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Understanding South African University Students' Experiences of Drinking and Driving

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2025

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

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A research report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts by Coursework and Research Report in Psychology (PSYC7022), School of Human and Community Development, Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Title:

Understanding South African University Students' Experiences of Drinking and Driving

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Master of Arts in Psychology by Coursework and Research Report- Research Report Declaration

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Declaration

I, Busisiwe Mabaso, declare that this dissertation titled "Understanding South African University Students' Experiences of Drinking and Driving" is my original unaided work. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at this or any other university. Consequently, I declare that:

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Carol Long, for her unwavering support, continued encouragement, patience, and understanding. I thank you.

I would like to thank my family, especially my parents and siblings for their support, kindness, words of encouragement, and prayers throughout the research process. You have been my pillar of strength, and your efforts have not gone unnoticed.

Lastly, I would like to thank all the participants in this study. Your contributions have significantly aided my academic journey and future endeavours. This research study would not be what it is without you. I wish you all the best on your respective paths.

Abstract

Drinking and driving continues to be a significant public health and safety issue, particularly among young adults. While studies have explored various aspects of students' experiences with drinking and driving, factors related to identity, social influences, and the environment have not been extensively studied in South Africa. Moreover, few studies examine the experiences of South African university students specifically related to drinking and driving. Therefore, this study aimed to gain insight into the experiences of drunk drivers and passengers. To determine this, a qualitative research approach was employed, and data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed thematically to understand the interplay of intrapersonal, interpersonal, social, and environmental factors shaping students' decisions. Findings reveal that moral dilemmas influence decisions to engage in drinking and driving, that both passengers and drivers play a role, and that family and sociocultural contexts shape attitudes related to drinking and driving. These insights highlight the need for targeted interventions addressing students' perceptions of alcohol and risk-taking behaviour. Future research should explore long-term drinking and driving patterns among university students and consider policy measures that incorporate cultural and social influences to promote safer behaviours.

Keywords: *DUI, Drinking and driving, Alcohol, Students, Driving behaviour*

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Chapter 1
1.1 Introduction and Background

Each year, about 1.35 million people around the globe die in road accidents, while an estimated 20 to 50 million sustain non-fatal injuries, some leading to lasting disabilities (World Health Organisation- WHO, 2022). In 2017, the WHO ranked road accidents among the top ten leading causes of death, surpassing illnesses like tuberculosis and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) (WHO, 2017). A major factor contributing to road accidents is driving under the influence (DUI), which affects judgment, delays reaction times, and diminishes motor coordination—crucial abilities needed for safe driving (Yadav & Velaga, 2020). Despite worldwide attempts to reduce this problem, alcohol-related crashes continue to cause serious injuries, disabilities, trauma, and fatalities (Deme, 2019; Govender et al., 2021; Lategan et al., 2017; Sukhai et al., 2022; WHO, 2018). While DUI poses a global challenge, its effects are disproportionately harsh in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), which account for 93% of road traffic deaths despite representing only 60% of the world's vehicles (WHO, 2022). Africa has the highest incidence of road traffic fatalities, with 27 deaths per 100,000 individuals—nearly four times greater than Europe's rate of 7 per 100,000 (Akinyemi, 2022). In South Africa, road deaths remain alarmingly high, partly due to the rise in vehicle ownership since the end of apartheid in 1994 (Sinclair, 2013; Lamont & Lee, 2015). In 2000, approximately 7.0 percent of all fatalities and 7.1 percent of the disease burden in South Africa were linked to alcohol, a figure significantly higher than global averages (Schneider et al., 2007). The WHO (2018) has also recognised South Africa as a country with high per capita alcohol consumption, instances of binge drinking, and dangerous and harmful drinking behaviours. Therefore, it is evident that South Africa faces a significant issue with alcohol (Peltzer et al., 2011). In South Africa, alcohol consumption is deeply entrenched in culture, with history being a contributing factor (Wagenaar, 2018; Lategaan et al., 2017). Initially, European farmers set up beer halls designed for Black individuals, but these establishments were tightly controlled, leading to illegal taverns without regulation (Mulaudzi et al., 2022). Moreover, some farm labourers received payment in the form of alcohol or were granted unrestricted access to it on wine farms, fostering patterns of heavy drinking (Masola et al., 2019; Mukhuba et al., 2019; Wagenaar et al., 2018). Alcohol retains cultural importance, often exchanged as gifts and consumed during social events, celebrations, and traditional rituals (Pienaar & Savic, 2016). The extensive availability and social acceptance of alcohol have normalised consumption, even in risky scenarios such as

drinking and driving (Meel, 2022; Reith, 2018). South Africa ranks among the highest in alcohol consumption, with approximately five billion litres consumed each year (WHO, 2018). Excessive drinking significantly contributes to the country's elevated rate of road accidents, where reckless behaviours like speeding, ignoring traffic signals, and losing control of vehicles are frequently associated with DUI offences (Yadav & Velaga, 2020). Even though the legal limit for blood alcohol concentration (BAC) for drivers in South Africa is established at 0.05 grams per 100 millilitres of blood, numerous drivers continue to surpass this threshold, leading to serious legal and safety repercussions (Ehmke-Engelbrecht et al., 2016).

Research indicates that 27% of deaths in South Africa are related to alcohol use (Magabane, 2024). Between 2007 and 2019, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo experienced higher road traffic-related deaths. By 2019, the Eastern Cape's road death rate was close to Limpopo's. Gauteng displayed a different pattern from other provinces, with fewer road accident deaths. However, during holidays, road accidents in Gauteng were more frequently influenced by alcohol consumption, driver exhaustion, and adverse weather conditions (Statistics South Africa, 2024). In 2019, hospitals reported the highest number of road accidents since 2007. Nevertheless, most deaths in the Western Cape, Free State, and Northern Cape occurred before injured individuals could reach the hospital (StatsSA, 2024). Between 2021 and 2022, road accidents decreased in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape but increased in the Northern Cape and Western Cape. North West and Free State continued to have the lowest road accident rates (Chikunga et al., 2022; StatsSA, 2024). Pedestrians account for the highest share of fatalities in road accidents, followed by drivers and then passengers. Pedestrians are especially vulnerable to injury and death because they lack any protective barrier in a collision. The WHO (2022) reports that 88% of pedestrian routes across the globe lack safety, directly leading to accidents and fatalities. In addition to its implications for public health, improving pedestrian safety also raises issues of social justice, as those with lower socioeconomic status tend to experience higher rates of pedestrian injuries and deaths. Furthermore, fostering safer walking conditions is essential for reducing road accidents (Bantjies et al., 2024). Various factors contribute to alcohol consumption across provinces. These include age, race, whether a person smokes, education level, religious activity, available recreational facilities, and socioeconomic status (Mmereki et al., 2022). South Africa's drinking behaviour is attributed to historical factors, including shifts in government, legislation, and demographic and economic changes. This has led individuals born after the

apartheid regime to engage in substance use, resort to illegal means of making money, and turn to violence and crime. (Florence, 2014).

Young drivers, especially those in university, are particularly at risk for engaging in dangerous driving behaviours linked to alcohol use (Deme, 2019; Patrick et al., 2021; Watters & Beck, 2016). Each year, alcohol use among students leads to fatalities, injuries, mental health issues, substance dependency, and both physical and sexual assaults (Pentz et al., 2023). Factors like peer influence, societal expectations, and family attitudes significantly affect drinking and driving behaviour among university students, making it a common yet dangerous aspect of college life. (Pelham & Dishion, 2018; Sumetsky et al., 2022). For numerous students, DUI is viewed as a rite of passage—an expected element of the university experience (Du Preez et al., 2016; Steptoe et al., 2004). A South African study found that one-third of undergraduate students consume alcohol at levels that lead to immediate physical, psychological, social, and academic issues such as hangovers, reduced self-esteem, incidents of sexual misconduct, and absenteeism from classes (Wagenaar et al., 2018). Although a substantial amount of research has been conducted on the prevalence and contributing factors of DUI, there is still a considerable lack of understanding regarding how South African university students perceive and manage drinking and driving. This study seeks to examine these experiences, highlighting the personal, social, and environmental elements that contribute to DUI among students.

1.2 Rationale

There are rising concerns among both international and South African practitioners and researchers in the areas of alcohol consumption and traffic safety, particularly the issues caused by alcohol-impaired drivers (Busayo & Oyelana, 2018; Goldenbeld et al., 2020; Stringer, 2021). Nonetheless, there is still limited research regarding the experiences of South African students with DUI or Riding with a Drunk Driver (RWDD). The majority of existing studies have mainly concentrated on behaviours like texting while driving, speeding, attitudes toward hazardous driving, and measures to prevent such behaviours among students (Byington & Schwebel, 2013; Bachoo et al., 2013; Gauld et al., 2014; Rowe et al., 2016). A significant portion of this research has focused on novice drivers in universities (Carter et al., 2014; Scott-Parker et al., 2013; Scott-Parker et al., 2014; Yang et al., 2019; Harbeck et al., 2018). Furthermore, studies have also looked into the effects of DUI (Skidmore et al., 2016; Harding et al., 2016; Foxcroft et al., 2015; Lamis et al., 2016; Jackson et al., 2020) as well as

the impact of drugs or marijuana use while driving (Gueye et al., 2023; Hultgren et al., 2021; Hingson et al., 2017; Patrick et al., 2021). Nevertheless, there remains a significant gap in research that specifically addresses the experiences of South African students' experiences of drinking and driving. Bachoo et al. (2013) point out a lack of research on risky driving behaviours in South Africa, although their study mainly focused on postgraduate students in Durban. Lategan et al. (2017) shed light on the socio-demographic factors influencing drinking habits among university students in South Africa. Trangenstein et al. (2018) concentrated on heavy drinkers and their driving contexts. These findings illustrate the insufficient research on drinking and driving within the South African setting, highlighting the necessity for additional investigation. Qualitative research investigating students' encounters with drinking and driving, as well as their experiences riding with intoxicated drivers, is notably limited in the South African context.

As previously mentioned, the experiences of students regarding drinking and driving are still insufficiently examined (Bachoo et al., 2013). While earlier research has highlighted other risky driving behaviours as significant concerns for university students, there is an urgent need for a more in-depth understanding of the personal, social, and legal elements that affect these actions. This study seeks to fill this gap by utilising a qualitative methodology to gain a better insight into the factors that lead to decisions to participate in DUI or RWDD. University students are particularly vulnerable to peer influence and social pressures (Mogotsi et al., 2014). However, research is scarce on how these factors shape their driving behaviours (Watters & Beck, 2016). To decrease road accidents among university students, it is crucial to enhance awareness and develop a deeper understanding of their experiences (Du Preez et al., 2016; Lategan et al., 2017; Sukhai et al., 2022). Such insights can guide the creation of targeted initiatives, policies, and programs that address the social influences driving these behaviours.

Interventions aimed at decreasing DUI incidents in Africa have been put into place (Dumbili et al., 2021), yet their effectiveness has been minimal (Bayer & Fairchild, 2016; Buckley et al., 2016; Fell, 2019; Fisa et al., 2022; Govender et al., 2021). These efforts consist of measures such as increasing the minimum legal drinking age, reducing blood alcohol concentration (BAC) limits, revoking the licenses of drivers who surpass BAC thresholds, and setting up checkpoints to identify impaired drivers (Hultgren et al., 2021). However, Burton et al. (2017) contend that more stringent regulations, elevated fines, and license

suspensions have proven ineffective as they emphasise punishment rather than preventive strategies. As a result, despite initiatives from hospitals, educational institutions, governments, and traffic safety organisations, the rate of DUI among students has not shown a significant decline (Banz et al., 2019; Bravo et al., 2018; Terry & Terry, 2016).

There is a lack of effective strategies to prevent DUI, particularly in Africa (Biggane et al., 2021; Wesson et al., 2016). The normalisation of DUI is influenced by social norms, customs, and practices, including attitudes toward laws, government control, individual rights and freedom, police attitudes, and the role of alcohol in society (Buvik, 2016; Cislaghi & Heise, 2018; Monaco et al., 2020; Savic et al., 2016). In South Africa, cultural practices often normalise alcohol consumption at social events and traditional rituals (Bank & Sharpley, 2022; Suransky & Van der Merwe, 2016). Alcohol is commonly used recreationally as a means of social interaction, and for many students, it is regarded as a key component of the university experience (Patrick et al., 2017). The issues of alcohol consumption and abuse are significant in South Africa, marked by high levels of intake and alcoholism, which worsened during the COVID-19 lockdown (Chu et al., 2022; Ngqangashe et al., 2021; Thobejane & Raselekoane, 2017). The societal acceptance of alcohol use has led to widespread participation in DUI (Caluzzi et al., 2022; Wilkinson & Ivsins, 2017), positioning it as both a social and public health challenge (WHO, 2018). Studies indicate that there is a link between alcohol consumption and risky sexual behaviour among young people (Carels et al., 2022; Wagenaar et al., 2018). Wagenaar et al. (2018) highlighted that the normalisation of alcohol consumption is increasing in universities. This emphasises the necessity for a deeper comprehension of students' encounters with DUI to tackle this problem effectively. Gaining knowledge in this sector will offer crucial insights that can support collaboration between students, the field of traffic safety, government organisations, and traffic psychology departments to minimise DUI. More effective strategies can be devised to confront this widespread issue by understanding the fundamental factors and social influences.

1.3 Aims

This research aims to investigate the personal experiences of university students in South Africa who have either driven while intoxicated or been passengers in cars driven by someone under the influence of alcohol. Considering the relationship between personal choices and larger societal factors, this study seeks to gain insight into how students deal with the moral dilemmas associated with drinking and driving, how their interactions as drivers

and passengers shape these experiences, and how family expectations and sociocultural norms contribute to their decisions to DUI.

1.4 Research Questions

This research seeks to answer the following primary question and secondary questions:

- How do South African university students experience and make sense of drinking and driving, either as drivers or passengers?
    - What moral dilemmas do students face when engaging in or witnessing drinking and driving, and how do they navigate these challenges?
    - How do social interactions between drivers and passengers shape experiences of drinking and driving?
    - How do family and sociocultural locations shape how drinking and driving is perceived?

To explore these questions, this study examines students' experiences with drinking and driving, considering the social, moral, and interpersonal factors that shape their roles as both drivers and passengers. Past studies suggest that a driver's behaviour can be significantly affected by their social environment, leading to variations in their actions based on whether they are driving alone, with family members, or with friends (Jacobina & Ventura, 2019; Watters & Beck, 2016). This study aims to investigate how intrapersonal, interpersonal, social, and environmental factors influence the experiences related to drinking and driving. It intends to offer a comprehensive overview of students' experiences with drunk driving (Watters & Beck, 2016).

1.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, drinking and driving continues to be a significant issue, resulting in the loss of many lives and accidents that lead to disabilities. These road traffic collisions inflict physical, psychological, social, and economic harm. Studies indicate that young drivers, including university students, are particularly affected. Despite the existence of intervention programmes, drinking and driving remain a pressing social and health problem. Acquiring knowledge in this area will provide crucial insights for students, the field of traffic safety, government organisations, and traffic psychology departments to collaborate in minimising DUI incidents. It is, therefore, important to explore the experiences of university students, as understanding their experiences will highlight gaps that may have not been thoroughly explored. This chapter has outlined the background, aim, rationale, and context of the study.

Chapter two presents a literature review, the theoretical framework, and the conceptual framework related to this study. Chapter three outlines the research methodology, while chapter four presents the results and findings. Lastly chapter five discusses the implications and limitations of this study, along with future recommendations and concluding remarks.

Chapter 2

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines and discusses the theoretical framework and literature related to students' experiences with drinking and driving. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is presented as the theoretical basis. The literature review then focuses on various studies concerning students' encounters with drinking and driving.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 The Ecological Systems Theory

The study utilised Bronfenbrenner's (1994) Ecological Systems Theory. This theory provides a valuable framework for understanding social and environmental influences shaping human behaviour (Eriksson et al., 2018). It consists of multiple interrelated systems that interact to influence individual choices and actions (Perron, 2017). Bronfenbrenner's theory allows for a close examination of human development through five main systems: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. Thus, the model can be applied to understand students' experiences of DUI. Watters and Beck (2016, p. 122) asserted that "driving is inherently a social behaviour." When applied to drinking and driving, it helps explain how personal, social, and societal factors collectively contribute to students' decisions regarding drinking and driving. Each system, from the most immediate influences in the microsystem to broader societal norms in the macrosystem, plays a role in shaping behaviours towards drinking and driving (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bingham et al., 2016). Cassarino and Murphy (2018) applied the ecological systems theory to drinking and driving.

