they have acquired in the veld to defeat their enemies. A Mosotho man understands that it is a disgrace to have injuries at the back; hence, it is important to face the opponent when fighting. In that way, he develops this character trait of courage to become a real man.

A scholar like Coetzee (2002: 2) affirms that stick fighting provides an opportunity for the boys to build the courage to distinguish themselves as proficient warriors and to earn respect in the community. This view highlights that the game of *mokallo* trains the boys to gain courage during the fight and assists them to maintain respectable status by defeating their opponents or competitors. As a result, the Basotho boys grow up with the mentality that respect is earned through defeating their opponents in a fight. Therefore, they are assisted by the concurrence participation in the game of *mokallo* to build courage and also get used to the fighting skills that enable them to be fearless.

It is concluded that *mokallo* helps the boys to acquire the fighting skills, as well as defence mechanisms to protect themselves, their families and their country. The *mokallo* game instils courage in the boys which, is a character trait that the boys are expected to have in future as the warriors and family men. From this game, the boys learn that to gain more courage, they have to fight their battles by facing their opponents and through regular participation.

### **3.4 Gender Stereotypes in the Game of Khotsoane**

Matšela (2001: 39) defines the game of *khotsoane* as a traditional game played by the older girls of the same age where they cook *likhobe* 'cooked corn' (Mabille & Dieterlen, 2011: 208) and eat them while the water is boiling. The researcher adopted this definition and used it to discuss endurance and self-control as two gender



stereotypes instilled in girls through this game. This section first gives a summary of the game of *khotsoane* followed by a discussion of endurance and self-control.

### **3.4.1 Summary of the Game of *Khotsoane***

*Khotsoane* is played in a cave when it is raining. The place where the game takes place is referred to as *khotsoaneng* ‘cave’. Mabile and Dieterlen (2011: 147) define *khotsoaneng* as a place where the girls preparing for initiation go to cook food when it is raining. The girls avoid interrupting their parents by going to the caves to play together with their age mates. As a result, *khotsoana* allows the girls to give the parents their own space during the rainy weather. They also play the game when some house chores for the family have stopped due to rain. When they go to the cave to play, the girls carry along the pots and grains to cook. The girls eat *likhobe* ‘cooked corn’ while the pot is still on fire without the fear of being burnt. Matšela (1994: 21) asserts that the children eat *likhobe* ‘cooked corn’ without taking off the pot from the fire and without waiting for the water to subside. They dip their hands inside a pot until they finish eating *likhobe* ‘cooked corn’.

The game involves singing by the girls who may invite the herd boys to join them. Sometimes the herd boys join the girls in the cave to hide from the rain or to beg for food. The boys bring with them wood as an offering to the girls. The presence of the boys compels the girls to show maturity and try to avoid sexual temptations because they play alone without the supervision of their parents. It is at this point that benevolent feelings may arise during the game and the opposite sexes end up finding themselves tempted to sexual activities as both boys and girls do not control their feelings.

#### **3.4.1.1 Endurance**

*Khotsoane* is one of the Basotho traditional games that instil in the girls that they have to endure pain and not give up easily when they encounter a difficult situation in their lives. McIntosh (2013: 501) defines endurance as the ability to keep doing something difficult, unpleasant or painful for a long time. This definition is adopted for this study and the researcher regards endurance as the strength to withstand pain by the girls reflected in this game. Water is used as a reminder that a girl-child will bring a life which comes with a painful experience in future when she is mature. Endurance is

identified as gender stereotype, which is also symbolised by the use of water during the announcement of a girl-child to her father, and when a girl-child experiences her first menstrual cycle discussed in chapter 2. It is against this background that the study explores how the game of *khotsoane* instils endurance of pain in the Basotho girls.

The first gender stereotype instilled by the game of *khotsoane* is endurance. The endurance is inculcated in the Basotho girls when they dip their hands inside the boiling water. According to the Gender schema theory, the children's behaviour is influenced by the society's cultural knowledge of being a man and a woman (Christen & Zurbriggen, 2017: 568). The girls do not wait for the water to subside but dip their hands in the boiling water of *likhobe* 'cooked corn' and start eating *likhobe* 'cooked corn' while the pot is still on fire. By withstanding the pain from the boiling water, the girls understand that to become the real women in life, they have to endure pain. The dipping of hands to pick out *likhobe* 'cooked corn' in boiling water takes place until the pot is empty. The girls are not expected to give up on picking *likhobe* 'cooked corn' because of heat but continue until they have finished everything. Dipping of hands in a boiling water and withstanding the pain symbolise different experiences such as the pain and suffering of womanhood from giving birth to raising the children that the girls will encounter in future as adults.

