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heCareZA Social Media Analytics Report 3

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Introduction

This report aims to generate a deeper understanding of gender discrimination through an analysis of public social media. In it, we provide an overview of our research into the online conversation about men and women in South Africa. The findings discussed in this report are shared with other researchers, practitioners and digital activists to inform policy and practice. They are also used by the heCareZA programme to engage men in self-reflection and healing through creative communications and dialogue facilitation. The long term goal of the heCareZA programme is to engage with thousands of men and support them to effectively promote gender equality, dismantle the cycle of gender discrimination and curtail the perpetration of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) through online and offline dialogue facilitation.

The development of masculinity in the digital era is an area of immense interest, the use of memes, sharing of content from influencer accounts and other forms of online content may have real world implications on men's conceptualisations of masculinity and subsequently their behaviour (Shefer & Ratele, 2023).

We describe our research process, including the creation, testing and refinement of an online research query to be used as a benchmark in our ongoing social media comparative analysis. Relying on quantitative and qualitative research findings, this report is the latest instalment in a series of reports written in support of the heCareZA programme. We use data metrics to provide a high-level overview of the broad conversation about the relationships between men and women in South Africa. Through the exploration of this data, our team identified one prominent focus area to analyse further in this report. This focus area, **lobola**¹, is unpacked in depth.

Lobola and other cultural practices are an important part of the relationships held between men and women in South Africa. Lobola is a popular intergenerational practice that is intended to build relationships between families. This practice has changed over time and become commodified, which may lead men to regard women as a transactional commodity, and therefore may lead to violence and abuse. To support the heCareZA programme, opportunities to engage are also identified and a summary of findings is presented.

The primary source of data for this report was sourced from the social media platform, Twitter. Recent estimates drawn from Twitter's advertisement reports in early 2022 indicate that 2.85 million South Africans are active on the social media platform.²

¹ See "Step 3: Data Preparation" on page 6 for more information on how and why these focus areas were selected.

² <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-south-africa>

Trigger Warning: This report contains sensitive content, such as discussions of sexual violence and abuse, which may be triggering to readers.

heCareZA Programme Overview

The programme is aimed at men and focuses on disrupting the narrative that perpetuates harmful gender attitudes, social norms and standards. We know that “hurt people, hurt people” (attributed to Charles Eads, 1959³). Accordingly, rather than judging men or alienating them through hostile engagement, we focus on deepening our understanding of their experiences and of gender discrimination through online social media in South Africa. Moreover, we harness these platforms as dynamic spaces to foster relationships with men through online dialogue and to engage them as allies in order to reduce gender discrimination and violence. The first step in this transformative process is to conduct in-depth online research to investigate conversation about the interactions between men and women taking place on social media in South Africa. This knowledge will inform our future work that engages men.

Findings Summary

- Conversation found online relating to lobola found that users shared views around the “bride price” and negative sentiments around women having tattoos, smoking or not being virgins. The veracity of these statements cannot be confirmed, and these sentiments do not reflect the traditional culture of lobola as a practice.
- Dr. Nandipha Magudumana⁴, co-accused in the jail break and escape of a violent criminal, was also used as an opportunity to discuss gender assumptions and stereotypes. In this case, discussion was specifically related to questions about what may drive a woman to commit or be involved in violent crime.
- In certain cases where generalised claims about women were made, behaviour reminiscent of accounts from the “manosphere”, a collection of websites, blogs, and online forums promoting masculine misogyny, and opposition to feminism, were present. Understanding the popularity of these accounts may assist in deepening our understanding of how toxic masculinity is constructed online.
- Commercial competitions and advertising centred around women’s day garnered strong traction and engagement during the reporting period.

³ <https://slate.com/culture/2019/09/hurt-people-hurt-people-quote-origin-hustlers-phrase.html>

⁴ [IOL: Who is Dr. Nandipha Magudumana](#)

- A popular post highlighted a perceived social and financial pressure that men felt was necessary to please women. Concerns around mental health difficulties stemming from this pressure sparked a conversation around masculinity and the fear that being perceived as weak may stop many men from seeking help related to their mental health.
- A theme emerged in the data that spoke to the need to seek help and to release experiences of emotional trauma from previous relationships. People engaged in this conversation indicated that past trauma may feed into negative perceptions and subsequently mistreatment between men and women.
- On a post viewed over two million times, a male account expressed that they too fear other men but that this perception is not often spoken about. Women who engaged with this tweet noted that when men spoke about other men in a fearful way, they did not consider the constant fear women may feel in our society.
- A stereotype emerged that women are attracted to “bad boys” and that nice men are disregarded as boring.

Methodology: Step-by-Step Research Process



Using a query designed to capture the broad conversation about interactions between men and women, this report covers February 2023. Stieglitz and colleagues (2018) identified four distinct phases in social media data analysis: (1) discovery, (2) collection, (3) preparation, and (4) analysis. Below, we describe how these phases guided our research project.