A summary of these systems can be found in Table 1 below, adapted from *Cassarino and Murphy (2018).*

Table of figures

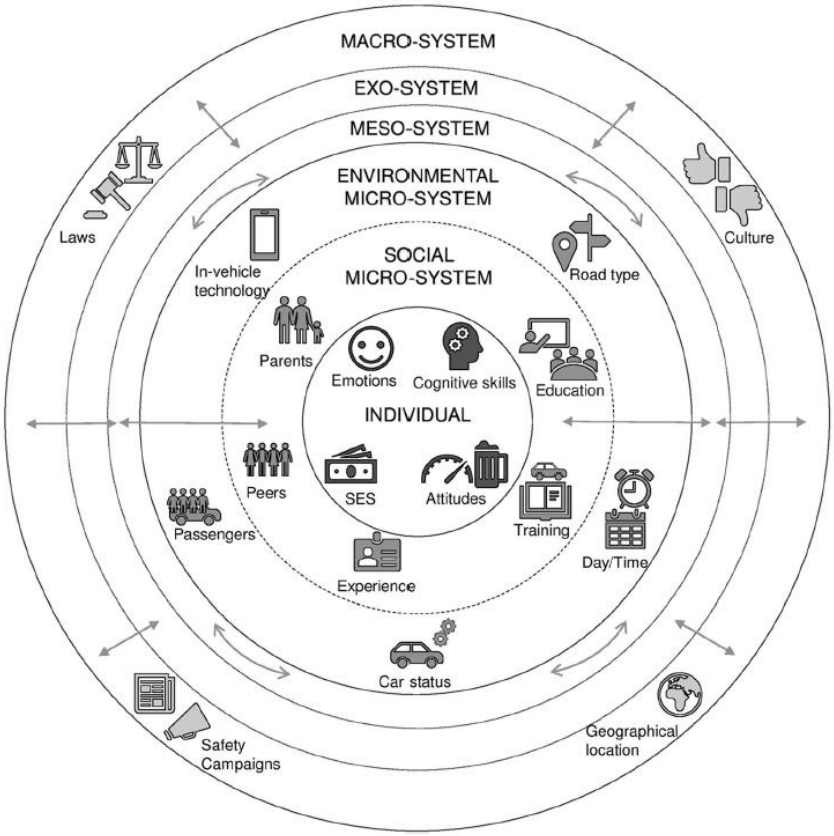


Fig. 1. Framework of individual, social, and environmental factors intervening in young novice drivers' risk using an ecological systems model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Arrows indicate links between factors within and between systems.

Table 1: Ecological systems theory applied to drinking and driving as adapted by Cassarino and Murphy (2018)

Individual Level

At the centre of this model is the individual whose behaviour is influenced by personal characteristics such as cognitive abilities, attitudes, and past experiences. Decision-making skills and impulse control are important when it comes to risky behaviours like drinking and driving (Scott-Parker et al., 2014). Cassarino and Murphy (2018) asserted that individual factors such as driving-related cognitive skills and personal characteristics influence how individuals drive. This is also linked to emotions (Walsh et al., 2017). A person's ability to assess risk, weigh consequences, and make responsible choices determines whether they choose to drive under the influence. Attitudes and personal beliefs also shape behaviour, as individuals who perceive drinking and driving as dangerous or morally unacceptable are less likely to engage in it (O'Brien et al., 2016). Experience plays a role as well, with novice

drivers often underestimating the risks associated with alcohol consumption and overestimating their ability to drive safely after drinking (Cestac et al., 2011).

Microsystem

The microsystem refers to the immediate environment in which a person is situated, for example, home, school, or work. These settings are places where one can interact with family, peers, or colleagues. This setting is one in which interpersonal relations will impact how one develops over time (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Peers are particularly influential, as young adults often shape their behaviours based on the social norms within their friend groups. If drinking and driving is normalised among peers, an individual may feel pressure to engage in the behaviour to maintain social standing or avoid inconvenience. However, friends who actively discourage drinking and driving can serve as a protective factor (Møller & Haustein, 2014). Family influence is also important. Parents' behaviours around alcohol consumption and driving set an early example for young adults. Parents who show responsible behaviour and openly communicate about the dangers of drinking and driving may help instil safer decision-making in their children (Bingham et al., 2016). Education is another key factor in this system, as awareness programs and school-based interventions provide knowledge about the risks of alcohol-impaired driving. When students receive formal education about responsible drinking and the legal consequences of DUI, they may make safer choices (McCarthy et al., 2007).

Mesosystem

The mesosystem refers to the interaction between different elements of the microsystems that shape behaviour. (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Soyer, 2019). When applied to drinking and driving, this can refer to the relationship between an individual's driving behaviour and the social environment, as well as environmental factors. For instance, parental guidance and peer influence often intersect. A student who grows up in a household where drinking and driving is discouraged but is surrounded by friends who frequently engage in the behaviour may experience conflicting messages. Similarly, if a university actively promotes anti-drinking and driving campaigns but students continue to normalise drinking and driving in social settings, the effectiveness of these programs may be less (Sukhai et al., 2022). How these different aspects of an individual's life interact can reinforce or challenge their decision-making regarding drinking and driving (Cassarino & Murphy, 2018).

Exosystem

The exosystem consists of external influences that indirectly affect an individual's behaviour, such as laws, media, and economic factors (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These may include, for example, the economic, educational, or governmental systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Watters and Beck (2016) argued that encouraging influence attempts—actions or behaviours aimed at altering another person's beliefs, attitudes, or behaviours—is essential for motivating them to consider or embrace a proposed idea or action. This is particularly important when considering indirect influences such as fear of judgement, the driver taking accountability, and being in an accident, all of which can contribute to changes in driving behaviour (Watters & Beck, 2016). Strict drinking and driving laws and the extent to which they are enforced play a significant role in shaping behaviour (Scully & Newstead, 2008). Police issuing driver tickets may result in changed behaviour (Luca, 2015). Public awareness campaigns in the media also help to reinforce the dangers of drinking and driving, with initiatives like South Africa's 'Arrive Alive' campaign aiming to educate the public and shift behaviours toward safer driving practices (Peltzer et al., 2011). Furthermore, economic factors, including access to transportation options, can further influence decision-making. Individuals may be less inclined to drive under the influence in urban areas with affordable ride-sharing services or reliable public transportation. Conversely, those living in rural areas with limited transport options may feel they have no alternative but to drive after consuming alcohol. These structural factors create an environment that either supports or discourages responsible choices regarding drinking and driving (Cassarino & Murphy, 2018).

Macrosystem

The macrosystem represents the broader cultural and societal values that shape behaviours. This system is comprised of beliefs, culture, patterns, values, economic and political systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). These factors influence an individual's development, as different environments uphold different cultures and belief systems, leading individuals to experience these environments in varied ways (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In societies where alcohol consumption is deeply embedded in social life, there may be a higher acceptance of drinking-related behaviours, including impaired driving (Watters & Beck, 2017). Cultural views of masculinity and risk-taking can also play a role, as some individuals may view drinking and driving as a test of confidence or skill rather than a dangerous activity (Dumbili et al., 2021). Moreover, geographical factors also come into play. In some regions, long distances and poor public transportation infrastructure make driving a necessity, increasing the likelihood that

individuals will take the risk of DUI. Additionally, government policies regarding alcohol consumption, such as legal drinking ages and liquor licensing laws, influence overall drinking behaviours and, by extension, the likelihood of alcohol-impaired driving. Countries with stricter alcohol regulations often report fewer incidents of drinking and driving, highlighting the impact of policy-level interventions (Room et al., 2005).

Chronosystem

The chronosystem adds the useful dimension of time to the ecological systems theory. It demonstrates the influence of both change and constancy in one's environment. The chronosystem may include a change in employment status and societal changes such as economic cycles and wars (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Soyer, 2019). This is shown in the increase of drivers post-apartheid as more people are employed and have access to personal cars (Lamont & Lee, 2015). Furthermore, the rise of ride-sharing services such as Uber and Bolt has also provided alternative transport options, potentially reducing the likelihood of individuals DUI (Dills & Mulholland, 2018). The chronosystem emphasises the dynamic nature of drinking and driving behaviours, illustrating that individuals' choices are not static but evolve based on life changes, legal policies, cultural shifts and technological advancements over time.

The use of the microsystem, mesosystem exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem from the ecological systems theory is valuable to this study. The theory is valuable because it seeks to explain intrapersonal, interpersonal, social and environmental factors that shape the drinking and driving experience. This thus provides an empirical framework for the study. The theory highlights environmental influences at different levels, indicating that certain environments encourage behaviours such as risky driving.

This theory will partly explain and answer the questions concerning the factors that shape drinking and driving behaviour. The theory also relates to the literature in the literature review regarding individual, social, and environmental influences on DUI.

2.3 Literature Review

2.3.1 Prevalence of DUI Among University Students

International research indicates that university students are particularly susceptible to committing DUI offences due to factors such as peer influence, easy access to alcohol, and their perceptions of risk (Patrick et al., 2020; White & Hingson, 2013). The elevated rates of DUI among students are often linked to the prevalent drinking culture at universities, where

alcohol consumption is a common social activity (Carter et al., 2014; Terry & Terry, 2016). In the USA, almost 50 percent of the youth binge drink, while 18 percent of the youth drink heavily (Wagenaar et al., 2018). Research further suggests that students who frequently attend parties, bars, or social events are more likely to drive under the influence, especially when they perceive alternative transportation options as scarce or inconvenient (Giddy, 2020). Numerous studies have sought to measure the prevalence of DUI among university students. Hultgren et al. (2021) examined the use of multiple substances, including alcohol, nicotine, and marijuana, finding that simultaneous use of these substances increases the likelihood of impaired driving. Additionally, some studies suggest that DUI rates may be lower in areas with stringent laws and robust enforcement practices (Keatley et al., 2017; Siegfried & Parry, 2019). Watters and Beck (2016) conducted a qualitative investigation into college students' perspectives on risky driving, revealing that many students downplay the dangers of DUI and often rationalise their behaviour based on past experiences. Similarly, Garcia-Retamero and Dhami (2013) found that students frequently recognise perceived benefits to risky driving, such as saving time or maintaining control over their social experiences. Hatfield et al. (2009) contended that sensation-seeking is seen as a perceived benefit of risky driving, while Brell et al. (2019) stated that young drivers enjoy the sense of control it provides.

In the South African context, research has highlighted the prevalence of DUI among university students, revealing key patterns and trends specific to this population. Lategan et al. (2017) emphasised that there is a lack of knowledge on South African university students' drinking behaviours. However, some researchers have examined South African drinking behaviours more broadly (Govender et al., 2021; Sinclair, 2013; Sukhai, 2003; Sukhai et al., 2022). Du Preez et al. (2016) examined the factors influencing student drinking behaviour, identifying several predictors, including patterns of media consumption, reference groups, cultural influences, social drinking norms, socio-demographic indicators, levels of alcohol knowledge, attitudes towards alcohol, expectations regarding the outcomes of alcohol consumption, and various drinking motives; this research revealed that students consume alcohol with specific expectations regarding its effects, such as increased sociability and confidence. Consequently, some students have motives for drinking that include social, coping, conformity, and enhancement reasons, some of which may lead to risky drinking behaviour (Du Preez et al., 2016). Wagenaar et al. (2018) supported this, arguing that personality, social, and interpersonal influences shape drinking behaviour. Personality

influences include self-efficacy, impulsivity, self-esteem, self-awareness, self-consciousness, and sensation-seeking. The social influences comprise social norms, assumed motives, and societal beliefs. Additionally, the interpersonal influences encompass family, peers, and personal attributes such as attitudes, race, gender, genetics, and religiosity, as well as risk and protective factors. Engaging in and participating in religious activities has been shown to reduce incidents of alcohol consumption, as religion serves as a protective barrier against excessive drinking (Pentz et al., 2023). Bachoo et al. (2013) conducted a cross-sectional study on South African postgraduate students' risky driving in relation to thrill-seeking behaviour, attitudes, impulsivity, and anger. The study reported that students exhibiting these traits were more likely to engage in risky driving behaviour, with younger drivers being more prone to such actions than older individuals, who generally held safer driving attitudes. Sukhai (2003) conducted an exploratory investigation into road rage, aggressive drinking, and other dangerous drinking behaviours among a representative group of drivers in Durban, South Africa. The findings indicated that risk-taking behaviours associated with lifestyle factors might lead some individuals to experience more frequent accidents.

2.3.2 Social Influences

Individuals' behaviours are influenced by those around them, thus influencing their driving behaviours. Driving behaviour is significantly shaped by family and friends (Watters & Beck, 2016).

Family

Young drivers generally demonstrate more cautious behaviour when their parents supervise them compared to when they are driving alone or with friends (Chung et al., 2014). The driving habits of young individuals are often influenced by their parents, with driving styles changing based on the nature of their relationship during parental driving sessions (Gil et al., 2016; Schmidt et al., 2014; Scott-Parker et al., 2015). The influence of passengers can manifest through verbal or physical means, including making positive remarks, sharing anecdotes, or expressing favourable sentiments about risky driving (Centifanti et al., 2016). Curry et al. (2015) discovered that when parents actively engage with learner drivers, it results in less hazardous driving behaviour, suggesting that parents should comment on driving practices, offer praise, or evaluate their children's driving techniques. Novice drivers whose parents provide constructive feedback, allow them to drive in different environments, and let them learn from their errors tend to have fewer road accidents over time (Mirman et

al., 2017). Parents who emphasise the importance of checking mirrors and staying aware of their surroundings contribute to road safety and play a crucial role during the initial stages of their children's driving education. This guidance impacts young people's driving habits even when parents are not present (Scott-Parker et al., 2015; Shimshoni et al., 2015).

Peers

The various types of relationships that drivers have with their peers influence their behaviour (Guggenheim et al., 2015). In a study conducted by Hendricks et al. (2015) on students in the Western Cape, it was found that alcohol use was influenced by peer pressure, as students wanted to fit in and avoid judgement from their peers. Research has shown that young individuals are more prone to engage in dangerous driving behaviours when accompanied by friends (Braitman et al., 2014; Donmez & Liu, 2015). In support of this, car accident statistics indicate that a significant number of drivers involved were with their peers, and the presence of friends has been shown to affect road accidents (Donnelly-Swift & Kelly, 2015; Ouimet et al., 2015; Simons-Morton et al., 2011). Studies indicate that peers who endorse risky driving behaviours heighten the likelihood of drivers violating road safety regulations (Simons-Morton et al., 2014; Shepherd et al., 2011; Watters & Beck, 2016). Qualitative and experimental research on young drivers has demonstrated that friends who hold negative views about risky driving positively impact their friends' driving habits (Scott-Parker et al., 2015; Taubman-Ben-Ari et al., 2015). However, the influence of peers on students driving under the influence remains less explored; nonetheless, there are consistent findings regarding peer pressure and distractions caused by peers among young drivers (Buckley & Davidson, 2013). However, it is still uncertain whether social or university culture might directly drive university students to partake in risky driving behaviours (Zimasa et al., 2017).

2.3.3 Sociocultural Norms and DUI

The social context to which individuals are exposed to alcohol can directly affect their driving behaviour through shared cultural norms, which may influence risky driving (Nævestad & Bjørnskau, 2012). Sociocultural norms significantly influence the drinking habits and DUI behaviours of university students. These norms are deeply rooted in cultural traditions, societal expectations, and peer pressure, which contribute to the acceptance of risky behaviours such as driving while intoxicated (Bank & Sharpley, 2022). In various African cultures, alcohol is often associated with social gatherings, traditional rites, and life milestones, highlighting its cultural importance (Peltzer et al., 2012). Sukhai et al. (2022)

contended that alcohol consumption in South Africa has deep connections to the apartheid system, the dominant liquor market and the lack of punishment for DUI. The prevalent acceptance of alcohol consumption within these contexts shapes young adults' views on drinking, frequently rendering excessive drinking and behaviours such as DUI more socially acceptable. A major factor contributing to DUI among university students is peer influence. According to Dumbili et al. (2021), students often regard drinking and driving as socially permissible, especially in environments where alcohol consumption is encouraged. Social events, campus activities, and nightlife often create pressure to drink, with some students fearing that declining alcohol or choosing not to drive after drinking may lead to social ostracism (Watters & Beck, 2016). Likewise, Preez et al. (2016) emphasised that students may engage in DUI to meet their peers' expectations and to avoid being perceived as boring or overly cautious.

The association between alcohol consumption and masculinity also significantly contributes to the normalisation of DUI behaviour. Research by Peltzer et al. (2012) indicates that among young men, drinking is often viewed as a symbol of masculinity and social status in South Africa. This perspective can lead to increased alcohol consumption and heightened risk-taking behaviours, including DUI (Lategan et al., 2017). Similar observations have been made in other African societies, where drinking is regarded as a rite of passage and a sign of strength, further perpetuating harmful behaviours (Dumbili et al., 2021; Du Preez, 2016). Furthermore, the media and popular culture significantly reinforce sociocultural norms regarding alcohol use and DUI. Bosch (2020) highlights that South African television shows and advertisements often depict alcohol consumption as glamorous and socially appealing, especially to younger viewers. Such portrayals help normalise heavy drinking and can shape students' perceptions of alcohol use.

2.3.4 Sociodemographic Factors and DUI

Sociodemographic factors, such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, and education level, play a crucial role in shaping individuals' behaviours related to DUI. These factors often interact with personal characteristics and environmental elements, creating a complex web of influences that affect risky driving behaviour.

Age

Age is among the most examined sociodemographic factors regarding DUI. Young drivers, particularly those in the 18–25 age range, are frequently recognised as a high-risk

demographic for DUI (Bachoo et al., 2013; Hultgren et al., 2021; Lategan et al., 2017). Lategan et al. (2017) conducted a study on sociodemographic factors that influence South African students' drinking and driving behaviour and found that alcohol use generally rises during adolescence and young adulthood as students gain more independence. There is a gradual decline in alcohol consumption observed during middle age, with the lowest levels occurring around the age of 65. Similarly, Pentz et al. (2023) conducted a study across five countries focusing on students' drinking behaviour, and it was found that first-year students consumed more alcohol compared to second and third-year students. This increased risk is often attributed to a combination of factors, such as underdeveloped brain maturity, reduced risk awareness, and a propensity for thrill-seeking activities (Romer et al., 2014; Hatfield et al., 2014). Research indicates that younger drivers tend to underestimate the dangers associated with alcohol-impaired driving and overestimate their ability to drive safely after consuming alcohol (Du Preez et al., 2016; Govender et al., 2021). Nevertheless, some scholars argue that age is not the sole factor influencing DUI behaviour. For instance, Endriulaitiene et al. (2013) found that personality traits such as impulsivity and sensation-seeking play a mediating role in the link between age and risky driving behaviours. This suggests that while young drivers are disproportionately represented in DUI statistics, individual differences within this demographic are also significant. Although sociodemographic factors provide important insights into DUI behaviours, some researchers caution against making broad generalisations about their influence. For instance, studies indicate that personal traits, including personality characteristics and self-efficacy, often interact with sociodemographic factors to shape DUI behaviours (Endriulaitiene et al., 2013; Gupta et al., 2016).