Mohlabane (2020: 83) opines that having the children in the Basotho marriage gives a married woman an identity. If a married woman fails to conceive, she is not accepted by part of the society. Failure to conceive by a married woman may lead to stigmatisation. This view highlights the strenuous situation that some women experience when they are unable to affirm the heterosexual marital role of having the children. They have to withstand the unpleasant reaction of society and suffer the consequences of delaying giving birth. Therefore, the game prepares them to be ready to endure difficult situations such as the ones alluded to when they reach adulthood stage.

Furthermore, Sultana (2011: 8) adds that regardless of the busy schedule that a woman may have, she has to attend to domestic responsibilities, such as, household chores, bearing and raising the children, doing laundry and preparing and cooking food. This means that a woman has to balance her work and perform all the expected

roles and responsibilities without failure or giving up. Even though the load seems to be too heavy to be carried by one person, a woman has to develop patience and carry on without complaints. Therefore, *khotsoane* is a foundation of a difficult life that a girl-child is prepared to endure in future as an adult. In this game, when the girls withstand the pain of boiling water until they have finished their task, it is a good reflection that they will be able to endure future challenges such as difficulties during labour and other challenges in their marriage life as the married women.

#### 3.4.1.2 *Self-Control*

The Basotho girls are expected to behave well and refrain from sexual activities that may tint their images. Robinson (2020: 1) defines self-control as the ability to manage one's impulses, emotions and behaviour to achieve the expected roles and responsibilities. This definition is adopted for discussion of this gender stereotype. Self-control is the gender stereotype that is instilled in a girl when she first experiences menstrual cycle noticed in chapter 2. A girl-child is given rules to observe when she experiences her first menstrual cycle regarding this gender stereotype of self-control, which is further inculcated through the game of *khotsoane*.

The last gender stereotype instilled by the game of *khotsoane* is self-control. This gender stereotype is implanted in the girls where they avoid falling into the temptations of getting into sexual activities with the boys who joined them during the game. The girls play far away without the guidance and supervision of their parents in the game of *khotsoane*. They are joined by herd boys who may encourage them to go astray by engaging them in sexual activities. As a result, they are expected to be at their utmost behaviour and avoid engaging in sexual activities that can jeopardise their youth by falling pregnant before marriage. This may also lead to the girls carrying the stigma of pre-marital sex and pregnancy, the phenomena that are against their cultural norms. For that matter, the game helps them to exercise self-control against falling into temptations.

The girls' behaviour is expected to align with the expectation of their culture and society where they are supposed to conduct themselves differently as compared to the boys. The fact that the girls are joined by the boys in the cave and are alone without the supervision of the parents during the game does not permit them to engage in unacceptable behaviour, but to practise self-control.

Literature also conforms to instilled self-control in girls. For example, Motalingoane-Khau (2007: 51) asserts that the Basotho girls are expected to be sexually innocent and keep their virginity for marriage. For the Basotho girls', having a child out of wedlock is a disgrace to a family as the society regards a pregnant girl as a delinquent because her sexual activeness becomes apparent whereas a boy has no worries about his status. The above view shows that the children's behaviour matters most in their upbringing as far as marriage is concerned. According to the Basotho way of life, marriage as an institution, is supposed to be pure, instilled and encouraged through virginity keeping from this young age using games like *khotsoane*, amongst others. As a result, the girls are expected to have self-control in order to keep their virginity for marriage at a later stage of their lives.

Therefore, the game of *khotsoane* was used as a platform to challenge the behaviour of the girls from the teenage stage to prepare them to be the real women who will be able to avoid temptations in future. Even though the boys and girls are expected to resist sexual temptations, the girls are supposed to be at their utmost behaviour as falling pregnant before marriage tints not only their image, but also that of their families. As a result, monitoring the behaviour of girls and instilling consciousness in them is very important in the Basotho culture.

