

Abstract

There is a general understanding of the concept of masculinity, as it has been spoken about and is still spoken about today. Fundamentally, masculinity is an integral aspect of the experience known as manhood. Due to its constructed nature, masculinity has many facets, such as not being singular but plural (Connell, 1987; Morrell, 2001). This is of great significance in general but, more specifically, to men who work as hairdressers in hair salons. This is because hair salons are seen as traditionally feminine spaces, and thus, there is an expected impact that working in these spaces can have on one's sense of masculinity. This study, therefore, explores how men who work as hairdressers navigate their masculine identities in these traditionally feminine spaces. This is important as this version of masculinity may prove to be healthier and more progressive to all whom it affects – the men and those around them. This qualitative study aims to explore male hairdressers' lived experiences and the resultant construction of masculinity in Braamfontein. In order to achieve this, 10 male hairdressers that work in hair salons in Braamfontein were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis was used to make sense of the findings. The findings suggest that these men aspire towards hegemonic standards of masculinity; however, they are placed in a marginalised position by others due to their occupations. This results in them developing a model of masculinity befitting them. Moreover, their aspirations towards hegemonic masculinity help legitimise it as the standard, but also, their model of masculinity suggests that there are progressive ways in which men can change that.