Gender

Studies showed that male drivers consistently represent a more significant portion of DUI incidents compared to female drivers (Bachoo et al., 2013; Tavolacci et al., 2013). This disparity is often linked to higher rates of risk-taking behaviour, greater alcohol consumption, and societal norms that may encourage risky actions among men (Hatfield et al., 2009; Potard et al., 2018). For instance, a study conducted by Scott-Parker and Oviedo-Trespalacios (2017) found that young male drivers were more likely to engage in DUI to demonstrate dominance or gain peer approval. Nuntsu's (2004) study on South African university students' behaviour and attitudes towards perceived risks revealed that most male students frequently engage in DUI, as they obtain their driving licences earlier than females. Women are often reported to

abstain from alcohol or to drink casually, while men tend to drink frequently and often consume more alcohol (Lategan et al., 2017). However, some research challenges this perspective by indicating that the gap in DUI behaviours between genders may be narrowing. Watters and Beck (2016) revealed that female college students are increasingly involved in risky driving behaviour, including DUI, suggesting that shifting societal norms and evolving gender roles might be influencing these trends. Similarly, Steptoe et al. (2004) studied university students' drinking and driving behaviours across 23 countries and revealed that more female students in the USA and some European countries engage in DUI compared to their male counterparts. Lategan et al. (2017) explored the biological factors that affect gender differences in alcohol consumption. They argued that women have a lower body water percentage compared to men of equivalent height and weight, which means women experience a higher concentration of alcohol even when consuming the same amount as men of similar height and weight. It is noted that women possess less of the enzyme dehydrogenase in their stomach, which is responsible for metabolising or breaking down alcohol before it enters the bloodstream, leading to women absorbing up to 30% more alcohol than men. Additionally, women tend to be shorter than men, which influences the alcohol concentration in their bloodstream, making them more susceptible to the adverse effects of alcohol. Lategan et al. (2017) highlighted Wilsnack et al. (2000) argument that gender distinctions could not be used to account for drinking habits; instead, what influences alcohol consumption are social norms and behaviours. As a result, men tend to drink more than women because it is deemed more socially acceptable for them.

Socioeconomic Status

Socioeconomic status (SES) is a significant factor influencing DUI behaviours. Individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may face specific challenges that increase their vulnerability to DUI, such as limited access to education, fewer options for alternative transportation, and greater exposure to environments where alcohol consumption is prevalent (Matzopoulos et al., 2022; Vanderschuren & Roux, 2019). For instance, research conducted in South Africa revealed that young drivers from disadvantaged communities were more likely to engage in DUI due to their limited understanding of road safety regulations and inadequate enforcement of traffic laws (Bachoo et al., 2013). Conversely, individuals with higher SES may have better access to resources, such as ride-sharing services like Uber, which can help reduce the likelihood of DUI (Giddy, 2020). However, this is not universally applicable, as some studies indicate that individuals from higher SES backgrounds may

engage in DUI due to a sense of invincibility or the belief that they can evade legal consequences (Garcia-Retamero & Dhami, 2013). In a study conducted by Pentz et al. (2023), it was shown that the higher the students' income—through stipends, salaries, and bursaries—the more alcohol they consume and the more risky behaviours related to alcohol they exhibit. Lategan et al. (2017) examined various alcoholic beverages and their impact on behaviour, revealing that wine is primarily consumed at home, while beer, ciders, and spirits are enjoyed in social settings. The study also found that students who consume beer and spirits are more likely to display hazardous drinking behaviours, which in turn leads them to partake in risky activities, including drinking and driving. The various types of alcoholic beverages were symbolic, with the more expensive ones providing students with social status.

Education Level

The level of education is closely linked to DUI behaviours, as it influences individuals' understanding of road safety, risk awareness, and decision-making abilities. Lategan et al. (2017) found that first-year students consumed more alcohol than second and third-year students. Research consistently shows that those with lower educational levels are more likely to engage in DUI compared to those with higher education (Bachoo et al., 2013; Ramirez et al., 2013). This trend is often attributed to a lack of awareness about the risks of alcohol-impaired driving and limited exposure to road safety initiatives. For example, a study by Ramirez et al. (2013) revealed that young drivers from rural areas, who typically have lower educational attainment, were less informed about road safety regulations and more prone to engaging in DUI. However, some researchers argue that education level alone does not fully explain DUI behaviours. Lategan et al. (2017) conducted a qualitative study focusing on the sociodemographic factors influencing drinking behaviour. The study found that factors such as income and the type of alcohol consumed influence drinking behaviours, which can lead to poor decision-making and driving under the influence. Additionally, environmental factors, such as peer pressure and cultural norms, can sometimes overshadow the impact of sociodemographic factors (Simons-Morton et al., 2014; Scott-Parker et al., 2015). For instance, a young driver from an affluent background may still engage in DUI if they are heavily influenced by friends who downplay risky behaviours (Braitman et al., 2014).

2.3.5 Consequences of DUI

Driving under the influence has far-reaching consequences that extend beyond the individual driver, affecting passengers, other motorists, and society at large. These consequences can be categorised into legal, health, social, and economic impacts, all of which contribute to the broader public health challenge linked to alcohol-impaired driving.

Legal Consequences

The legal implications of DUI are generally immediate and severe for those found guilty of the offence. In many countries, DUI is regarded as a criminal act that can result in fines, suspension of driving privileges, mandatory alcohol education courses, and possibly imprisonment (Fell, 2019; Keatley et al., 2017). South Africa has enforced stringent regulations under the National Road Traffic Act of 1996, which includes lower blood alcohol concentration (BAC) limits and harsher penalties for DUI violations (Liebenberg et al., 2019; Sukhai et al., 2022). Nevertheless, despite these regulations, inadequate law enforcement and inconsistent application have been identified as significant obstacles to reducing DUI rates (Taumang et al., 2022). Vanderschuren and Roux (2019) contend that South Africa has fragmented and uncoordinated alcohol policies, thus lessening legal consequences for offenders. Conversely, countries such as Australia and New Zealand have adopted zero-tolerance policies towards DUI, which are associated with a reduction in alcohol-related accidents (WHO, 2021). Pentz et al.'s (2023) study revealed that among the five countries examined, students from Croatia and Portugal displayed safer drinking behaviours, whereas those from Ireland, South Africa, and Bosnia participated in risky drinking habits, which can be attributed to strict policies and effective law enforcement. Stricter rules improved compliance and lessened young drivers' susceptibility to road accidents (DePesa et al., 2017).

Health Consequences

The health effects of DUI are significant and multifaceted, affecting both the impaired driver and others on the road. Alcohol impairs cognitive functions, such as focus, decision-making, and reaction time, thus increasing the likelihood of accidents, which may result in injuries or death (Cassarino & Murphy, 2018; Du Preez et al., 2016; Romer et al., 2014). Physical injuries resulting from DUI-related crashes can range from minor scrapes and bruises to severe trauma, permanent disability, or fatalities (Horswill et al., 2016). For instance, a meta-analysis by Hoye (2016) revealed that DUI significantly raises the risk of fatal accidents, especially among younger drivers. Alongside physical injuries, DUI may also impose long-

lasting psychological effects, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in crash victims and feelings of guilt or depression in offenders (Zimasa et al., 2017; Phaswana-Mafuya & Davids, 2011). Alcohol consumption may also lead to risky sexual behaviours, possibly resulting HIV and STIs (Carels et al., 2022).

Social Consequences

The social ramifications of DUI may not be immediately apparent, yet they can be just as destructive, as those found guilty of DUI often face stigma, damaged relationships, and feelings of social exclusion (Scott-Parker et al., 2015). Young drivers, in particular, may endure lasting repercussions on their educational and career opportunities, as many employers and academic institutions view such offences as indicative of poor decision-making (Wagenaar et al., 2018). The lasting implications of alcohol use may also include resorting to crime, violence, ostracism from family and friends (Florence, 2014). Furthermore, incidents involving DUI can erode trust within communities, especially when they lead to injuries or fatalities. Research indicates that the families and friends of DUI victims frequently experience prolonged emotional pain and a sense of injustice (Taubman-Ben-Ari & Katz-Ben-Ami, 2012). Conversely, some scholars argue that the social effects of DUI are unevenly distributed. For instance, individuals from higher socioeconomic backgrounds often have better access to social support, which enables them to mitigate the social repercussions of a DUI conviction (Garcia-Retamero & Dhami, 2013; Sukhai, 2003).

Economic Consequences

The financial impact of DUI is significant, influencing individuals, families, and society as a whole. In a study conducted by Florence and Koch (2011) on substance use in low-socioeconomic communities using a bio-ecological framework, it was found that alcohol consumption is higher in these communities due to personal, social, political, and historical factors. Studies in South Africa indicate that the country, as a developing nation, incurs significant costs due to alcohol use (Govender et al., 2021; Sukhai, 2003; Sukhai et al., 2023). In contrast, Japan, a high-income country, has low rates of alcohol use and DUI. The costs that countries incur due to drinking and driving are both direct and indirect. Direct costs include medical expenses, legal fees, and rising insurance premiums for offenders (Fell, 2019). Indirect costs, which encompass reduced productivity, property damage, and emergency services, further exacerbate the economic burden of DUI (Matzopoulos et al., 2022). For example, a study conducted in South Africa estimated that crashes involving

alcohol impose billions of rand in costs on the economy each year, placing considerable pressure on public resources (Vanderschuren & Roux, 2019). Govender et al. (2021) supported this assertion, arguing that in 2018, R166 billion was spent on road accidents, with alcohol being the primary contributor to these incidents' costs. Similarly, in the United States, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reported that accidents related to alcohol-impaired driving imposed over $44 billion in costs on the economy annually (Fell, 2019).

2.3.6 Intervention Programmes

Intervention programmes designed to reduce alcohol-related DUIs are essential for improving road safety and diminishing the risks linked to driving under the influence of alcohol. These programmes employ diverse strategies, including safety campaigns, educational initiatives, legislative measures, technological advancements, and community-driven efforts. While some interventions have proven successful in altering attitudes and behaviours, others have faced criticism for their limited long-term effectiveness or inadequate follow-up. This section examines the various types of DUI intervention programs, their effectiveness, and the obstacles that come with their execution.

Safety campaigns

Safety intervention programmes are often designed to instil fear in order to help people make better driving decisions. However, Carey et al. (2013) conducted a study that found instilling fear and utilising threats is ineffective in altering driving behaviour. Similarly, Plant et al. (2017) discovered that young drivers' motives for driving safely do not correlate with their actual driving behaviour after viewing a safety advertisement. In this study, young drivers self-reported their driving behaviour after watching videos and advertisements about the consequences of speeding. One to two weeks later, the drivers completed a questionnaire, and the results indicated that the advertisements and videos had no influence on their behaviours, thereby demonstrating the ineffectiveness of such safety campaigns. Another study indicated that explicit threats can be effective; for instance, young drivers' behaviours were more influenced when they were shown a video of their peers driving, one of whom was not wearing a seatbelt (Hoffman & Rosenbloom, 2016). Carey and Sarma (2016) found that safety campaigns were more effective when drivers were encouraged to engage directly, rather than merely being shown pictures or videos of car crashes. Safety campaigns have

been developed and implemented alongside other initiatives, including educational campaigns.

Educational and Awareness Campaigns

Educational initiatives are among the most prevalent strategies aimed at reducing DUI, particularly among younger drivers. These initiatives typically focus on enhancing awareness of the dangers associated with alcohol-impaired driving and encouraging safer driving practices. For instance, Mackenzie et al. (2015) discovered that information-driven training programmes positively affected the attitudes and behaviours of young drivers, resulting in a decrease in risky driving habits. Similarly, (Bonsu et al., 2024) found that interventions aimed at raising awareness increased participants' understanding of road safety regulations and the repercussions of DUI. Nevertheless, the impact of these initiatives is often constrained by their short-lived effectiveness (Govender et al., 2021). Steinka-Fry et al. (2015) carried out a meta-analysis of DUI interventions and observed that, while educational programmes prompted immediate changes in driving behaviours, these modifications were not maintained over time. Lategan et al. (2017) added that campaigns should include empowering messages which encourage students to make informed decisions about drinking and driving instead of putting out authoritative and direct messages such as 'Don't drink' and 'Alcohol kills'. Du Preez et al. (2016) suggested that students' interventions should encourage healthy drinking. Mogotsi et al. (2014) further pointed out that educational campaigns in resource-limited settings frequently encounter obstacles such as inadequate funding and poor accessibility, which can diminish their effectiveness. Van Schalkwyk et al. (2022) analysed alcohol-industry-funded school-based youth education programmes, and the results revealed a need for effective university student-focused interventions. Nuntsu (2004) suggested that studies should incorporate drivers and RWDD. Steptoe et al. (2004) and Phaswana-Mafuya and Davids (2011) recommended that interventions for South African students involve social learning theories, which include social cognition and cognitive behavioural models, to alter risky behaviour. Wagenaar et al. (2018) noted that the limited research on the patterns of student driver behaviour makes it difficult to implement student-centred interventions.

Legislative and Enforcement Measures

Legislative actions, such as stricter DUI regulations and improved enforcement, have proven to decrease incidents of alcohol-impaired driving significantly. For example, the introduction of Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) systems in the United States has shown a correlation

with a reduction in fatal accidents among young drivers (Fell et al., 2011; DePesa et al., 2017). Similarly, nations with zero-tolerance approaches to DUI, including Australia and New Zealand, have reported lower occurrences of alcohol-related accidents (WHO, 2021). In South Africa, the National Road Traffic Act of 1996 introduced measures such as lower BAC limits and restricted hours for alcohol sales, which have contributed to a reduction in DUI cases (Sukhai et al., 2022). However, the effectiveness of these measures is frequently undermined by weak enforcement and inconsistency in practice. Abayomi et al. (2016) noted that the success of legislative actions depends on public awareness and adherence, both of which are often lacking in communities with low literacy and limited access to information. Taumang et al. (2022) criticised South Africa's disjointed alcohol policies and advocated for stronger enforcement of DUI laws, including increased breath testing and post-crash BAC testing. Subsequently, Govender et al. (2021) noted that enforcement operations have been implemented; however, there is room for improvement in changing driving behaviours in South Africa.

Technological Interventions

Technological advancements have emerged as a promising strategy for reducing DUI incidents, particularly among younger drivers. For instance, smartphone applications designed to monitor driving habits and provide immediate feedback have demonstrated enhancements in driving skills and a reduction in risky behaviour (You et al., 2013; Kervick, 2016). Nevertheless, the long-term success of these solutions is often constrained by user engagement. Haney et al. (2024) conducted a study on the motivation to use smartphones to seek feedback regarding their BAC. Participants were provided with breathalysers that they were expected to use in the morning after drinking. Some participants received messages warning them about their BAC limit, while others did not receive notifications from the BAC tracker application. The participants who did not receive any messages drove despite their BAC exceeding 0.05, whereas those who received messages were reported to use alternative transport options or refrain from driving altogether. In another study, You et al. (2013) noted that young drivers often disabled tracking applications after receiving rewards or incentives, highlighting the challenges of maintaining behaviour change through technology alone. Steptoe et al. (2004) proposed combining technological interventions with behavioural support systems, such as counselling or peer assistance, to enhance intervention effectiveness. Additionally, Sukhai et al. (2022) suggested that alcohol ignition interlocks be implemented,

requiring drivers to take a breathalyser test; if the results are above the BAC limit, the car will not start.

Community-Based and Peer-Led Programs

Community-based interventions involving local participants and peer-led initiatives have gained popularity as a strategy to address DUI locally. For instance, peer-to-peer programmes encouraging friends to intervene when someone is about to drive under the influence have shown the potential to reduce DUI incidents (Geber et al., 2017). Similarly, family-focused programmes that engage parents in driver education have been associated with improved driving habits among young drivers (Ehsani et al., 2016). However, the success of these programmes often depends on the quality of their implementation and the level of community involvement. Mogotsi et al. (2014) highlighted that community-based initiatives in low-income areas regularly encounter challenges related to limited resources and low engagement rates, which can impede their effectiveness. Buckley et al. (2014) noted that many community-based programmes lack comprehensive evaluations, making it difficult to assess their impact. Additionally, some researchers argue that peer-led initiatives may be less effective in cultures where drinking and driving is socially accepted (Scott-Parker & Oviedo-Trespalacios, 2017).

2.4 Conclusion

The theory employed in this research relates to the type of methodology and analysis utilised in this study. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory offers a perspective for examining data related to experiences as inherent knowledge of the phenomena being investigated. Cassarino and Murphy (2018) further illustrate the relation of Bronfenbrenner's ecological system to DUI. In this case, the phenomena include the individual, social, and environmental factors and how this influences decision-making. The literature review examined the prevalence of DUI, sociocultural norms, sociodemographic factors, consequences of DUI and intervention programmes. The following chapter describes the research design for data collection and analysis methods employed in the study. The chapter then outlines how the considerations for trustworthiness and ethical principles were ensured for this research study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research approach and design utilised in this study to answer the research questions. It includes a discussion of the methodology, detailing the research approach and design employed. Following this, a description of the sample and sample size is provided, along with the method of data collection, the procedure undertaken for the study, and the data analysis method used. Additionally, reflexivity, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations are discussed to illustrate how the study was conducted.