To conclude, endurance and self-control are two gender stereotypes instilled in girls through the game of *khotsoane*. The game of *khotsoane* works as a preparatory stage for initiation school and marriage where girls are expected to become women by waiting for the right time to engage in sexual activities. When the girls endure pain by dipping their hands in boiling water to pick out *likhobe* 'cooked corn', they understand that they have obligations of womanhood and motherhood that they are supposed to fulfil in future. Therefore, they have to withstand the hardship of life. The game also encourages the girls to have the self-control to prepare for the right time when they would be sexually active.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed different gender stereotypes reflected in the Basotho's traditional *khati* song "koko!" and the games under the study. The gender stereotypes identified and discussed in the *khati* song "koko!" and the selected games confirm that the gender roles are not inborn, but stem from the culture in which

the children are born as stated by the principle of the Gender schema theory. In the *khati* song “koko!”, a man and a woman have different roles that are expected to be performed. The woman is supposed to prepare food and serve her husband, and she is also expected to take care of the children as her traditional role while the man portrayed in the *khati* song “koko!” is supposed to provide food to feed his family.

Furthermore, *mantloane* teaches the girls how to babysit their younger siblings. The act of babysitting prepares them for the adult roles. They learn to feed them, carry them on their backs and play with them when their mothers are not around or are occupied with the family businesses. The game shows sharing as one of the gender stereotypes. From this gender stereotype of sharing, the girls learn how to care for others who come to the game without food due to unforeseen circumstances. They share what they have with the rest so that everybody can participate in the game.

Protection and courage are two gender stereotypes instilled through the game of *mokallo*. The boys acquire defence skills from *mokallo* through regular participation in the game. They learn how to strike and defend at the right time. These fighting skills are important as they prepare them for the future role of becoming respectable warriors who will protect their families and their country. The game instils courage, which is a character trait expected from a Mosotho man. The trait helps the boys to prove their manhood amongst their age-mates and prepare them for the future role of becoming fearless warriors.

In the last game, *khotsoane*, endurance and self-control have been identified as gender stereotypes instilled in girls through the game. The girls are expected to endure pain from the game *khotsoane* as a preparatory stage for initiation and marriage. When the girls dip their hands in the boiling water, they understand that they will have to withstand pain in future and not run away from life challenges as married women and mothers. The society expects the girls not to retreat when they are faced with the problems, but to withstand unpleasant situations until they achieve their goals. The game also indicates that the girls are expected to have self-control as they are the most vulnerable people to deal with the situations that are anticipated such as temptations. The game of *khotsoane* helps them to be at their utmost behaviour and be able to avoid the temptations of engaging in sexual activities even if they are attracted to the boys that join them during the game.

## CHAPTER 4

### INTENDED AND EXPECTED VALUES INSTILLED IN CHILDREN

#### 4.0 Introduction

The previous chapter identified and discussed the gender stereotypes in the Basotho traditional *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and the selected games. In this chapter, the researcher intends to explore the intended and expected values in the children that result from the gender stereotypes reflected and instilled through some of the games discussed in chapter 3. The researcher has identified the following values: good marriage relations, motherhood, humanity, self-confidence, perseverance and faithfulness. These values are instilled or promoted by the gender stereotypes that have been discussed in the previous chapter as reflected in the *khati* song ‘kooko!’ as well as the selected games.

#### 4.1 Good Marriage Relations

Good communication in a family leads to good marriage relations between a man and a woman. Manyeli (2019: 10) defines marriage as a formal agreement between two adults who enter into a lifetime partnership. A researcher agrees with this definition and adds that there must be commitments and willingness to share responsibilities by married couples as that allows a smooth operation in the family.

Considering food preparation and provision of food as two gender stereotypes from the *khati* song ‘kooko!’, a boy-child and a girl-child are expected to have good marriage relations in future. In the *khati* song ‘kooko’, the two gender stereotypes, namely, preparation and provision of food by both wife and husband respectively, suggest the sharing of roles and responsibilities through which good marriage relations are promoted and maintained in a family setting. In the song, the man says, *ha u phehe* ‘you do not prepare food’ to his wife who in response also tells her husband that he does not provide food. This conversation between a husband and wife is an indicative of a failed marriage in terms of sharing of roles between husband and wife, hence no good marriage relations in this situation. It is through this scenario that the song communicates the importance of sharing responsibilities between the married partners for the promotion and maintenance of good marriage relations. If a man did his role and provided food, that food could have been prepared by his wife as the

gender stereotypes suggest; the conversation would have been different, probably the one reflective of good relations between the two parties.

According to the Gender schema theory, sharing of the responsibilities and roles stems from the way the boys and girls are raised from a tender age by the parents and other close members of the family. From a tender age, the boys and girls are assigned different roles that prepare them for the future roles as the married men and women. From a tender age, the girls learn about the preparation of food and are taught about how to prepare food for the members of their families while the boys learn about hunting as a way of searching for and providing food. As a result, the children grow up understanding that good marriage relations are built through the performance of the expected roles by both a man and a woman in the family.