3.2 Research Approach

This study employed a qualitative approach to explore students' experiences of drinking and driving. Qualitative research relies on gathering data through the examination of individuals' experiences (Grossoehme, 2014). The researcher chose the qualitative method due to its practical and adaptable nature (Flick, 2018). Qualitative research aims to delve deeply into phenomena, enabling a comprehensive analysis of a specific subject, often conducted within individuals' natural environments (Kılıçoglu, 2018). This qualitative study examines students' experiences with drinking and driving without separating drivers and passengers. Many participants had taken part in both roles at different times, highlighting the fluid and socially influenced nature of these experiences. Analysing them together better captures the interconnected decision-making processes, peer dynamics, and environmental factors shaping drinking and driving behaviour. The study aimed to understand how participants experienced and interpreted their surroundings. Therefore, a qualitative study was suitable for this study. A phenomenological approach was utilised, as this type of research is thorough and interpretative (Dodgson, 2019). This methodology allowed participants to articulate their emotions, lived experiences, and knowledge (Dodgson, 2017; Prosek & Gibson, 2021). It facilitated the researcher's deep understanding of the participants' lived realities (Prosek & Gibson, 2021). This thus allowed the researcher to better understand the participants' experiences due to the descriptive nature of the approach (Hossain et al., 2024)

Moreover, the research adopted an interpretivist framework informed by phenomenological principles. The interpretivist framework holds that social constructs shape reality and emphasises the importance of examining social phenomena to comprehend experiences (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020; Thanh & Thanh, 2015). This framework was appropriate for the study as it is grounded in individuals' interactions, beliefs, and experiences, allowing the

researcher to view the world through the eyes of the participants (Ngozwana, 2018). In this research, the researcher analyses how students understand their personal and social realities (Smith & Osborne, 2015).

3.2.1 Selection of Participants

Although sampling is traditionally associated with quantitative research, it is also utilised in qualitative studies to refer to a selected subset of the population that meets specific criteria and is appropriately sized to assist in answering the research questions and achieving the study's objectives (Staller, 2021). The study employed non-probability sampling techniques, particularly convenience and snowball sampling. Non-probability sampling is frequently utilised in qualitative research (Etikan et al., 2016). Purposive sampling focuses on the attributes of participants, which means the researcher pinpointed the specific traits, knowledge, or experiences necessary to gather information-rich data (Etikan et al., 2016). However, it was essential for participants to be willing to take part and share their experiences (Etikan et al., 2016). Snowball sampling was implemented to reach and potentially recruit additional participants through those who had already taken part in the study and could connect with others who met the inclusion criteria (Sharma, 2017). For the purpose of this study, the target population included undergraduate and postgraduate students from the University of the Witwatersrand who had participated in drinking and driving, whether as passengers or drivers.

Prior to obtaining ethical clearance the registrar sent mass emails to the University of the Witwatersrand students across various faculties. Additionally, course coordinators for first, second, third, and honours psychology were requested to send emails about the study and what participation entails. The researcher began the snowball sampling method by utilising emails from potential participants requesting to participate in the study. Participants who emailed the researcher were also asked to refer potential participants. This approach gave the researcher an initial basis for selecting participants (Owen-Smith & Coast, 2017). Snowball sampling allows the researcher to gather nuanced and rich data (Etikan et al., 2016). Therefore, this sampling method was suitable as it enabled the researcher to conduct and receive rich data regarding the research questions.

The sample for this research involved undergraduate and postgraduate students from the University of the Witwatersrand, as the study aimed to investigate students' experiences. Given the university's large student body, specific criteria and characteristics were defined to

effectively reach the target population and sample (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). To participate in this study, students needed to be enrolled as either undergraduate or postgraduate students at the University of the Witwatersrand. Additional criteria for participants included having experienced drinking and driving, whether as a driver or passenger, at least three times. Research shows that repeated engagement in DUI is influenced by environmental and habitual factors rather than decisions made once (McCarthy et al., 2007). Participants were also required to communicate effectively in English (Amor et al., 2019). In qualitative research, language barriers can affect data quality; therefore, it is vital to have participants who can communicate clearly and be well-understood by the researcher (Squires, 2009). The age range for participants was set between 18 and 28 years. Data indicated that young adults are more prone to risky behaviours such as drinking and driving and have the highest rates of accidents related to drinking and driving (Hingson et al., 2017; National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2020; Ward et al., 2019). Individuals of any gender or race were welcome to participate in the study. A diverse sample facilitates a broader understanding of how different social and cultural contexts shape students' experiences with drinking and driving (Voas et al., 2012). Importantly, individuals who had experienced traumatic road traffic incidents were excluded. This exclusion was ethically motivated to reduce the risk of psychological harm to participants, yet it also introduced a particular limitation. Namely, it may have led to the underrepresentation of individuals with more negative, emotionally intense associations with drinking and driving. As a result, the narratives collected may skew toward more neutral or even normalised accounts of risky behaviours. The researcher aimed to limit the risks associated with the study, making it essential to adhere to beneficence and minimise any potential harm to participants (Cacciattolo, 2015).

The researcher aimed for a sample size of six to eight participants. Qualitative research typically employs smaller sample sizes to thoroughly explore participants' experiences (Robinson, 2014). Limited samples facilitate detailed and comprehensive analyses of how individuals perceive their experiences (Noon, 2018). Moreover, smaller sample sizes allow the researcher to dedicate sufficient time to participants, ensuring an in-depth understanding of their experiences (Boddy, 2016). Larger samples can impede the ability to analyse each participant's experiences thoroughly and comprehensively (Eatough & Smith, 2017). More than eight participants volunteered; however, some of the volunteers did not respond to the researcher, and some did not meet with the researcher as discussed. Eight participants were included in the study. The first interview was used as a pilot interview. Since no significant

changes were implemented after this interview, it was included in the final analysis. Therefore, the sample size was eight, which led to data saturation; hence, no further interviews were conducted to mitigate redundancy.

Drinking and driving is not confined to a specific demographic; therefore, including individuals of all races and genders is crucial. However, the data lacked diversity. Of the eight participants, seven were Black African, and one was White. While this indicates limited representation, it somewhat reflects South Africa's demographic distribution. The participants' genders were evenly distributed, with four female and four male participants. Their ages ranged from 19 to 26 years. Five participants were involved in the study as individuals who had ridden with a drunk driver, while three had engaged in DUI and experienced RWDD.

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Race	Positionality (Driver or Passenger
Koketso	26	Female	Black	Passenger
Ipeleng	19	Female	Black	Passenger
Palesa	19	Female	Black	Passenger
Nolwazi	20	Female	Black	Driver and Passenger
Morena	24	Male	Black	Passenger
Cody	20	Male	White	Passenger
Anele	23	Male	Black	Driver and Passenger
Tanaka	21	Male	Black	Driver and Passenger

Table 2: Demographic table of participants

The figure above illustrates the demographics as well as the positionality of participants interviewed for the study

3.2.2 Method of Data Collection

Interviewing can take various forms: unstructured, semi-structured, and structured interviews (Eppich et al., 2019). For this study, the researcher collected data using semi-structured

interviews. The purpose of semi-structured interviews was to investigate the contextual limits of participants' experiences and reveal aspects that may not be evident from others' viewpoints. Moreover, this data collection technique aimed to understand how individuals interpret social phenomena, providing a richer insight into their experiences (Kallio et al., 2016). The researcher explored how participants experienced drinking and driving. The advantages of semi-structured interviews included their capacity to enable the interviewer to examine participants' experiences while staying focused on the research topic, leading to interviews rich in data (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). Semi-structured interviews offered flexibility and adaptability, fostering interaction between the interviewer and the participant (Kallio et al., 2016). This format allowed the interviewer to ask follow-up questions based on participants' responses, giving participants an opportunity to articulate their thoughts freely (Ruslin et al., 2022). The researcher made sure to allocate ample time for the interviews by taking into account the availability and schedules of participants and arranging convenient times for them.

Conducting semi-structured interviews necessitated the researcher's solid understanding of the topic to formulate effective interview questions (Ruslin et al., 2022). The semi-structured interviews were organised according to an interview schedule (see Appendix A). An interview schedule consists of a list of questions created by the researcher to guide the interviews (Balushi, 2016). The open-ended questions in the interview schedule generated rich data, facilitating a more thorough investigation of the topic (Ahlin, 2019). Furthermore, the interview schedule aided the researcher in preparing for any potential challenges that might occur during the interviews (Henriksen et al., 2022). The interview schedule was developed to address the research objectives and provide answers to the research questions. Thus, the interview began with a question about students' experiences of drinking and driving, followed by questions exploring their reactions to others engaging in this behaviour and the associated social and cultural practices. Examples of these questions included: 'How do others react to drinking and driving?', 'Can you describe any cultural practices related to drinking and driving and share your thoughts on them?' and 'Can you describe any social practices related to drinking and driving and how you feel about them?'. The questions sought to answer some of the issues that some studies had not addressed. Some examples include: "How do you feel when you are drinking or driving or when you are riding with someone who is drinking and driving?" and "Please explain any cultural practices around drinking and driving, and how you feel about them."

The interview schedule was first sent to the researcher's supervisor and was then sent to an expert reader on the topic for review. The researcher then conducted a pilot interview with the first participant. A pilot study is essential for researchers as it helps identify potential challenges in their research design, tools, and participant recruitment (Khatamian, 2018). Pilot interviews enable the researcher to assess the interview questions and make required modifications where necessary before advancing to the main interviews (Teresi et al., 2022). The researcher made adjustments to the interview schedule. This was necessary to gather more focused, relevant, and detailed information that aligned with the study's objectives (Morse, 2015). All the interviews were conducted in person at the University of the Witwatersrand. All interviews were conducted at a place and time that was convenient for participants. A disadvantage of the in-person interviews was that occasionally other students would walk by and create noise, and birds and passersby were distracting for interviews held outdoors. The interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis. Interviews were recorded using the Otter app and were transcribed on the same day. Interviews ranged from approximately 30 minutes to an hour. The interviews were kept at a length that was sufficient for the researcher and the participant without exhausting both parties (Thompson et al., 2024). The length of the interviews depended on the participants' responses.

3.2.3 Research Procedure

The research procedure began with the researcher obtaining approval from the registrar at the University of the Witwatersrand to undertake a study involving students. Once ethical clearance was granted and permission was obtained to conduct the study, the researcher asked course coordinators at the University of the Witwatersrand to distribute emails encouraging students to voluntarily sign up for the study. The researcher encouraged participants to share the details of the study with others who might be interested. The researcher engaged with individuals who reached out with interest in participating in the study, inviting them to take part in an interview. Participants received a participant information sheet (Appendix B) detailing the study's aims and objectives and explanations of what participation would entail. Those who consented to take part were requested to complete a consent form (Appendix C), which included their agreement to participate and consent for the interviews to be audio recorded. Interviews were arranged for times and locations that suited the participants. The research took place at the University of the Witwatersrand. After the interviews, the researcher transcribed the recordings to enable efficient data analysis.

At the start of each interview, participants were told that they may withdraw at any time before, during or after the interview and that there would be no consequences for withdrawing. This study was a low-risk study; therefore, withholding information about the aims from the participants was not necessary. As a result, there was no psychological debriefing. However, towards the end of the interviews, closing questions were asked to the participants, and they answered satisfactorily. Participants were also given a chance to ask the researcher questions about the study, and all questions were answered well. This study was a low-risk study; however, it was important to consider that the topic of drunk driving may be upsetting. therefore, participants were informed that they could contact the school's counselling careers and development unit. The details of the counselling unit were provided on the information sheet. The counselling unit does not charge students for its services.

3.2.4 Methods of Data Analysis

The data from the research study were examined using thematic analysis. This technique focuses on analysing data to highlight themes relevant to the research subject (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). The researcher selected this data analysis method because it facilitated a comprehensive examination of the data, encompassing coding, investigation, and interpretation of the significance of students' experiences by identifying and developing themes (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Thematic analysis is valued for its clarity and flexibility, as it accommodates various methodologies and theories, incorporates personal and theoretical insights, employs inductive approaches, and encourages the development of diverse themes to enhance the understanding of the data. This technique was employed to identify patterns and themes in qualitative data. It was particularly suited for this study as it captured individuals' experiences and perceptions of the world (Clarke et al., 2015; Terry et al., 2017).

The researcher followed the thematic analysis steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2021). The first step was to immerse herself in the data by typing what the participants said during the interviews and trying to make sense of it. The researcher listened to the recordings repeatedly to fully engage with the data and transcribe it verbatim. The data was transcribed using the Otter app and subsequently edited by the researcher to deepen her understanding and familiarity with it.

The researcher's second step involved generating codes by identifying and categorising relevant and significant information while providing brief summaries of the data (Braun &

Clarke, 2021; Chapman & Chapman, 2015). In this phase, significant information was coded using printed copies of the transcripts to assist in organising and interpreting the participants' experiences. This was achieved by meticulously concentrating on details, taking notes, and highlighting recurring themes. The researcher employed different coloured highlighters and pens to distinguish between various concepts, ensuring the data were effectively organised according to similar patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Clarke et al., 2015). Attention was also given to any inconsistencies in the data, which were systematically organised. Following this, the researcher proceeded to the third step: identifying and searching for emerging themes.

The third step involved analysing the themes to ensure their relevance and accurate reflection of the participants' experiences after coding the data. The researcher created a table with headings for the main themes, organising the data under the appropriate categories. Any information that did not align with these main themes was placed in a separate section. The themes emerging from the data were applied across both roles (drivers and passengers), making it unnecessary to separate them.

For the fourth step, the researcher reviewed the themes. The data was reviewed, refined, and recoded. The researcher considered themes that needed to be removed or merged and those that would become subthemes. The themes that could be divided into two separate themes were split, and themes lacking sufficient supporting data were evaluated. The researcher assessed the validity of all themes in relation to the data, recoded any data that may not have been coded previously, and reviewed the entire dataset. The data was recoded, refined, and reviewed.

Subsequently, the researcher progressed to the fifth theme, which involved naming and defining it. In this step, the researcher identified what each theme encompassed. The researcher evaluated each theme by noting significant data and intriguing insights, establishing each narrative. The researcher refined the data by examining the relevance of each theme to the topic and the research question. Furthermore, the researcher analysed the themes alongside subthemes, discarding those with overly complex data. The researcher ensured that all themes were clearly defined by composing a sentence that encapsulated their essence. The themes were succinctly named, effectively conveying their core significance.

After establishing the themes, the researcher compiled a written report. This report indicated it was a master's research project, providing a concise, logical, and clear account of the data. Engaging examples from the transcripts featuring direct quotes illustrated how the data

related to the research question. Nevertheless, the researcher revisited the steps as needed to ensure that the research question was thoroughly addressed (Clarke et al., 2015; Terry et al., 2017).

3.3 Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, words are employed to understand, analyse, observe, and interpret data (Elo et al., 2014). In contrast, quantitative data relies on numerical evidence for validity and reliability. The quality of qualitative research is assessed through trustworthiness and reflexivity (Shufutinsky, 2020). Trustworthiness encompasses credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Amankwaa, 2016). The researcher used the aforementioned qualities of trustworthiness to justify the quality of the study.

Credibility is a key aspect of trustworthiness, referring to the believability of findings (Shenton, 2004). To enhance credibility, the researcher invested time in engaging with participants, ensuring they felt comfortable sharing their experiences openly. By doing so, the researcher aimed to minimise bias and remain as close to the participants' genuine experiences as possible.

Dependability involves ensuring that the study's findings are consistent over time (Nowell et al., 2017). Furthermore, to establish dependability, the researcher maintained an audit trail. To ensure dependability, the research project should be rational, traceable, and clearly documented (Adler, 2022). To achieve this, the researcher kept a detailed record of the research process, including how data was collected and analysed. Additionally, the interview schedule was the same for all participants. This way, if someone were to revisit the study, they could follow the steps and understand how the researcher arrived at the conclusions.

Confirmability focuses on ensuring that the findings reflect the experiences of participants rather than the biases of the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Since researchers inevitably bring their own perspectives into their work, the researcher practised reflexivity by maintaining a research journal. This enabled the researcher to reflect on their assumptions critically and ensure that these did not interfere with the interpretation of the participants' experiences (Berger, 2015). The researcher also utilised triangulation—drawing from multiple sources such as interviews and literature—to strengthen the objectivity of the findings (Patton, 1999).

Transferability relates to whether the findings could apply in other contexts (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). While the goal of qualitative research is not a broad generalisation, the

researcher provided rich, detailed descriptions of participants' experiences. This allowed others—whether researchers, policymakers, or educators—to assess whether these insights are relevant to their own contexts.

Reflexivity. In qualitative research, the researcher's perspective and personal biases play a crucial role in influencing the study (Olmos-Vega et al., 2022). I acknowledge that my sociodemographic background, cultural context, and historical experiences affect the research process. Engaging in reflexivity is essential for comprehensively examining how my position may influence the study's design, data collection, and results interpretation (Jamieson et al., 2023). By reflecting on my personal experiences, background and preconceived notions, I aim to improve the research's transparency, reliability and credibility.

My own experiences with alcohol-related incidents have fuelled my interest in this topic. At the young age of four, I was involved in an alcohol-related car accident while my father was driving. Although my father and I were physically unharmed and I have only vague memories of the event, it has heightened my awareness of the risks associated with drinking and driving. Additionally, I have previously engaged in drinking and driving myself, though I was fortunate to escape serious injury or legal consequences. These personal experiences provide me with a unique perspective and may help foster a sense of rapport and trust with participants, as they may feel more comfortable sharing their stories with someone who can relate to their circumstances without judgment.

To ensure reflexivity throughout the research, I utilised journaling as a means of self-reflection. Journaling enables researchers to record their personal assumptions, beliefs, and biases, which is especially crucial in qualitative and interpretative phenomenological studies, where subjectivity is integral to the process (Smith et al., 2009). By maintaining a reflexivity journal, I critically examined my role in the research journey and made sure that my interpretations were rooted in the experiences of the participants rather than influenced by my own biases.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Research must adhere to specific principles (Hasan et al., 2021). This study did not target vulnerable populations. The researcher ensured that participants experienced no harm, received respectful treatment, and were treated fairly (Cacciattolo, 2015). To proceed with the study, the researcher sought ethical clearance from the Human Research Ethics Committee (non-medical) at the University of the Witwatersrand (refer to Appendix D). After

obtaining ethical clearance, the researcher contacted the ethics registrar to request authorisation to conduct research involving students at the University of the Witwatersrand (Appendix E). Since the study examined the experiences of South African university students regarding DUI, consent from the university was necessary. Ethical dilemmas commonly arise in research (Chowdhury, 2015). Nevertheless, the researcher considered various potential ethical issues that could arise during the study and implemented measures to address them appropriately.

3.5 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Although the researcher could not guarantee anonymity because interviews were held in person, confidentiality was upheld for all participants (Gray et al., 2020). Confidentiality was achieved by employing pseudonyms in the transcripts and removing or altering any identifiable information about participants (Lancaster, 2017). Anonymity was achieved by employing pseudonyms in the transcripts and removing or altering any identifiable information about the participants (Lancaster, 2017). This safeguard ensured that participants' data could not be traced back to them, thereby protecting their anonymity (Taquette & Borges da Matta Souza, 2022). Participants sometimes shared accounts of their experiences related to RWDD or DUI. The researcher preserved the confidentiality of these narratives by omitting or disguising any identifying details in the final research report and transcripts (Goodwin et al., 2020). The researcher's supervisor had access to transcripts containing pseudonyms to further protect participant anonymity (Taquette & Borges da Matta Souza, 2022).

3.6 Voluntary Participation and Informed Consent

Participants were briefed on the study's focus and the expectations of their participation. They were also allowed to ask any questions they might have. Furthermore, participants were informed that they could exit the study at any time or decline to answer particular questions if desired, ensuring their involvement was voluntary (Arifin, 2018). This information was provided to participants in the information sheets and reiterated before and during the interviews. Participants were asked to provide written consent for their involvement in the study and for the recording of the interview sessions (Roulston & Choi, 2018).

Participants were provided with information sheets (Appendix B) to ensure they fully understood the purpose of the study, its aims, and their involvement (Saunders et al., 2015). The information sheet also indicated that recordings and transcripts would be stored on a

password-protected personal computer known only to the researcher. Signed consent forms were securely stored in a locked cupboard to uphold confidentiality.

3.7 Conclusion

This study employed a qualitative methodological approach to explore participants' experiences with drinking and driving. This approach involved a purposive sampling method and a semi-structured interview data collection technique. Interviews were conducted in person, and audio recordings were made for transcription purposes. The disadvantages of in-person data collection include the researcher having no control over noise or distractions from people passing and lacking control over obtaining a more diverse sample. The data was analysed using thematic analysis. Issues of trustworthiness were addressed through reflexivity, and all ethical considerations were adhered to. The following chapter will outline the findings of the study.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the research design and methodology employed to address the research questions. This chapter will present the findings and the themes that emerged from the data, and discuss these findings in relation to the study's research questions.

4.2 Overview of Themes

Thematic analysis of the data revealed three key themes that provide insight into students' experiences of drinking and driving. The first theme entitled 'the moral dilemma of drinking and driving,' captures the internal conflict and decision-making processes that individuals face when considering whether to drive under the influence. The second theme, 'driver and passenger interaction', examines the social dynamics between drivers and passengers in drinking and driving situations. Lastly, the theme of 'family and sociocultural location' considers how broader social and cultural factors influence attitudes and behaviours related to drinking and driving.

4.2.1 The Moral Dilemma of Drinking and Driving

As demonstrated in the literature review drinking and driving is widely recognised as a dangerous and irresponsible act, yet it remains a complex and multifaceted issue that many individuals grapple with. For the participants in this study, drinking and driving was not only a legal or safety concern but also a deeply personal moral dilemma. This section examines the moral conflicts, rationalisations, and reflections participants shared about their experiences with drinking and driving. It explores how these internal struggles intersect with broader themes, such as social responsibility, thrill-seeking behaviours, and religious or ethical reflections. This section highlights the tension between moral awareness and external influences, creating a nuanced picture of how individuals navigate this complex issue.

4.2.1.1 Moral Conflict and Awareness

This section explored students' experiences of moral dilemmas surrounding drinking and driving. Participants expressed varying perspectives on the issue, with Cody summarising his disapproval of drinking and driving by stating:

> *For me, it's like a big moral type dilemma (Cody- White male, passenger).*

Ipeleng echoed this sentiment, adding:

> *I don't think there is any right part about drinking and driving. Like there's no section of it or part of it that is correct morally, anywhere (Ipeleng- Black female, passenger).*

While most participants expressed disapproval of drinking and driving, some admitted to experiencing mixed feelings. Ipeleng encapsulated this duality:

> *Okay, I feel bad saying anything is cool about drunk driving. But that feeling kind of goes away when you're in the moment and it's not dangerous… what I would say is cool—air quotes—is that sense of freedom. It's fun, it's free, it's wow, you know, life is worth living (Ipeleng- Black female, passenger)*

Similarly, Koketso initially described drinking and driving as irresponsible but later acknowledged the liberating and fun aspects. Nolwazi also admitted to enjoying the thrill, despite knowing it was wrong. Across the interviews, participants revealed a recurring moral conflict: they were aware of the dangers and ethical implications of drinking and driving, but struggled to align their actions with these beliefs. For instance, Palesa remarked:

> *So drinking and driving is wrong all the time. But in my instance, like I said multiple times, drinking and driving is okay if you trust yourself… But it's definitely wrong (Palesa- Black female, passenger).*

This statement illustrated internal moral conflict: Palesa initially blanketly condemned drinking and driving, but then contradicted herself by saying it is "okay if you trust yourself". Ipeleng similarly acknowledged the risks while rationalising her continued involvement as a passenger:

> *If I go with someone who's drinking and driving, it is a risk for me, and I know that. The fact that I can acknowledge that it's a risk tells me that I know what's happening here is not right (Ipeleng- Black female, passenger).*

Some participants felt personal responsibility for their choices, as reflected in Morena's assertion:

> *If you're too drunk, I'm not going to be a part of that (Morena- Black male, passenger)*

This demonstrated a firm moral stance. However, other participants justified drinking and driving under certain conditions. For example, Tanaka argued:

> *If you control your drinking, you will be fine (Tanaka- Black male, driver and passenger).*

This justification reflects a more individualistic approach to responsibility, emphasising perceived control over actual risk. Nolwazi, also demonstrated a negotiation of boundaries:

> *I prefer calling my partner to drive me home when I feel I've reached my limit. I'd rather leave my car at home and e-hail to the place where I'll be drinking (Nolwazi- Black female, driver and passenger).*

Such statements revealed the weight participants placed on personal responsibility while negotiating moral awareness with convenience. Nonetheless, cognitive dissonance persisted. Anele said:

> *I overestimate my abilities… I think, no, I'm not that drunk (Anele- Black male, driver and passenger).*

Similarly, Koketso noted that intoxication diminished her sense of responsibility:

> *I don't care much when I'm drunk because I'm not fully conscious (Koketso- Black female, passenger).*

Despite these contradictions, some participants maintained a consistent moral stance regardless of intoxication. Cody emphasised the influence of social circles:

> *I'm fortunate that I surround myself with people who are more responsible about it (Cody- White male, passenger).*

Cody even ended a relationship due to differing views on drunk driving, illustrating how personal moral responsibility can lead to significant social decisions. Similarly, Morena credited his non-drinking friends for reinforcing his stance, highlighting the influence of social surroundings on behaviour. These reflections underscored how moral responsibility is not an isolated construct but shaped and reinforced by the company individuals keep. This

intersection between moral responsibility and the allure of thrill-seeking highlights personal responsibility in DUI.

4.2.1.2 The Allure and Thrill of Drunk Driving

While many participants expressed awareness of the risks associated with drunk driving, a recurring sub-theme was the allure and thrill associated with the behaviour. For instance, Nolwazi acknowledged that she enjoys the thrill she gets from drunk driving

> *because I like the adrenaline rush, I like rollercoaster ride, and so it wasn't that bad for me (Nolwazi- Black female, driver and passenger).*

Anele shared similar sentiments, saying that he enjoyed driving drunk, saying it made him feel like a Formula 1 driver:

> *I guess what I felt at the time, you know, I, my ego or whatever I don't know, for lack of a better word… The music is also good as well. And so I would feel like Lewis Hamilton I guess, in that moment (Anele- Black male- driver and passenger).*

Tanaka also stated that he enjoys drinking and driving, remarking,

> *when I was like driving when I was like drunk I was even enjoying driving more than I do when I was sober. I enjoy drinking and driving more… for me, it's fun (Tanaka- Black male, driver and passenger).*

While the thrill and adrenaline of drunk driving often provided a fleeting sense of freedom for participants, this excitement stood in stark contrast to their awareness of the broader social and ethical responsibilities tied to their actions.

4.2.1.3 Religion and Moral Reflection

For some participants, religion influenced their views and coping mechanisms. Anele described turning to faith while he and his friends were DUI:

> *Obviously tried to mask it with having fun, and praying as well, and believing that nothing is gonna happen to us. God is with us. Even though we are sinning and all that (Anele- Black male- driver and passenger).*

Koketso similarly described relying on prayer in moments of danger, while she was driving home with her cousin and their friends:

> *I just prayed for, you know, dear life… so it was just me praying that, you know, that everyone just arrived safely at that point (Koketso- Black female, passenger).*

Participants also engaged in moral reflection when they recounted their experiences, often expressing significant regret about the risks and consequences of drunk driving. Palesa, for example, reflected on the implications of being a passenger in a car with a drunk driver:

> *Getting into a car with someone who's drunk, it does have some implications. It might not happen that day, but maybe one day something will happen (Palesa- Black female, passenger).*

This awareness of potential long-term consequences was echoed in the self-critique participants voiced. Koketso described her emotional response as she processed her actions:

> *I think it got me thinking—a lot of self-blame, there's a lot of guilt (Koketso- Black female, passenger).*

Many participants questioned their judgment. Ipeleng, for instance, made a firm resolution:

> *I will never be a drunk driver. Because it's dangerous. This is bad. I've been a passenger to so many drunk drivers… I don't want to be that person (Ipeleng- Black female, passenger).*

Participants also expressed remorse for not making safer choices, with some acknowledging that alternative options were available. Koketso admitted:

> *There are other options such as maybe taking an Uber, leaving the car somewhere else (Koketso- Black female, passenger).*

These moral struggles are not isolated; instead, they are intricately linked to the role that drivers and passengers play in drunk driving situations.

4.2.2 Driver and Passenger Interaction

This theme delves into the dynamics between drivers and passengers during instances of drinking and driving, highlighting the complex interplay of trust, social roles, risk perception, and decision-making. Participants' accounts reveal how familiarity and unspoken expectations influence their choices, while varying perceptions of danger and sporadic control measures reflect the often-unplanned and fluid nature of these interactions.

4.2.2.1 Trust and Familiarity

This section focuses on how trust and familiarity significantly influence risk tolerance in the social dynamics between drivers and passengers. The participants' interactions reveal that trust in the driver's perceived control and skill often supersedes rational assessments of safety. Tanaka, for example, shared that his friends view him as a reliable driver even when he has been drinking.

> *They really trust me. They say, you must drive us (Tanaka- Black male, driver and passenger).*

He later repeated,

> *They told me that they feel safe with me driving whilst we're drunk. They say you must drive us, they really trust me (Tanaka- Black male, driver and passenger).*

Tanaka believes that his friends trust him to drive drunk because he does not make "silly mistakes" on the road such as speeding or braking abruptly. Similarly, Nolwazi shares her experience as a passenger, expressing that she feels secure with drivers she considers competent:

> *I hardly felt scared when I've been with a drunk driver… you just have to trust the person (Nolwazi- Black female, driver and passenger).*

This sense of trust, based more on the driver's demeanour than their actual state, shows how passengers may feel inclined to overlook risks if they perceive the driver as calm and controlled. Palesa echoes this sentiment, describing how she mirrors the driver's confidence to reassure herself. She shared,

> *If they act like they're okay, then you kind of feel okay too (Palesa- Black female, passenger).*

This confidence in the driver's ability to drive while intoxicated reflects trust that is based on familiarity. Familiarity was shown through Anele's experience of his aunt driving drunk,

> *And so at that time, I don't know I trusted her driving, I mean, I trust her driving, whether we are under the influence or not. She's quite a good driver (Anele- Black male, driver and passenger).*

Nolwazi's experiences with her boyfriend and father further highlighted how familiarity with loved ones can override caution. She explained that she rarely felt scared when being driven by someone she knew who had been drinking. When her father insisted on driving after drinking, Nolwazi found herself compelled to trust his judgment. Ipeleng's comment illustrated that the type of relationship one has with the driver matters:

> *You know your brother better than you know your friend so I can trust my brother but I am not sure that I can trust a friend, especially with my life (Ipeleng- Black female, passenger).*

Koketso also added, when asked how she felt about drinking and driving,

> *I think from my experience, it's been a thing of trusting the driver (Koketso- Black female, passenger).*

This implicit trust fosters a false sense of security, as passengers like Palesa feel reassured by the driver's outward calm or the relation one has with the driver, even if it does not reflect actual competence.

4.2.2.2 Social Roles and Unspoken Expectations

The participants' experiences reveal that unspoken social roles and implicit expectations often determine who will drive, regardless of their level of intoxication. Within groups, certain individuals are seen as default drivers, creating a dynamic where the responsibility to drive becomes more about social roles than readiness or sobriety. Many participants revealed that they do not have prior conversations about how to get home after a night out. For

example, when Koketso was asked how she and her friends decide how to get home after a night out, she responded:

> *I think it depends on who I am out with. I have friends who drive and friends who don't drive. So if they don't drive we usually then take Ubers so it's either we go somewhere, we Uber to someone's house and then the other person will just leave from there or we go separately (Koketso- Black female, passenger).*

Similarly, Anele stated,

> *It depends. Honestly, if our friends with cars are around then no discussion whatsoever is held, if they aren't around, then obviously we do know that we'll take an Uber (Anele- Black male, driver and passenger).*

This highlights an absence of planning driven by an implicit trust within the group. Their mutual understanding that someone will drive implies that familiarity and trust have eliminated the need to address the dangers directly. These experiences reveal a consistent pattern where close relationships create an environment in which drinking and driving is normalised. Tanaka described how his friends have normalised the behaviour, therefore they did not see it as drunk driving:

> *They don't even consider it as drinking and driving; they just consider it as driving (Tanaka- Black male, driver and passenger).*

Tanaka noted,

> *They don't even care about drinking limits. They just know that I'm the one who'll be driving (Tanaka- Black male, driver and passenger).*

This unspoken understanding reinforces a pattern where the potential consequences of drinking and driving are overlooked, as the group collectively accepts this as their default mode of returning home.

4.2.2.3 Risk Perception: Navigating Danger

Among the participants, there is a notable pattern where drinking and driving become normalised within social settings, largely facilitated by a diminished perception of risk. For example, Tanaka speaks to a common practice among his friends where they deliberately

plan for road trips that involve drinking, with an understanding that they will switch drivers as they tire. This casual approach reflects a diminished perception of risk. For many drivers and passengers, risk perception is situational, influenced by the context of the journey or the driver's behaviour at any given moment. Tanaka described an evolving sense of danger during one such experience:

> *At first, the ride was okay, but as we drove, he started speeding. I started feeling like, oh, the car has gone way faster, and we are drunk, so this might be dangerous (Tanaka- Black male, driver and passenger).*

Here, Tanaka's realisation of risk is tied to observable changes, such as increased speed, which amplifies his awareness of the risky situation. Anele explained that there was a sense of fear on multiple occasions, but this feeling quickly faded as he grew accustomed to the practice. He recounted his experience when he almost got into an accident with his friends stating,

> *We were shook, like when it happened, we were like really? And everyone sobered up for like a second (Anele- Black male, driver and passenger).*

Anele mentioned that after the incident they quickly recollected themselves and continued enjoying their night. This adaptation reflects how real things get when faced with a dangerous situation. Cody echoed this sentiment by describing how he felt when his partner's brother was driving, asserting:

> *He was driving like a maniac. It was terrifying. I was very, very scared (Cody- White male, passenger).*

Similarly, Tanaka noted his experience as a passenger.