In support, Obioha and Tšoeunyane (2012: 253) assert that the family members share the responsibilities so that each member can contribute towards the continuity and stability of their family based on their social categorisation of age, sex and other characteristics and boundaries. From this point of view, it is expected that every member of the family performs their assigned roles and responsibilities. Therefore, the expected value from this game encourages the children to develop a feeling that they have to contribute to the production and preparation of food in order to promote and maintain good relations between the married couples.

## **4.2 Motherhood**

Motherhood is one important value in nurturing of the children. Collin (2016: 285) defines motherhood in the African women perspective as emotional care for the children and provides for their physical survival. Kuri and Fierheller (2017: 20) add that motherhood is performing intensive care, increasing social and economic capital for the children and securing a future for them. Motherhood can also be defined as the ability to raise the children in a warm environment regardless of the biological or legal connection. It is upon these definitions provided here that the researcher regards motherhood in the Basotho community as an important phase in the life of a woman.

It has been noted earlier that nurturing and babysitting are identified as two gender stereotypes from the *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and the game of *mantloane*, respectively. This implies that motherhood is expected from a girl-child when such a child reaches adulthood stage. The value is instilled through nurturing, which is reflected in the

*khati* song ‘kooko!’ when a man asks a woman about the whereabouts of their children by saying, *bana ba kae?* ‘Where are the children?’ and also through babysitting reflected in the *mantloane* game where the young girls are left with their younger siblings to look after. As a result, a girl-child grows up attached to the children and develops mutual feelings and eagerness to raise her children in future. The young girls also become physically and emotionally attached to their young siblings, to an extent that nurturing and babysitting are the skills that they excel in. Therefore, the games prepare the young girls for motherhood through the *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and *mantloane*, respectively.

According to the Gender schema theory used in this study, the girls’ behaviour is influenced by the society’s cultural knowledge of being a woman (Bem, 1984: 186). Girls grow up with the expected roles of motherhood from the games that they are introduced at younger age when they easily accumulate new knowledge. The girl-child is expected to use what they have learned and acquired from the game of *mantloane* and *khati* song ‘kooko!’ when they raise their children in future. They are also expected to become real mothers now that they have the necessary skills of taking care of the children, feeding them and putting them to sleep. *Mantloane* and *khati* song ‘kooko!’ prepare the girls for motherhood and there is a belief that they should also face the challenges that go together with the responsibilities of nurturing of the children.

From the game of *mantloane*, a girl-child learns to expand and develop ways to prepare her children to accomplish success when faced with life challenges from different stages of life in future (Kammeyer, 2010: 106). This view points out that motherhood is a very important stage in a life of a girl-child as she is trained to be observant towards the growth of the children in future. She develops an understanding that her main priorities and obligations are to take care of the children, protect them and ensure that they achieve their goals to become important people in future. This view is supported by the Sesotho proverb, *M’a- ngoana o tšoara thipa ka bohaleng* ‘The mother of a child holds the dagger on the sharper edge’ (Maisela, 2005: 63). This proverb emphasises the importance of a mother, and that she can do everything in her power to protect her children and make sure that they are well taken care of even in awkward situations. Therefore, the girls grow up understanding the



importance of taking care of the children and providing protection for them from a young age.

### **4.3 Humanity**

This section discusses humanity as an expected value, which is promoted by sharing as another gender stereotype identified in the game of *mantloane*. Mofuoa (2015: 6371) asserts that the Basotho community encourages humanity to provide love, care and support to all people regardless of their economy and vulnerability status through sharing. Mapesela (2004: 322) adds that the Basotho communities inculcate good ethics, morals, values, humaneness and neighbourliness to ensure that they survive the hardship brought about by famine and other factors of life.

Here the value of humanity promoted by the game of *mantloane* is in line with the Gender schema theory (Bem, 1984: 186). Sometimes the children's upbringing encourages positive behaviour where they learn and observe what it means to be a real woman in their culture. The girls develop humanity and an understanding of becoming real women by helping each other from the early stage of development. They do not allow the girls to participate in a game without food as that jeopardises the jovial mood of the game. The acts of humanity have also been one of the Basotho cultural norms practised in the past through co-operatives. As a result, the girls adopt this practice and implement it at the game where they learn how to support each other.