> *The car has gone like way faster and like we are drunk so this might be, dangerous. So like, that's where the fear starts kicking in, what if something happens (Tanaka- Black male, driver and passenger).*

Most participants expressed how terrifying it was to be driven by a drunk driver. Passengers often evaluate risk based on their trust in the driver's capabilities, but this trust can sometimes conflict with their personal sense of danger. Nolwazi noted,

> *When I was drinking and driving with my friends, they were very cautious about it, very, very scared, from what I remember, but they still got in the car (Nolwazi- Black female, driver andpassenger).*

Anele similarly described situations where friends would encourage each other to drive while impaired, rationalising these actions through a shared belief in each other's control. Nolwazi echoed this stating,

> *Very naive of me to be like, 'you know, nothing bad's gonna happen'. You know, 'I've got this under control (Nolwazi- Black female, driver).*

Tanaka added to this statement saying,

> *I think it's a control thing. My friends don't have control because they don't even like to limit themselves. They will bring their cars but don't want to drive back home (Tanaka-Black male, driver).*

Tanaka's self-assessment of being more controlled than his peers allows him to perceive his actions as less risky. Ipeleng further stated that young adults overlook safety,

> *They sometimes take safety for granted. Like they don't really think about safety until maybe something happens (Ipeleng- Black female, passenger).*

Certain environmental factors also play a role in how risk is experienced. Tanaka mentioned,

> *I don't race in the city… maybe we'll race on the M1 when it's really late because there's reduced traffic, so the chances of bumping into someone are low unless you lose control (Tanaka- Black male, driver).*

This statement underscores how situational elements, such as traffic density or time of day, can create a false sense of safety. Passengers sometimes rely on momentary evaluations of the driver's behaviour to determine their level of comfort. Anele shared,

> *Okay, so as a driver at most times, my friends, you know, they hype you up, they hype, hype me up, you know, like, the music's also like going on and then you also have this urge to like, speed up as well… But then I did quickly realise this is not my car. This is my mom's car and my mom is quite strict. So I did take it down a notch (Anele- Black male, driver and passenger).*

Nolwazi echoed similar sentiments stating,

> *So I definitely am more cautious about the fact that my mom got the car because I feel like if I had got the car, I don't think I'd be as cautious as I am (Nolwazi- Black female, driver and passenger).*

A mix of situational awareness, personal confidence, and the influence of social dynamics shapes risk perception in drinking and driving contexts.

4.2.2.4 Sporadic Control Measures and Unplanned Decisions

This section reflects how, within groups of people engaging in drinking and driving, interactions between drivers and passengers often involve haphazard decisions and intermittent attempts to control the situation. Rather than implementing strict, consistent safety measures, participants rely on spontaneous or improvised actions that reflect the lack of structured planning. Ipeleng discussed a form of intermittent control when she described the practice of "second location" where individuals decide to continue drinking at a different place even after their initial plans end.

> *I don't know if it's just me, but the nights that are unplanned are the ones that turn out to be the most fun in my experience. So, I think that's where the whole second location thing comes in, even third location or wherever (Ipeleng- Black female, passenger).*

Anele also explained a similar social practice he shares with his friends, where he and his friends drink indoors, go out, and then go to a second location.

> *It's just like pre-game and there's drinks everywhere. And then we get to the club and again, it's drinks and sometimes you go to second location after the club (Anele- Black male, driver and passenger).*

Koketso noted how she and her cousin might initially intend to drive home but then spontaneously decide to drink more, saying,

> *I think other times we'll just be going to the second location and we'll ask if that's okay, if, like, we're not tired yet, it'd be like, Okay, so where are we going next? second location? We could be going to a third location. So it just depends on how fun the night is, how young the night is (Koketso- Black female, passenger).*

This pattern of unplanned escalation showcases how decisions around drinking are prone to change mid-course. Tanaka provided further evidence of unplanned and improvised control as he described how, on some occasions, if someone in his group got too drunk, he would drive their car and drop each person off one by one, finally parking the car and getting an Uber himself. This impromptu arrangement emerges only when a passenger's intoxication reaches an unacceptable level. In contrast, Anele shares how sporadic decision-making occurs in terms of speed control when he drives after drinking. He explained

> *Even with my speed, the speed I travel with, when I'm the one that's drunk, I do take it down you know, I do limit myself in terms of I do not go over 60 (Anele- Black male, driver).*

Similarly, Tanaka mentioned that he too regulates his speed when driving drunk stating,

> *I know I have my principles. Like I'll say to myself if I reach a certain state, I don't do this. Like, if I'm drunk and driving, I don't drive over 140 kilometers. I stay low (Tanaka- Black male, driver and passenger).*

The difference between Anele's limit of 60 kilometers per hour (which is the speed limit on city roads) and Tanaka's limit of 140 kilometers per hour (which exceeds the limit of 120 kilometers per hour on highways) foregrounds the subjectivity involved in setting speed limits. Tanaka mentioned that he likes racing and having road trips while drinking with his friends. This sporadic approach to speed regulation—relying on external conditions like low traffic rather than his own level of intoxication—illustrates a kind of selective control, where safety is assessed through circumstantial factors rather than a consistent, careful approach. Palesa's experience also demonstrates how sporadic control measures play out among passengers. She recounts being "very cautious" and "very, very scared" while in the car with a driver who had been drinking. Although she feels fearful, she still accepts the situation, suggesting a dependence on the driver's judgment. Unplanned decisions and sporadic control measures highlight how irregular and reactive approaches to safety define driver-passenger interactions.

4.2.3 Family and Sociocultural Location

This section examines the interplay of family dynamics and sociocultural location in shaping behaviours around drinking and driving. The interviews reveal a tension between peer influence and familial guidance concerning drinking and driving. Young people often find

themselves navigating competing pressures, where the carefree attitudes of friends clash with the more cautious advice of family members. Koketso highlighted this dynamic, stating:

> *We care about, you know, like not much, just having fun, but family is more strict, so they take it more seriously (Koketso- Black female, passenger).*

While families aim to instil a sense of responsibility, inconsistent behaviour sometimes undermines their guidance. For instance, Nolwazi noted that,

> *From when I was younger, when my dad would drink and drive… I felt safe with my dad, and he drove like a lunatic anyway (Nolwazi- Black female, driver and passenger).*

Koketso shared her mother's strong disapproval of alcohol consumption:

> *Oh, my mom absolutely hates it. My mom hates alcohol (Koketso- Black female, passenger).*

Similarly, Cody recalled the firm boundaries established in his household:

> *My mom always grew around, uhm, like that's just not something that you do. It was always set as a very firm boundary on, like, if you want to drink, fine, you don't drive (Cody- White male, passenger).*

Tanaka recounted his mother's stance:

> *My mom says if you want to drink, like drink, but like, okay, drink in normal circumstances. Maybe go to the bar then Uber coming home (Tanaka- Black male, driver and passenger).*

Anele shared a view of his aunt's behaviour while driving:

> *With my aunt, when she's drunk, she does know what she's doing. She is aware and alert, you know, in as much as she is drunk (Anele- Black male, driver and passenger).*

Families have differing views of DUI. Tanaka explained:

> *At my place, if we have a ceremony and people are drinking, they make me drive them home. Then I will drop their cars off maybe tomorrow because they don't encourage drinking and driving (Tanaka, Black male, driver and passenger).*

However, the normalisation of drinking at these events can blur the lines between caution and risk. Koketso observed:

> *Usually, at after-tears, people go get some alcohol, they drive and stuff, and people still continue driving (Koketso- Black female, passenger).*

An after tears is a term that refers to the gathering held after a funeral, where the life of the deceased is celebrated. This gathering is usually done by Black South Africans (Dukuza, 2005).

4.2.3.1 Sociocultural Norms and Practices Around Alcohol

Alcohol occupies a central role in South African social and cultural practices, serving as a cornerstone of connection and celebration. Koketso described how alcohol fosters togetherness, even in solemn events such as funerals:

> *I think the one aspect of after tears, usually, people sit together, people that knew that person who has passed on will come together, speaking about the person, celebrating that person's life, speaking on the memories of that person. So, it does bring like a togetherness (Koketso- Black female, passenger).*

Palesa echoed this sentiment, recounting her experience at a funeral gathering:

> *It was a funeral gathering on Saturday and then Saturday night, to find out that we're still continuing with the celebration, that's when they bought more alcohol (Palesa- Black female, passenger).*

This pattern extends to other social events, where alcohol is often seen as a staple of celebration. Koketso explained:

> *I feel like in South Africa, any type of gathering is like an opportunity to drink. Those can be birthday parties, funerals, the groove, different locations to groove. You do a housewarming, you'll plan that, you know what? No, I'm just doing a braai, and*

> *people usually just voluntarily will want to go buy their own drinks and like alcohol (Koketso- Black female, passenger).*

This normalisation of drinking is deeply ingrained in cultural practices and sometimes even linked to heritage, as Cody shared:

> *There was this guy from Soweto on the day who came up to us like, 'Today you're going to get drunk like someone from Soweto. We drink, and we drink hard.' It has a lot to do with where you're from (Cody- Black male, passenger).*

Cody additionally included,

> *South Africa has a huge, huge issue with drinking in general... On my dad's side of the family, because there was that Irish heritage, drinking was just always a thing that you do. So, they grew up around a lot of drinking. This is what you do, you know, that's like part of their heritage in that way (Cody- White male, passenger).*

Palesa also described the cultural rituals associated with alcohol during significant events such as lobola ceremonies:

> *At my mom's lobola, they bought—you know, those alcohols drunk at a lobola, like the brandy ones? So they bought the alcohol they usually use at lobolas, like the brandy, they bought those, then umqombothi, and then the elders continued to drink (Palesa- Black female, passenger).*

Participants recounted their experiences of cultural ceremonies held, where older people drink umqombothi (traditional beer) while younger generations buy commercial alcohol. This section highlights the central role of alcohol in South African sociocultural practices, where it serves as a key element of connection, celebration, and heritage. From funerals and lobola ceremonies to casual gatherings, alcohol is deeply embedded in cultural rituals and social norms. This normalisation of drinking, often tied to identity and tradition, underscores its influence in shaping behaviours and attitudes across generations.

4.2.3.2 Generational Differences in Drinking Practices

Despite its central role in social life, participants understood drinking behaviours to vary across generations. Koketso observed:

> *My aunties will make traditional beer… they don't particularly drive (Koketso- Black female, passenger).*

Similarly, Cody recounted his family's practices:

> *My mom would hold really big get-togethers with everyone, and obviously the adults would be drinking. In cases like that, if they had drunk enough, they must stay. They might spend the night, they might sleep over, and then in the morning, once they've sobered up, they can be on their way (Cody- White male, passenger).*

He added that his grandfather, despite drinking heavily, avoided driving:

> *I've heard that my grandfather used to aggressively drink, but never drive. There was never a combination with driving (Cody- White male passenger).*

In contrast, younger generations were perceived to prioritise mobility and convenience, and to engage in riskier drinking and driving. Ipeleng explained:

> *I have seen that drinking and driving is more… It's more, how do I say this? Okay, it occurs more in my peer group, like for example 18 and up or 18 to mid-20s or something. Because with older people or parents, they can partake in drunk driving. However, sometimes, for example, they will choose to sleep in the car to sober up or something. With people my age, they just don't care (Ipeleng- Black male, passenger).*

This sentiment is echoed by Anele, who recalled an example of early exposure to risky behaviour:

> *A friend of mine was driving—they were like 16 years old—and drinking and driving at that age. And at that age, you don't even have that much situational awareness. If something happens on the road, you won't know how to control the car. You're not trained by a professional (Anele- Black male, driver and passenger).*

Tanaka reflected on how perceptions of drinking and driving shift with age:

> *Drinking and driving… You'll maybe be okay when you're my age, like in your twenties. They say as you get older it affects uhhh… concentration. Even normally, an older person, like middle-aged, will struggle with attention. But I think as you get older, you gain experience (Tanaka- Black male, driver and passenger).*

This highlights how age influences perceptions and practices while also suggesting that gender may further shape these dynamics, as explored in the following section.

4.2.3.3 The Role of Gender in Cultural Drinking Norms

Gender plays a significant role in shaping cultural drinking norms and behaviours related to alcohol consumption and driving. Participants highlighted the intersection of gender expectations, responsibility, and risk-taking in these scenarios. For many men, drinking is deeply tied to cultural notions of masculinity, often reinforced through social pressure. Anele shared how men are sometimes guilt-tripped or blackmailed into drinking to conform to societal expectations as he relays his experience of how his cousin was coerced into drinking:

> *He, you know, was like trying to hold back, and they now started guilt-tripping him or blackmailing him. Like, why don't you want to drink with us? You know, you're a man within this village, so you have to drink, and if you don't want to drink, then you can leave our space (Anele- Black male, driver and passenger).*

This pressure underscores how masculinity is tied to participation in drinking culture. Tanaka noted:

> *The thing at weddings is like maybe three guys like me, with my one uncle and my brother, we're like, okay, you start driving people home. You go there, there, and there, and then you come back and take the cars back (Tanaka- Black male, driver and passenger).*

Men often take on the responsibility to drive. Nolwazi recounted how her boyfriend avoids drinking and driving to ensure their safety, framing it as part of his role as a man:

> *My boyfriend lives right by me. I'll take my car home and then ask him to come with me… but because he's like, I'm a man, I want to be a man, he won't obviously. So that we're both safe and stuff like that (Nolwazi- Black female driver and passenger).*

However, this sense of responsibility is not universal, as Palesa highlighted how some men deny their intoxication to assert their masculinity:

> *Drunk people become in denial that they are drunk, and they want to prove themselves that, No, I'm a man, I can drive. I am not weak. You know? So they'll be like, We're not weak. We're not drunk. We can do this. We can do anything (Palesa- Black female, passenger).*

Nolwazi described her experience of her father driving:

> *Obviously, I'm the one who does drive when my dad is a bit over, but sometimes he's very determined, saying, I can drive, I can do it (Nolwazi- Black female, driver and passenger).*

Gender plays a role in the societal expectations however there are other factors that influence transport alternatives after a night out for females. Koketso highlighted how safety concerns for women in South Africa influence decisions about transportation after drinking:

> *We Uber to someone's house, and then the other person will just leave from there, or we go separately. But to go separately is a bit more risky—being a woman in South Africa, it's a bit risky (Koketso- Black female, passenger).*

Participants also noted differences in how men and women navigate law enforcement. Anele shared an instance where his aunt avoided legal consequences for DUI by leveraging her charm:

> *One time we did get stopped with my aunt, but she sweet-talked her way out of it. You know, like, Oh no. Those people found her attractive. She gave them her number, you know, and they let her go (Anele- Black male, driver and passenger).*

Nolwazi shared a similar experience of being stopped by law enforcement, stating she did not receive a ticket because she is pretty and female. Moreover, economic and structural factors also intersect with gender roles. Nolwazi expressed the need for more accessible services, such as those that transport drivers and their cars, to reduce drinking and driving. She reflected:

> *If South Africa was in a better place economically, like services where drivers will come and pick up your car and take you home, instead of just using Uber and leaving your car wherever—because it's also not safe for your car—things like that would help (Nolwazi- Black female, driver and passenger).*

Morena further noted that most women in his family do not drive.

> *Most females in my family do not drive, ja. I wonder why but males drink but don't drive (Morena- Black male passenger).*

Men are often expected to drink as part of their identity, while simultaneously being held accountable for driving responsibilities. Women, on the other hand, navigate additional safety risks and systemic barriers, underscoring the intersection of gender, culture, and structural inequality in shaping these norms.

4.2.3.4 Geographical and Socioeconomic Influences

Participants highlighted significant differences in how geographical and socioeconomic contexts influence drinking and driving. These variations shape access to transport, drinking patterns, and overall perceptions toward safety. Drinking and driving behaviours in rural areas are shaped by unique cultural norms and structural limitations. Alcohol consumption is often deeply embedded in social practices, with strict expectations for participation. Anele described how drinking rituals are enforced in rural settings:

> *So, everyone takes a shot, like right now the bottle has to finish, and then if there's another one, the same thing applies. The only thing that you can do to pace yourself is if there's umqombothi (traditional beer). Juices aren't even allowed in that space—cold drinks and fizzy drinks aren't allowed (Anele- Black male, driver and passenger).*

Refusing to drink is often met with judgment or exclusion, as Anele noted:

> *When you don't drink, there's a whole lot that goes into it, and people think you're better (Anele- Black male, driver and passenger).*

Participants like Anele and Palesa describe the lack of reliable transport infrastructure in their rural regions, which forces individuals to rely on personal vehicles or acquaintances for transport. Koketso adds that late operating hours of alcohol outlets exacerbate this issue:

> *The place is not like Joburg; most alcohol places don't close, or they close late to accommodate people who run out of alcohol (Koketso- Black female, passenger).*

Ipeleng describes her experiences in Lesotho emphasising the availability of affordable and accessible transport in Lesotho, which reduces the need for individuals to drive under the influence. She explained:

> *I've never experienced a situation where we are stranded... there's always someone with money to call for transport (Ipeleng- Black female, passenger).*

Morena, from Lesotho, highlighted the lack of reliable public transport in rural areas, which often compels individuals to rely on walking or hiking as alternatives:

> *They won't allow you to walk like that. Actually, in the rurals, we have to cross rivers, blah blah, so you're already a danger to yourself. But if you can walk—if you leave early while it's still bright—you can still walk (Morena- Black male, passenger).*

Walking is often seen as a safer alternative to DUI, but it also carries risks due to the geographical challenges of rural areas. Morena observed:

> *I am from the rurals, so there aren't many cars. After drinking, people just walk back home (Morena- Black male, passenger).*

Palesa explained that after drinking, she and her cousins would walk to a nearby family member's house to sleep:

> *Everyone goes to the place where they will be sleeping; we don't accompany each other. Remember, it's a village, so it is safe (Palesa- Black female, passenger).*

The rural context reveals how deeply ingrained sociocultural norms, family dynamics, and structural limitations intersect to influence drinking and driving behaviours. Socioeconomic factors also play a significant role in shaping behaviours around drinking and driving. Cody highlights how financial challenges in poorer communities contribute to risky behaviours:

> *And it's worse as you go into poorer communities as well. It's very sad, but for a lot of people, drinking is their only source of joy (Cody- White male, passenger).*

Nolwazi reflected on how financial constraints influence transport decisions:

> *Before, when money wasn't tight, it would be a thing of you can leave the car where you're at and then Uber home. If I genuinely had the money to Uber everywhere, I would. Like if I know I'm going somewhere and I know I'm going to drink, then I'd Uber (Nolwazi- Black female, driver and passenger).*

Similarly, Morena highlighted the limited reach and rising cost of ride-hailing services like Uber:

> *The Uber thing is now expensive and doesn't go to some locations (Morena- Black male, passenger).*

These insights reveal how financial resources directly impact the ability to make decisions. Participants also noted how the urgency to return home, often overrides safety considerations. Koketso described the common strategies individuals employ:

> *So usually they either trust the driver, or they go home the next day, or they do try to find other means of transport, such as using public transport like taxis or hiking (Koketso- Black female, passenger).*

Anele reflected on how parental attitudes and financial constraints intersect with transport decisions:

> *I remember my dad was like, he doesn't want to buy us cars, you know, outside, obviously, of the financial implications. If he were to have the money, he wouldn't buy us cars (Anele- Black male, passenger).*

Financial constraints also pay a role in drinking behaviours. For example, Koketso shared that "pre-drinking" before going out was a common strategy to reduce spending at clubs:

> *So we always have pre-drinks before going to the club. That's just to basically lessen expenses so that when we arrive there, we don't have to spend as much (Koketso- Black female, passenger).*

Geographical and socioeconomic contexts significantly shape drinking and driving behaviours. These insights underscore how structural limitations and socioeconomic realities

intersect to influence perceptions and practices around alcohol consumption and driving. This perspective aligns with a broader recognition of how structural and financial limitations shape drinking and driving behaviours.

4.2.3.5 Informal Risk Management Strategies

Participants described a range of informal strategies to mitigate the risks associated with drinking and driving. Some participants discussed strategies to evade law enforcement checkpoints. Koketso shared the use of navigation apps such as Waze to avoid areas where police are stationed:

> *There are apps, like Waze, that will tell you where there are cops, giving alternative routes (Koketso-Black female, passenger).*

This example reflects a broader tendency to sidestep modern safety measures in favour of maintaining convenience or cultural practices. Similarly, Anele noted how his friends intentionally select routes to avoid law enforcement:

> *My friends always know, like, routes to take. So it's always like, try and avoid places where there will be cops (Anele- Black male, driver and passenger).*

Koketso also mentioned:

> *We were also just trying to find roads where we couldn't find the police. There was a point where we did see the police, and we made a U-turn on the road, took a different route, and we got to res (Koketso- Black female, passenger).*

These practices reflect an attempt to reduce the likelihood of legal consequences. Additionally, participants mentioned informal physical tests to assess sobriety before driving. Cody shared an anecdote:

> *This sounds really stupid, but we used to walk in a line thing where you, like, you know, you have to walk in a straight line with your foot in front of the— and like, if you're wobbly, yeah, you're not fit to drive (Cody- White male, passenger).*

Additionally, Palesa, Tanaka and Ipeleng reported strategies such as eating, drinking water, or waiting a set amount of time to sober up before driving. Cody described his friend's ways of sobering up stating:

> *If they are going to drink, they've done it like where it'll be like one drink and then you go wait for four hours or something; they've eaten, so that they sort of sober up a little bit (Cody- White male, passenger)*

Palesa recounted how her uncle tried to avoid falling asleep while driving drunk by turning the music up loud:

> *He turned the music aloud, like the music was loud so that it disturbs his mind so that he does not fall asleep on the road (Palesa – Black female, passenger).*

Palesa also mentioned another instance where her uncle stopped to splash himself with water in an attempt to stay alert:

> *The road is not smooth, so like, we would go and stop on the road and drink water. He splashed himself with water (Palesa- Black female, passenger).*

Participants also referenced myths that perpetuate risky behaviours. Cody shared a belief he had heard about drunkenness reducing injuries in car crashes:

> *I do remember hearing though at some point that, like, sometimes people who are drunk when they get into a car crash, being drunk actually helps save their life. Because when you're drunk, your muscles are relaxed. A lot of injuries that happen in a car crash, it's because your muscles tense up (Cody- White male, passenger).*

Anele shared another myth involving breathalyser tests:

> *I remember there was a tweet where they were saying, if you get stopped— there was someone who was helping people, plugging, I guess, people— if you get stopped by the traffic cops and you are breathalysed, you must blow but don't like wwwhhhuuuu, like just blow a bit. The alcohol content will show, but the level will be much less than what you really had (Anele- Black male, passenger)*

Participants employ a variety of informal strategies to mitigate the risks of drinking and driving. These practices reflect attempts to balance convenience, cultural norms, and perceived safety, often bypassing formal measures.

4.2.3.6 Policies and Law Enforcement

Participants highlighted a disconnect between existing policies and their implementation, noting that while laws against drinking and driving exist, enforcement is inconsistent and often ineffective. Cody expressed this divide succinctly:

> *There is a strong division between the policy existing and its implementation. Laws can exist, but that doesn't mean they are obeyed (Cody- White male, passenger).*

Participants like Nolwazi and Morena described enforcement as lenient or corrupt, further undermining the effectiveness of policies. Nolwazi shared an incident of leniency during a police stop:

> *I was driving my dad's car one day, and it's a big car. I got stopped... but because I'm a 'pretty female' who got stopped by a male officer, I definitely didn't- Yeah, I've never been caught in that regard (Nolwazi- Black female, driver and passenger).*

Morena expressed scepticism about the impact of law enforcement, highlighting bribery and inefficiency:

> *If I can ask you the stats of people getting arrested for drinking and driving, how many? Do you think you can give me a positive number? Not a manufactured number, a positive number (Morena- Black male, passenger).*

Morena added,

> *It's South Africa; they are getting bribed (Morena- Black male, passenger).*

Ipeleng echoed this sentiment, adding that some officials prioritise personal gain over enforcing the law:

> *Soldiers or policemen know that people are drunk driving. However, they don't intend to stop it. They just want some bribery or money or a drink or two… but people don't get sent to jail (Ipeleng- Black female, passenger).*

Participants also reflected on potential strategies to reduce drinking and driving. Ipeleng suggested expanding conversations to include passengers:

> *I never really hear people talk about what leads to drunk driving. People don't talk about the passengers or talk to the passengers; they mainly just refer to the person who's driving (Ipeleng- Black female, passenger).*

Participants identified a significant gap between the existence of drinking and driving policies and their enforcement. These insights highlight the challenges of translating policy into practice and the importance of addressing systemic flaws to improve road safety.

4.2.3.7 Social and Broader Ethical Responsibility

Participants recognised how their moral ethics intersected with broader social responsibilities. Palesa emphasised:

> *Your life is what matters the most, and the life of the people who are in your car (Palesa- Black female- passenger).*

This acknowledgment of potential harm to passengers and pedestrians highlighted a shared moral and social responsibility. Cody expressed frustration at the selfishness of drinking and driving:

> *But you're putting so many other people at risk because of that decision. Selfish (Cody- White male, passenger).*

This sentiment was echoed by Palesa, who emphasised the risks to innocent lives. Similarly, Anele reflected on the ripple effects of DUI, stating:

> *It has an impact on other families as well (Anele- Black male, driver and passenger).*

This awareness extended to participants' families, with Anele expressing a reluctance to explain a potential crash to their family, while Koketso feared how her family would react to her involvement in a DUI accident. Tanaka highlighted the need to protect others:

> *If you are alone, do whatever you want, but like if you have people, take care because you're putting their lives at risk (Tanaka- Black male, driver and passenger).*

Such reflections illustrate the interplay between personal and social responsibility.

4.3 Conclusion

This section highlights the multifaceted and deeply embedded nature of drinking and driving among students, shaped by individual, interpersonal, social, and cultural factors. The themes of moral conflicts, the role of drivers and passengers in shaping driving behaviour when drunk, and familial and sociocultural contexts illustrate the connections between personal accountability, social dynamics, and larger societal influences. Participants expressed conflicting emotions, from thrill and rationalisation to guilt and reflection, underscoring the tension between moral awareness and risky behaviour. Although personal accountability and social roles frequently impacted decision-making, sociocultural norms and generational traditions played a significant role in shaping behaviours around drinking and driving. The results section also reveals how the normalisation of risk, combined with geographic and socioeconomic contexts, sustains hazardous behaviours despite law enforcement efforts or control measures. This holistic understanding lays the groundwork for focused prevention strategies that align with the lived experiences of the individuals most affected.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This section will discuss the study's findings in relation to the literature and the theoretical framework. This chapter will also provide the concluding remarks. Lastly, the study's limitations and recommendations for future research will also be presented.

The aim of this study was to gain insight into how university students perceive drinking and driving as drivers and passengers. This study aimed to better understand students' experiences by gaining insight into how morality shapes decision-making, how interactions between drivers and passengers shape the experience of drinking and driving, and how family and sociocultural locations shape how drinking and driving are perceived.

5.1.1 The Moral Dilemma of Drinking and Driving

This study highlights a contradiction in university students' drinking and driving behaviours: although the participants recognised the moral and physical risks associated with DUI, they frequently engaged in rationalisations that enabled risky behaviour. These findings align with Patrick et al.'s (2020) findings that university students or young adults are more likely to engage in drinking and driving. A significant rationalisation method was the belief in perceived control, where participants believed they could accurately assess and manage their level of impairment. This finding aligns with the idea of optimistic bias in evaluating risk posited by Gerrard et al. (2008), demonstrating that self-assessments become integral to social narratives regarding drinking competence. Additionally, Brell et al. (2019) found that students enjoy a sense of control when engaging in risky driving. Many participants utilised conditional morality frameworks, considering DUI as universally wrong yet acceptable under specific circumstances, demonstrating the flexible nature of moral reasoning (Harmon-Jones, 2019). Religious beliefs also influenced moral disengagement. Some participants blended their spiritual beliefs into their risk assessments, employing faith as a shield and justification for engaging in risky behaviour. This extends Festinger's (1957) cognitive dissonance theory by illustrating how pre-existing belief systems can be co-opted into strategies for reducing dissonance, particularly in non-Western contexts. The emotional aspect of DUI decision-making was especially impactful. Participants reported intense thrill-seeking experiences that temporarily eclipsed moral concerns, supporting Bachoo et al.'s (2013) findings about how sensation-seeking affects driving behaviour, leading students to engage in risky driving due to their desire for sensation. Nonetheless, the thrill of taking risks led to memorable highs that outweighed subsequent guilt, challenging Steinberg et al.'s (2011) assumption that regret moderates future behaviour.

5.1.2 Passenger and Driver Interaction

The role that drivers and passengers play in DUI behaviours is significant when considering the factors that influence DUI behaviours. Guggenheim et al. (2015) studied the dynamics of issue frame competition in traditional and social media and found that peers significantly impact behaviour, as different relationships influence actions. Participants indicated that trust is crucial in the context of drinking and driving, as passengers are more likely to ride with someone they trust or know. Passengers felt reassured if the driver appeared to be in control. Participants expressed greater confidence and trust in their family members and friends when it came to driving under the influence. Watters and Beck's (2016) study supported this, as it was found that family and friends influenced university students' experiences of risky driving behaviours. In addition, Hendrick's et al. (2015) study aligns with these findings as peers influence drinking behaviours. Although some participants expressed discomfort with drinking and driving, the results illustrated that they often failed to communicate how they would get home and who would be driving. Most of the time, there was a designated driver; thus, there was no discussion about the means of getting home. This increased the normalisation of drinking and driving while decreasing risk perception. Risk was assessed based on the driver's perceived control, environmental factors, and situational factors. Drivers and passengers occasionally make impulsive decisions, showing that alcohol affects cognitive abilities. Hultgren et al.'s (2021) study aligns with these findings, concluding that alcohol and other drugs impair cognitive and motor abilities, which increases the risk of impaired driving and the likelihood of car accidents. Additionally, participants engaged in social practices such as continuing to drink at a different location from where they initially began. This illustrates how alcohol impacts impulsivity and prompts unplanned decisions (Jackson et al., 2020).

5.1.3 Family and Sociocultural Location

Participants' DUI behaviour was influenced not only by individual factors but also by social, cultural, and environmental factors. Familial modelling of driving behaviours and perceptions regarding DUI contributed to this issue, further exacerbated by cultural elements. Alcohol use is deeply ingrained in South African culture due to historical contexts and social interactions, which has led to the normalisation of alcohol consumption in South Africa. Importantly, these cultural rituals lack harm reduction strategies commonly found in Western drinking cultures, such as designated driver systems (Stringer et al., 2021), and instead encourage risk-taking through competitive drinking norms and peer pressure. Lategan et al. (2017)

corroborate the findings of this study, indicating that young people consume more alcohol than adults, with adults reaching their lowest alcohol consumption at 60 years old and those aged 20 to 34 drinking the most. This trend was attributed to newfound freedom, the underdevelopment of the frontal lobe, and the normalisation of drinking and driving in social settings, including universities (Du Preez et al., 2016). Additionally, in this study, younger people were found to be more likely to drink and drive, while older individuals tend to drink but choose to sleep rather than drive. However, some older participants in the study did decide to drive while intoxicated. Gender was another factor influencing DUI behaviours. Male participants were often expected to drive, while females frequently took on the role of passengers. Nuntsu (2004) showed that males are more likely to drive and obtain their driver's licences earlier than females. This thus explains the higher number of male drivers in this study. Moreover, cultural norms related to drinking and driving tend to reflect toxic masculinity, as men experience greater pressure to drink. Scott-Parker and Oviedo-Trespalacios (2017) study demonstrated this, as they found that males are more susceptible to drinking pressures to assert their masculinity.

Environmental factors influencing DUI include geographical and socioeconomic influences. Participants expressed the issue of transport availability in rural and urban areas. In rural areas, participants were more likely to drink heavily; however, access to transportation influenced their decisions on how they got home. In most cases, rural participants would stay over at a relative's house or walk home, while in urban areas, participants typically drove home. Most rural areas are often struggling communities, so cars are scarce. E-hailing services rarely operate in rural areas due to apartheid city planning, crime and a lack of resources like streetlights and good road surfaces, which can damage vehicles (Giddy, 2020). Additionally, some participants indicated that they do not use e-hailing services because of financial constraints, meaning that when they are drunk, their priorities lean more toward saving money than ensuring safety. This is evident in social practices such as "pre-drinking" at house parties before going out. Participants discussed informal methods to evade law enforcement or punishment. These included drinking water while consuming alcohol, eating before drinking, having air blown into one's face while driving, not blowing too hard into the breathalyser, and using a GPS application that alerts them of law enforcement checkpoints. In the same breath, participants raised an issue with the South African legal system, contending that law enforcers do not implement or enforce legal policies. Wagenaar et al.

(2018) contended that countries with a colonised history often experience development challenges. This thus attributes to broader political and historical issues.

5.1.4 Drinking Behaviours of Drivers and Passengers

The findings reveal differences and similarities among drivers and passengers regarding drinking and driving. While both groups share some commonalities, such as the influence of social and situational factors, their roles and responsibilities create unique dynamics that affect their behaviours. Drivers in this study exhibited a heightened sense of control over their actions, even when impaired. This aligns with Brell et al. (2019) study who found that people often enjoy drinking and driving due to a perceived sense of control, which is often associated with a driver's confidence in their driving abilities. This aligns with existing research on overconfidence in driving skills, where individuals tend to underestimate the effects of alcohol on their cognitive and motor functions (Du Preez et al., 2016). Drivers' reliance on subjective measures of sobriety, such as eating or waiting a set amount of time before driving, further underscores their tendency to prioritise perceived control over objective risk assessment. Moreover, drivers in the study often engaged in irregular and reactive safety measures, such as reducing speed or avoiding highways, rather than implementing consistent, proactive strategies. These behaviours reflect a selective approach to risk management, where safety is evaluated through circumstantial factors rather than a structured plan. Watters and Beck (2016) supported this by stating that drivers often rationalise their risky driving behaviour, especially when speeding. In this study, drivers rationalised speeding by claiming that it increases adrenaline and is enjoyable. Passengers, conversely, frequently delegate responsibility to the driver, relying heavily on trust and familiarity to justify their choices. This trust often stems from the driver's demeanour or past experiences rather than an objective assessment of their current state. This reliance on affective trust, rather than logical analysis, aligns with research indicating that passengers often prioritise social bonds over safety considerations (Crisafulli et al., 2024). Passengers also tend to rationalise their involvement in risky situations, frequently framing their decisions as unavoidable or socially necessary. This delegation of responsibility reflects a broader pattern of passivity among passengers, who often feel powerless to challenge the driver's decisions, particularly in hierarchical or peer-group contexts. This is illustrated by Stephenson et al. (2023), who highlighted that passengers of intoxicated drivers fear confronting the driver because of power dynamics, particularly when the driver is their parent

or older sibling. Although drivers and passengers share some similarities in their reactions to risk, their behaviours diverge in notable ways. Drivers reported using navigation apps or choosing specific routes to avoid police checkpoints, demonstrating a proactive effort to evade consequences. In contrast, some passengers often deferred to the driver's judgment, even when they felt unsafe.