As indicated in chapter 3 under the gender stereotype of sharing, before the game of *mantloane* starts, the girls are expected to have the food that they are going to prepare, together with the utensils and pots to be used during the game. It is at this point that the girls are cautious about other girls in need who have not brought any food to be prepared during the game. All the girls including those who have brought nothing share the food brought into the game equally. It is from the game of *mantloane* that a girl-child is expected to develop a mentality of sharing food from the early stages of development, and they are expected to extend it in future when they have families. The core of the game of *mantloane* is preparing and cooking food, which cannot take place if other girls have not brought any food to be cooked. In order to show humanity, the girls are forced by the nature of the game to share all the food brought into the game amongst them. In addition, the girls do not only share the raw and the cooked food, but also the utensils used in the game if some of them have none.

Mphanya (1992: 19) asserts that,

*Mekhoa, meetlo le litloaello, ke litholoana tse hlahisoang ke batho ba phelang hammoho e le sebetsa se matla se laolang likamano tsa bona e le batho, le ho betla tsela le ho ntšetsa pele bophelo ba bona ka bonngoe, esita le ka bongata ba bona monateng le mahlomoleng, bonolong le bothateng.*

‘Customs, culture and traditions are the result of good relations amongst the people who live together, which is a strong weapon that controls their relationship as humans, and to pave a way of improving their lives individually and collectively in joyful and sorrowful times, in simple times and difficult times’.

The afore-cited excerpt highlights how humanity helps to bring people together for the betterment of their lives. Showing humanity towards other people builds good relationships and creates an environment where the people are free to assist when necessary. For this matter, the girls grow up with an understanding of showing humanity by taking care of the needs of others through sharing of food and utensils reflected in the game of *mantloane*. This behaviour is also reflective of how the Basotho have been a nation that believes in helping one another to show humanity for the past years and is instilled in the girls through the game of *mantloane* in order to equip them with the skills for future roles as grown-up women.

#### **4.4 Self-confidence**

Self-confidence is the expected value encouraged by courage and protection as the two gender stereotypes identified in the game of *mokallo*. Felts (2007: 1) defines self-confidence as one’s belief that they can successfully execute the desired behaviour. Bénabou and Tirole (2002: 871) add that confidence is one’s ability that enhances motivation, making it a valuable assertion for the individuals with imperfect willpower. In this study, self-confidence is understood as the ability of the boys to face life challenges without fear.

Considering courage and man as protectors, which are two gender stereotypes from the *mokallo* game, a boy-child is expected to have self-confidence when such a child reaches adulthood stage. According to the Gender schema theory (Bem, 1984: 186), a boy’s behaviour and willingness to be respected by his age-mates and other boys is influenced by the society’s cultural knowledge of being a man. To be deemed a real man, a boy is expected to be confident to challenge his age-mates in the game of

*mokallo* without fear. A boy-child is expected to show confidence through regular participation and interaction in the game of *mokallo* competitions with different boys from his village and nearby villages. He is expected not to show any fear when he is challenged by his opponents as a way of demonstrating qualities of a real man. Regular participation in the *mokallo* game helps to build confidence in a boy as he acquires fighting skills and defence mechanisms that he is expected to use in future to protect himself and his family.

The fighting tactic that the boys have learned and developed from the game of *mokallo* helps them to enter into the game without fear of being defeated. For this reason, there is more pressure to engage in fighting competitions with their age-mates to improve their self-confidence. When a boy defeats his age-mates and other opponents from other villages during *mokallo* game, his confidence improves. Therefore, obtaining victory instils a positive attitude towards oneself, improves a boy's self-confidence, willingness to participate more in the game, and he becomes a real man amongst his age-mates. It is at this point that a boy-child becomes aware that being a hero means lifting his head and facing all the hardships of life without running away from difficult situations.

Griffin (2022: 1) affirms that people with self-confidence admire themselves and are willing to take risks to achieve their personal goals and think about what they will achieve in future. This view points out that the people with confidence have a positive perspective on what they hope to gain in their lives. As a result, the game of *mokallo* instils courage in the boys and inculcate in them that they are born to protect their families and country. These two gender stereotypes identified in the game of *mokallo* forces the boys to have high self-confidence to engage in challenging situations.

#### **4.5 Perseverance**

Perseverance is another expected value in this chapter promoted by endurance as one of the gender stereotypes identified in the game of *khotsoane*. Wheatley (2010: 3) defines perseverance as the persistence and effort required to keep doing things till the end, even if it is hard. The researcher adopts this definition and uses it as a guide in this discussion.

A girl-child is expected to have perseverance when such a child reaches adulthood stage. This value is promoted through endurance instilled in the girls by the game of *khotsoane* when the girls dip their hands in a boiling water to pick *likhobe* ‘cooked corn’. The process continues until the girls finish *likhobe* ‘cooked corn’ from the pot. The girls are expected to withstand the pain from the boiling water as a way to prepare them for adult challenges as the married women.

*Khotsoane* prepares the girls to be ready to enter into the next stage of their lives such as initiation and marriage. When the girls continuously dip their hands in the boiling water, they persevere to complete the task of eating all *likhobe* ‘cooked corn’ in the pot. The girls’ behaviour in this game of *khotsoane* is influenced by their understanding of the qualities of a real Mosotho woman as indicated by the Gender schema theory (Christen & Zurbriggen, 2017: 568). The theory believes that the cultural background and the environment in which the children are brought up contribute to the behaviour and attitude of the children. The girls’ eagerness to complete difficult tasks during the *khotsoane* game instils perseverance to be real women who will withstand pain when faced with challenges in marriage.

Even at the point when the pain is penetrating through their bodies, they withstand the pain to achieve their expected goal of becoming the real women who will withstand the pain in future. Instead of pulling off, they opt to sing to take their minds off the pain so that they continue until they achieve their goal of finishing *likhobe* ‘cooked corn’ while the water is still boiling. The act of eating *likhobe* ‘cooked corn’ from the boiling water signifies the challenges of initiation and marriage that the girls will have to endure and go through. The girls have to endure this painful experience at this stage to prepare for future challenges.

From the literature, Molapo (2005: 146) contends that a woman is prepared to withstand the pain on her first sexual encounter. The newly wedded woman experiences painful sexual intercourse to the point that she might be unable to work or walk properly the next day. The pain is said to be so extreme that a woman may be unable to perform her daily routines as usual. However, a woman is told not to make noise during the act as it is the state of bearing pain and showing that she is a real woman. This suggests that as a newlywed, a woman is supposed to sleep with her husband and endure the pain to achieve her obligation of increasing the lineage of the

family. Even though a woman experiences unbearable pain, she is expected to behave in a normal way and persevere as the pain will gradually disappear. Therefore, *khotsoane* assists the girls to have perseverance in their lives and understand that maturity comes with more responsibilities that need a woman who can persevere in difficult situations. It prepares them for this challenging situation of married life from a young age starting from the performance of *khotsoane* game.

Moreover, Molapo (2005: 14) affirms that the Sesotho maxim, *mosali o ngalla motšeo* ‘a woman sulks towards the innermost part of a house’ (Mokitimi, 1997: 18) means that a married woman is expected to stay and bear the problems in her family. This means that even if a married woman experiences some problems in her marriage life, she is not supposed to go back to her natal home to report to her parents what she is going through but must remain in her marriage and solve her marital problems with her husband or the elderly family member. Therefore, endurance as a gender stereotype instilled through the game of *khotsoane* prepares the girls for this difficult phase of their lives.

#### **4.6 Faithfulness**

Faithfulness is another value encouraged by self-control, which is one of the gender stereotypes identified in the game of *khotsoane*. McKaughan (2017: 9) defines faithfulness as the value of being loyal, resilient and firm in one’s belief or principle. The researcher agrees with this definition and adopts it for this discussion.

Faithfulness is promoted by self-control as one of the gender stereotypes identified in the game of *khotsoane*. This value is noticed when the girls stand firm on their decision to resist the temptations of engaging in sexual activities during the game of *khotsoane*. According to the Gender schema theory, the children’s behaviour is expected to align with the way they are raised, that is, their culture from the earliest stages of social development is believed to have influence over the children’s behaviour (Bem, 1984: 188). The Basotho girls are, consequently expected to be resilient and abstain from sex before marriage. In support, Ngubane (2010: 28) asserts that the Basotho girls have always been expected to remain pure throughout childhood stage. This means that the girls are expected to adhere to their promises of keeping their virginity for future when they are married.

Even though the girls are playing far from home, they are expected to be at their utmost behaviour by refraining from sex. During the game of *khotsoane*, sexual feelings may arise between the boys and girls as they have reached puberty stages. It is at this point that the girls have to be guided by their principles to keep their virginity. Qhala & Thetso (2014: 199) opine that the girls are raised with the intention of being future wives and mothers. To achieve this, they are warned against pre-marital sex and unwanted pregnancy, which are a disgrace to their families and community at large. This view indicates that the Basotho have their way of discouraging the girls from promiscuous behaviour that may jeopardise their dreams of becoming respectable women in future.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

This chapter concludes that the gender stereotypes reflected in the *khati* song ‘koko!’ and the games selected for this study reveals the expected values for the boys and girls to become respectable people when they reach maturity in future. It is through the performance of the *khati* song ‘koko!’ and the games under study that the intended future roles and responsibilities for both boys and girls are instilled.