5.1.5 Intervention and Policy

This research highlights that tackling drunk driving requires more than merely addressing legal and safety concerns—it also involves understanding the moral, social, and environmental dimensions of drinking behaviour (Garrison, 2024). Interventions often focus on drivers; therefore, implementing measures for both drivers and passengers could be effective (Fell, 2019; Fisa et al., 2022; Nuntsu, 2004). Garcia-Retamero and Dhami (2013) emphasised the importance of including passengers with drunk drivers in prevention programmes, discussing the consequences of DUI while dispelling misconceptions. Previous researchers have suggested student-based interventions (Bachoo et al., 2013; Du Preez et al., 2016; Jackson et al., 2020; Pentz et al., 2023). Public awareness campaigns could focus on individuals' moral responsibility to protect themselves and others rather than merely warning about legal consequences (Harith & Mahmud, 2020). Social influences play a significant role in shaping decisions regarding drunk driving. Individuals with responsible friends tend to make safer choices, demonstrating the powerful impact of peer influence. This suggests that interventions could be more effective if they encourage peer accountability and foster a culture where looking out for one another becomes the norm (Phaswana-Mafuya & Davids, 2011). Du Preez (2016) discussed interventions aimed at students, emphasising social and enhancement motives, as students often drink to enjoy social gatherings and reinforce feelings of happiness. Another key takeaway is that no one-size-fits-all solution exists (Steptoe et al., 2004). The moral dilemmas participants described illustrate how complex this issue is, shaped by a blend of personal, social, and cultural factors (Harith & Mahmud, 2020). Earlier research illustrated that parent modelling is important in shaping drinking and driving behaviours of young adults (Bailey et al., 2024; Scott-Parker et al., 2015; Watters & Beck, 2016). Furthermore, interventions must be tailored to meet different communities' specific needs and values. For instance, in rural areas, enhancing transportation infrastructure might be a priority, while in urban areas, making ride-hailing services more affordable and accessible could have a more significant impact (Giddy, 2020). The study also highlights how

trust and familiarity between drivers and passengers can influence risk-taking. Many individuals assume that a familiar or "reliable" driver is safe, even after consuming alcohol, but this is not always the case (Watters & Beck, 2016). Peer-led programmes could also contribute to shifting social norms by encouraging groups to plan ahead—such as designating a sober driver or arranging alternative transport before going out (Steptoe, 2004). These small changes can significantly influence the establishment of a culture of shared responsibility. Lastly, the lack of practical alternatives often leaves individuals with no choice but to drive after drinking. Many participants described resorting to last-minute or risky solutions because they felt they had no other options. Providing affordable and accessible transportation options, such as late-night buses or subsidised ride services, could empower individuals to make safer choices without feeling that they are missing out on social experiences (Sukhai et al., 2022). Lategan et al. (2017) suggested that interventions should be solution-based, thereby implementing campaigns for ride-sharing and ensuring individuals' safety. Sukhai et al. (2022) proposed a multifaceted approach that includes education, technology (such as ignition locks), fines, addressing socioeconomic deprivation, managing substance abuse, tackling mental health conditions, and providing rehabilitation and mental health support for offenders of drinking and driving, alongside ensuring safe public transport options.

5.2 Limitations, Recommendations and Implications

5.2.1 Limitations

While this study presents important insights into the factors influencing drinking and driving behaviours among students, it is essential to recognise its limitations to better understand the findings. As a qualitative inquiry, the research delves deeply into participants' experiences, yet it also encounters inherent constraints that impact its reach and generalisability.

A significant limitation pertains to the demographic composition of the sample. The research primarily focused on university students, which, although providing detailed insights into this specific group, limits the applicability of the results to broader populations. For instance, the experiences of students may differ significantly from those of older adults, non-students, or individuals from diverse socioeconomic or cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, the study's focus on South African contexts, particularly cultural practices such as after-tear gatherings and lobola ceremonies, suggests that the findings may not be entirely applicable to other regions where social norms and structural conditions related to alcohol consumption vary.

A significant theoretical limitation arises from the use of Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological systems theory. This model emphasises the interconnected effects of various levels—from the individual to the societal—on human behaviour. However, the information gathered in this research is derived solely from personal interviews, which reflects individual, first-person accounts situated within the microsystem. As a result, the study uses individual narratives as proxies for examining influences from higher-order systems such as peer networks (mesosystem), institutional practices (exosystem), or broader cultural norms (macrosystem). This results in a methodological challenge: the analysis draws multi-level interpretations from single-level data. Although participants may mention social dynamics or cultural practices, their accounts are still filtered through their personal perspectives. Thus, one must be cautious when attempting to generalise these narratives to broader systemic interactions or societal-level realities.

Additionally, reliance on self-reported data introduces further constraints. Participants' narratives regarding their experiences with drinking and driving may be subject to social desirability bias, where individuals downplay risky behaviours to portray themselves more favourably. Conversely, some participants may have amplified their experiences to meet perceived expectations. This potential bias highlights the difficulties in obtaining completely accurate accounts of sensitive or stigmatised behaviours, particularly within a qualitative framework where data is highly personal and subjective. The retrospective aspect of the interviews also brings forth the chance of recall bias. Participants were asked to think back on past experiences, some of which may have been altered by the passage of time or subsequent events. Memories related to alcohol incidents, specifically, can be fuzzy or influenced by emotional reactions, which could impact the data's reliability. While qualitative research emphasises depth over exactness, this limitation serves as a reminder to exercise caution when interpreting participants' stories.

Although the criteria for inclusion promoted diversity in terms of race, gender, and background, the final sample ended up being fairly homogenous. Out of the eight participants, seven identified as Black African and one as White. While this may be representative of South Africa's overall demographics, the socioeconomic background of the sample is less clear and warrants attention. Considering the university-based recruitment method, it is probable that participants had similar educational backgrounds and middle-class status. However, research indicates that risky behaviours like drinking and driving are often influenced by factors related to class, such as access to private vehicles, drinking habits, and

social norms among peer groups (Ward et al., 2019; Voas et al., 2012). The lack of participants from lower socioeconomic backgrounds—who might depend more on public transport—restricts the study's ability to understand how structural inequalities interact with risky behaviours. Furthermore, the study's consideration of gender dynamics, while valuable, may not fully encompass the diversity of gender identities and experiences. For instance, the perspectives of non-binary or transgender individuals were not specifically examined, and power dynamics within families and social groups may have influenced participants' willingness to share certain behaviours. This omission highlights the necessity for more inclusive research that addresses the full range of gender identities and their relationships to drinking and driving behaviours.

Another limitation relates to the narrow focus on alcohol consumption. The study specifically explored students' experiences of drinking and driving in relation to alcohol use, and did not account for the use of other psychoactive substances such as cannabis, prescription medication, or illicit drugs. While this focus allowed for a more in-depth examination of alcohol-related behaviours, it means the findings may not capture the full spectrum of impaired driving experiences. Lastly, given that this is a qualitative study, the research does not aim to establish causal connections or quantify the frequency of specific behaviours. Although this methodology allows for an in-depth exploration of personal experiences and social dynamics, it limits the ability to generalise findings or make broader statistical claims. Future studies could address this limitation by employing a mixed-methods approach, integrating qualitative insights with quantitative data to provide a more holistic understanding of drinking and driving behaviours.

5.2.2 Recommendations for Future Research

The results of this research pave the way for numerous future inquiries that could enhance our comprehension of drinking and driving habits. Although this qualitative investigation has offered valuable and detailed insights into the social, cultural, and familial influences on these behaviours, there are still areas that require further examination to address the identified limitations and gaps.

An essential direction for upcoming research is to expand the demographic range of the study. While concentrating on university students has provided significant insights into this particular demographic, broadening the sample to include those outside of school, older individuals, and people from various socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds would

improve the applicability of the findings. For instance, looking into the experiences of working professionals, rural populations, or individuals from differing geographical locations could uncover how structural elements like income, transportation access, and cultural values affect drinking and driving patterns in diverse contexts.

Additionally, future investigations could adopt a mixed-methods strategy, integrating qualitative interviews with quantitative surveys. While qualitative methods provide depth and detail, quantitative data could help identify patterns, prevalence rates, and causal correlations that interviews alone may overlook. For instance, a large-scale survey could assess the frequency of drinking and driving behaviours among various demographic groups, while follow-up interviews could explore the motivations and social interactions behind those behaviours. This combined approach would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the issue and strengthen the evidence base for interventions.

Another promising avenue for future research is the analysis of intersectional identities and their influence on drinking and driving patterns. Although this study addressed the influence of gender, further investigations could delve deeper into how overlapping identities—such as race, class, gender, and sexuality—shape individuals' experiences and decision-making processes. For instance, how do LGBTQ+ individuals navigate drinking and driving in settings where they might face additional stigma or discrimination? In what ways do socioeconomic disparities interact with cultural norms to affect risky behaviour? Tackling these questions would yield a more inclusive and thorough understanding of the subject. Future studies could also be enhanced by employing a longitudinal framework to track behavioural changes over time. While this research relied on participants' retrospective accounts, a longitudinal design would permit researchers to monitor how behaviours shift in response to life events, policy adjustments, or educational initiatives. For example, how do individuals' drinking and driving behaviours evolve as they move from university into the professional world? How do significant life changes, such as becoming a parent or undergoing a traumatic incident, affect risk perceptions and decision-making? Longitudinal research could offer crucial insights into the factors that encourage or inhibit changes in behaviour.

Finally, future research should aim to include perspectives from a broader range of stakeholders, such as law enforcement personnel, policymakers, and community leaders. While this study concentrated on the experiences of students, comprehending the systemic

factors that facilitate or hinder drinking and driving behaviours necessitates input from those who formulate and enforce regulations. For example, how do law enforcement officials view the effectiveness of existing policies? What challenges do policymakers encounter in executing interventions? Collaborating with these stakeholders would result in a more holistic understanding of the structural and institutional elements that sustain risky behaviours.

5.2.3 Implications of the Study

The findings of this study suggest that university students' experiences of drinking and driving are influenced by their beliefs and values, as well as the social microsystem, environmental microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. Due to the study's limited sample size, the findings cannot be generalised to the larger population but provide a useful basis for future investigations. However, this study provides a solid framework from which to build. Future studies should explore the relationship between drinking behaviour and the likelihood of engaging in DUI, as research indicates that higher alcohol consumption and drinking frequency increase the probability of driving under the influence (Sinclair, 2013). Observing students' drinking patterns may provide deeper insight into their decision-making processes regarding DUI. Additionally, perceptions of alcohol play a crucial role in shaping DUI behaviour. Studies have shown that individuals who hold positive views of alcohol, such as associating it with happiness and social bonding, are more likely to justify drinking and driving (Du Preez et al., 2016). Frequent drinkers often rationalise their behaviour, minimising the risks involved (Lategan et al., 2017), which highlights the need for further exploration of how students construct meaning around alcohol use and its consequences. A longitudinal study of students' drinking and driving behaviours would provide valuable insights into how risk perceptions evolve. Tracking these behaviours as students transition from undergraduate to postgraduate levels could reveal patterns that influence decision-making and risk assessment. Open-ended questions that capture self-reported DUI behaviour and perceived risk would strengthen the validity and reliability of future studies. While this study is limited in scope, its findings contribute to a growing body of knowledge on the social and psychological influences of DUI. Research that builds on these insights can inform targeted interventions, policies, and educational programs aimed at reducing DUI behaviours among university students.

5.3 Conclusion

This study aimed to explore South African university students' experiences of drinking and driving and gain insight into how intrapersonal, interpersonal, social, and environmental

factors shape students' decisions regarding this behaviour. To determine this, a thematic analysis was employed, revealing themes related to moral dilemmas, the roles of drivers and passengers in shaping drinking and driving behaviours, and family and sociocultural context. The themes indicated that drinking and driving behaviours are influenced by personal beliefs or values, peers, families, and geographical or environmental contexts. Drinking and driving is a public safety issue that impacts individuals' lives emotionally, physically, and mentally. Most participants reported that their drinking and driving behaviours were driven by fun, while others felt a necessity to arrive home. Drivers predominantly found the act exhilarating, whereas some passengers deemed it morally wrong. However, some passengers also found drinking and driving to be enjoyable, although they experienced moments of fear during the act. The meanings derived from drinking and driving experiences depend on how university students perceive driving under the influence. These perceptions were both positive and negative, as participants, whether drivers or passengers, viewed drinking and driving in different lights. While they acknowledged that drinking and driving is wrong, some rationalised their behaviour. Ultimately, this is an issue that often involves young drivers engaging in drinking and driving. Therefore, it is crucial for institutions, policymakers, law enforcement, traffic safety organisations, government entities, traffic psychology departments, and students to collaborate to address the problems and gaps identified by participants to implement effective intervention strategies.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Research Instrument

Interview schedule

Hello my name is Busisiwe Mabaso and I am student at Wits University. I appreciate you taking the time to participate in my research study. Please be aware that you are welcome to stop the interview at any time if you feel uncomfortable or if you do not wish to continue. Also, if for any reason once the data has been collected you feel that you want to withdraw from the study; you are free do so as well, and you can do so by letting me know. If you feel distressed at any time after the interview is concluded please feel free to contact the school's registered counsellor for free counselling services at 011 717 9140, their contact details will be provided to you at the end of the interview, they are also available on the participant information sheet that I emailed to you. Also, please be aware that your real name will be changed to a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality and that no identifying information will be used in the final report of this study.

Demographic Information

Age:

Gender:

Years of Driving Experience:

Institution Currently Enrolled in:

Questions

1. Describe your experience with drinking and driving
2. How do you feel about drinking and driving?
3. How do you feel when you are drinking or driving or when you are riding with someone who is drinking and driving?
4. What do you think leads to drinking and driving?
5. How do others react to drinking and driving

   Prompt: family, friends, other drivers, or pedestrians

   Prompt: how do others feel about it

   Prompt: how do you feel about their responses
6. How would you describe your reaction towards your family drinking and driving compared to your friends?

7. Describe what would normally happen at home after a ceremony with people who have been drinking and intend on driving back home.
8. Please explain any cultural practices around drinking and driving, and how you feel about them
9. Please explain any social practices around drinking and driving, and how you feel about them
10. Describe your conversations with your friends about means of getting back home after a night out of drinking.
11. How do you figure out what is right and wrong (in relation to drinking and driving)

And where do you draw the line?

12. What would you say is cool about driving under the influence and isn't?

Why?

Closing questions

- What motivated you to take part in this study?
- How was the interview
- What did you think it would be like?
- What did you talk about that you did not think would come up or what did you mention that surprised you?
- What did you take or learn about yourself during this interview?
- Is there anything you would like to ask me?

Closing statement

Thank you very much for taking part in my study. I appreciate it.

To contact counselling services at Wits University, you can call them at 011 717 9140.

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet



Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Busisiwe Mabaso and I am a Masters student in Research Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. As part of my studies, I have to undertake a research project, and I am investigating the students' experiences of driving under the influence of alcohol. This research project aims to find out how students experience drinking and driving.

As part of this project, I would like to invite you to take part in an interview. This activity will involve you conversing with me as the researcher about the topic and will take around 60 minutes. The interview can be face-to-face at a convenient time for you.

With your permission, I would also like to record the interview using a digital device.

You will not receive any direct benefits from participating in this study, and there are no disadvantages or penalties for not participating. You may withdraw at any time or not answer any question if you do not want to. The interview will be completely confidential. The information you give to me will be held securely. I will be using a pseudonym (false name) to represent your participation, in my final research report. Any identifying details that you disclose will remain anonymous in the transcripts and final write-up.

If you have any questions afterward about this research, feel free to contact me on the details listed below. This study will be written up as a research report which will be available online through the university library website. If you wish to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you upon request. Confidential research publications may be in the form of journal articles and/or conference presentations. With your permission, the data collected from this research project may be used by other researchers in an anonymised format.

To access counselling services at the University of the Witwatersrand, you can visit the Counselling and Careers Development Unit (CCDU) in person, email them at info.ccdu@wits.ac.za, or call them at 011 717 9140

If you have any queries, concerns, or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (non-medical), by telephone + at 27(0)11 717 1408, email Shaun.Schoeman@wits.ac.za

Yours sincerely,

Researcher
Busisiwe Mabaso, busimabaso114@gmail.com, 0641029247

Supervisor
Professor Carol Long, Carol.Long@wits.ac.za, 0117174510

Appendix C: Consent Form



Understanding South African University Students' Experiences of Drinking and Driving

I …….. agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. (Please circle the relevant options below).

I agree that my participation will remain confidential	YES	NO
I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his research report	YES	NO
I agree that the interview may be audio recorded	YES	NO
I agree that the information I provide may be used anonymously by other researchers following this study	YES	NO

…… (signature)
…… (name of participant)
…… (date)

Appendix D: Ethical Clearance

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ETHICS COMMITTEE
CONSTITUTED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: MAPSYC/23/06**
PROJECT TITLE:	"Understanding South African University Students' Experiences of Drinking and Driving".
INVESTIGATOR	Mabaso Busisiwe (1763381)
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATOR	SHCD/Psychology
DATE CONSIDERED	19 June 2023
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved unconditionally
RISK LEVEL	Minimal Risk
EXPIRY DATE	31 December 2025
ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE 03 June 2023	**CHAIRPERSON** _____ (Dr Aline Ferreira Correia)

cc: Prof. Carol Long (Supervisor)

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Chairperson of the School/Department ethics committee.

I/we fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, I/we undertake to submit an amendment of the protocol to the Committee.

_____ 17 / 07 / 2023

Signature **Date**

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

Appendix E: Permission Letter

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY REGISTRAR

19 July 2023

Busisiwe Mabaso
Student Number (1763381)
Master of Arts by Coursework and Research Report
School of Human and Community Development

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

"Understanding South African University Students' Experiences of Drinking and Driving."

This letter serves to confirm that the above project has received permission to be conducted on University premises, and/or involving staff and/or students of the University as research participants. In undertaking this research, you agree to abide by all University regulations for conducting research on campus and to respect participants' rights to withdraw from participation at any time.

If you are conducting research on certain student cohorts, year groups or courses within specific Schools and within the teaching term, permission must be sought from Heads of School or individual academics.

Ethical clearance has been obtained. (Protocol number: MAPSYC/23/06)

Research Expiration: (31 December 2025)

Nicoleen Potgieter
University Deputy Registrar

Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050, South Africa | T +27 11 717 1204/8 | E nicoleen.potgieter@wits.ac.za | www.wits.ac.za
IYUNIVESITHI YASEWITWATERSRAND | YUNIVESITHI YA WITWATERSRAND