It is therefore, concluded that most gender stereotypes identified in the Basotho traditional *khati* song ‘koko!’ and the selected games: *khotsoane*, *mantloane* and *mokallo* contribute to the important values expected by a society. These gender stereotypes identified in different games discussed in chapter 3 seem to instil values in the children’s as expected by society. For instance, from the *khati* song ‘koko!’, the children learn that good marriage relations are built through the shared roles and responsibilities by both partners; a man is responsible for the provision of food and a woman is expected to prepare and cook the food. There is a high chance of good marriage relations if the man and the woman depicted in the *khati* song ‘koko!’ would perform their roles as expected.

Furthermore, nurturing and babysitting the children are two gender stereotypes embodied in the *khati* song ‘koko!’ and *mantloane*, respectively. These two gender stereotypes prepare the girls for motherhood. The girls grow up with a positive mentality of becoming caring mothers for their children in future. They are expected to adopt the mothering skills that they learn from the game of *mantloane* and *khati* song ‘koko!’ and apply those skills in future. Besides this, *mantloane* instils the

feelings of humanity in the girls where they are expected to sympathise and share food with those who are needy. From this game, the girls grow up understanding Sesotho saying, *matlo ho cha mabapi* translated by Mokitimi (1997: 38) as ‘if a house catches fire, the neighbours’ houses may also catch fire’, meaning that “neighbours enjoy the same privileges and problems”. It is from sharing of food and utensils that the children understand what it means to assist other girls who are desperately in need of their help.

In addition, the gender stereotypes identified in *mokallo* and *khotsoane* are also important in the upbringing of children. From the game of *mokallo*, the boys develop self-confidence and courage that enable them to face life challenges in future. In the game of *khotsoane*, the girls are expected to persevere and become faithful. These two values are the cornerstones in a life of a girl-child that assist her to achieve her goals. The boys and girls are also expected not to have any thoughts to give up when faced with a difficult situation but to work hard to succeed.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the study, conclusion and recommendations concerning the purpose of the study, the research questions as well as their hypotheses.

#### 5.1 Summary of the Study

Chapter one introduced the study while chapter two of the study provided the reader with information regarding the contributing factors to the development of the gender stereotypes. In this chapter, it has been discovered that the Basotho traditional practices carried out when the birth of a child is announced to a father and when a girl-child experiences her first menstrual cycle, contribute to the development of certain gender stereotypes. The researcher found out that the activities performed on that particular occasion dictate the expected roles and responsibilities for both a boy and a girl-child.

The chapter also revealed that the use of water during the birth of a girl-child and when she experiences her first menstrual cycle symbolises life. The use of water reminds a girl-child that she will grow up and increase the lineage of the family by having the children. It was found that *kuruetso ka khoeli* for both a boy-child and a girl-child emphasises different roles and responsibilities expected by their families when they are mature. The activities that are performed during *kuruetso ka khoeli* highlight the additional roles and responsibilities expected of the boy-child and girl-child by society.

On the one hand, *kuruetso ka khoeli* indicates that a boy-child is expected to marry, be a warrior and a provider whereas the announcement of his birth symbolises that a warrior and a herd-boy is born. On the other hand, *kuruetso ka khoeli*, as well as the introduction of the birth of a girl-child to her father, denotes that she is expected to bear children in future, stay at home, prepare food and perform all the house chores.

Furthermore, the chapter revealed that the parents and grandparents are the main contributing factors to the development of the gender stereotypes as sole caretakers of



the children from birth. Parents and grandparents instil in the children from a tender age that they have to perform different roles and responsibilities due to their biological differences. It is also highlighted that the parents and grandparents treat the boys and girls according to what they want them to become and do in future, and that they do not focus on the ability and potential of a child. However, there are the gender stereotypes that prove that the boys and girls are naturally different, hence different roles and responsibilities. The chapter also revealed that the gender stereotypes are not inborn but are influenced by the culture and environment in which the children are born and raised.

Moreover, in chapter 3, the researcher found out that there are gender stereotypes in the *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and the selected games. The study discovered that in the *khati* song ‘kooko!’, the roles and responsibilities are divided based on gender as the society expects men and women to perform different roles and responsibilities in running the family. Other games such as *khotsoane* and *mokallo* seem to instil gender stereotypes in the children from a young age. From the game of *khotsoane*, the girls grow up with the mentality that to be a perfect married woman in future, they are supposed to behave well and avoid sexual activities that may tamper with their virginity. The game further revealed that a girl-child is supposed to be firm in her decisions and hold on to the principles that guide her life. For that matter, a girl’s upbringing is very delicate as it is surrounded by the games that channel her behaviour. In addition, *mokallo* instils in the boys that they have major responsibilities of providing food and protecting their loved ones once they are old. Through the game of *mokallo*, the study revealed that the boys are expected to develop patriotism to be the protectors and real family men who put their families and country first. Similarly, *mantloane* is no exception from other selected games. It was noted that through this game, the girls understand their roles and responsibilities of nurturing the children and housekeeping. The game prepares them for future roles, which the society expects them to perform when they reach maturity.

In chapter 4, it was highlighted that most of the gender stereotypes identified from the *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and the selected games in chapter 3 have a positive impact by instilling important values in children. The boys and girls develop love and strive to master the roles and responsibilities that they learn from a tender age. They extend their knowledge for future purposes when they are family men and women. These

gender stereotypes identified from the *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and the selected games result in self-confidence and perseverance in the boys and girls. They will therefore, be able to face life challenges without fear in future as the grown-up men and women. On the one hand, the society expects boys to be brave enough to overcome obstacles and unpleasant life experiences without having thoughts of retreating. On the other hand, the girls are also expected to be real women who will face the challenges of marriage without giving up. It was further noted that these gender stereotypes cultivate in the children an understanding of what it means to be a real man and woman in the Basotho culture as per Gender schema theory.

## 5.2 Conclusion

The study focused on the implications of the gender stereotypes reflected in the Basotho traditional *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and the selected games: *khotsoane*, *mantloane* and *mokallo*. In line with the Gender schema theory, this study discussed the contributing factors to the development of the gender stereotypes embodied in the *khati* song ‘kooko!’ and the selected games. This study concludes that the provision and preparation of food, nurturing, babysitting, sharing, protection, courage, endurance and self-control are the gender stereotypes found in the Basotho traditional *khati* song ‘kooko!’, *khotsoane*, *mantloane*, and *mokallo* that are informed by some Basotho traditional practices, rites of passage and the upbringing of the children by their parents and grandparents.

The society has expectations and dictates the roles and responsibilities for a child from birth. As a result, the children adopt the cultural norms that they are introduced to from a young age. It is also concluded that these gender stereotypes identified from the games discussed in this study instil important values in the children. The games instil in the children the values expected by the society, such as, good marriage relations, motherhood, humanity, self-confidence, perseverance and faithfulness. Therefore, it is concluded that the children are born without gender roles as per Gender schema theory, but the traditional games and songs that are introduced to them at a tender age instil in them these roles and responsibilities. These gender stereotypes instil values in children and guide them on what they intend to achieve in future as the married men and women. They also instil in them that their lives revolve around the societal expectations.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

It is in light of the findings stated above that the researcher recommends that the Basotho children be encouraged to play the Basotho traditional games and songs from a young age as that builds a strong foundation of what is expected of them by the society. The games and songs could be performed by the children at home and school with or without the supervision of the parents and teachers depending on the nature of the game or the song. It is also recommended that the parents could be aware of potential and interest of their children in different games and songs as that may shape the attitudes and behaviour of the children in future. The parents could try by all means not to treat their children differently as that may jeopardise their ability to perform certain roles that they learnt from the traditional games and songs.

The Basotho traditional games and songs seem to instil the gender stereotypes that instil important values in the children. As a result, it is highly recommended that all the stakeholders, such as, parents, schools and government encourage the inclusion of the Basotho traditional games and songs in a school curriculum from nursery to secondary level. It is also recommended that the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) includes other important skills needed in the development of a child.

#### ***5.3.1 Recommendations for Further Studies***

The study recommends that the Basotho traditional games and songs need further studies as the present study is limited to only four Basotho games. It is high time that the Basotho scholars examine the gender stereotypes reflected in other Basotho traditional games and songs. Basotho scholars have to work on other educational aspects reflected in the games and songs and the contribution that the Basotho games and songs can have in today's life. There is also a need for the Basotho scholars to examine the Basotho traditional games and songs that are no longer performed, yet they contain important treasures of the Basotho culture.

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### **Compact Disc**

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