Step 1: Data Discovery

- The first step in data discovery was to draw up a list of keywords designed to isolate the broad conversation about interactions between men and women in South Africa on social media. The research and dialogue facilitation teams contributed to this list collaboratively through a shared spreadsheet. The research team focuses on quantitative analysis while the dialogue team focuses on qualitative analysis of the conversation(s).
- To create this list, the research team drew on existing knowledge combined with desktop research, a literature review and a quantitative, analytic review of social media.
- Concurrently, dialogue facilitators recorded relevant insights and keywords gained through their exploratory online dialogue facilitation.
- Our preliminary keyword list comprised 52 words in isiZulu, isiXhosa, Sesotho, Afrikaans, English, and slang.
- We entered this list of words into a social media analytics tool to create a query into conversation about interactions between men and women on public social media in South Africa.
- We used this preliminary query to publish our chapter “Mapping Gender Norms in Public Social Media: A South African Study” ([Treffry-Goatley et al., 2022](#))

Step 2: Data Collection

- We “collected” the resulting data using our social media analytics platform.

Step 3: Data Preparation⁵

- We ‘prepared’ the data for analysis by refining the query. Query refinement entails sifting through the data set while looking for posts that are not relevant to interactions between men and women in South Africa. At this stage we also look at relevant posts that have not been included.
- If and when our team finds these errors, they are resolved by introducing additional keywords and/or exclusionary terms to the query. This allows us to analyse as much relevant conversation as possible (see [Appendix B](#)).
- With the goal of delivering the most useful insights possible in this report, we created tags to isolate conversation related to **lobola**. This focus area was selected based on two factors:
 1. *Prominence* - this is assessed quantitatively, using a dashboard that allows us to visualise data points, and qualitatively, using researchers’ expertise, desktop research and dashboard work.

⁵ New keywords and exclusions are identified both at the query and tag level on an ongoing basis.

2. *Relevance* - a qualitative assessment of whether a focus area is important enough to the strategic goals of the heCareZA project to be included. Our team makes this determination based on subject matter expertise in South African social media dynamics and whether or not further research into the focus area is likely to provide valuable information for the ongoing heCareZA Programme.

Step 4: Data analysis

- We built a dashboard in our social media analytics platform to support our data analysis. This tool produces metrics according to volume, trending topics, news stories, and unique authors in relation to the keyword list.
- Thematic analysis involves studying the emerging patterns in the data and exploring how units of meaning connect to form themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis can highlight individuals' perspectives, ideas and experiences, and can be used to generate fresh insight into the social dynamics behind human behaviour. Accordingly, we analysed the collected data thematically to interpret the data and to gain insight into dominant themes and trends.
- The goal of this analysis is to better understand what was said during the reporting period. Thematic analysis was conducted both at the query level and the tag (focus area) level.

Research Overview

Based on our social media analytics software, this section provides a high-level overview of the broad conversation between men and women taking place on public social media in South Africa, with special consideration given to key thematic focus areas.

Volume and Engagement

The table below (Figure 1) provides an overview of the total mentions received through the heCareZA query from 1 through 31 March 2023. A total of 469 117 mentions were recorded, created by over 101 700 unique authors, on average indicating three mentions per author. Comparing this to the previous month, total mentions increased by 36% and unique authors increased by 16%. This suggests that more individuals have chosen to engage in conversation related to gender dynamics recently. While this increase is notable, it can not yet be determined whether it is indicative of an expansion in general public interest or whether it may be related to specific stories that were present in the media during this period.

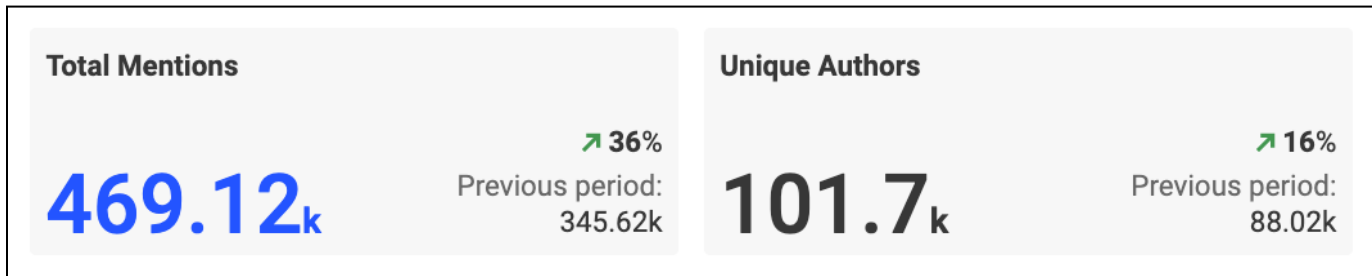


Figure 1: Total Mentions returned during reporting period

Mention Volume Peak Analysis

Figure 2 shows the two noticeable high peaks on 8 March 2023 with over 28 700 mentions returned on the day. Most of the tweets shared on the day related to International Women's Day. International Women's Day is a day when the achievements of women are recognised across the world. This day emerged from labour movement activities in North America and Europe during the twentieth century, according to the United Nations⁶. Most tweets shared were centred around celebrating women and recognising their positive impact on society and the world at large. While International Women's Day tweets dominated social media on this day, other social media conversations were noted, including conversations around lobola and the evolution of the cultural practice (see Figure 3).

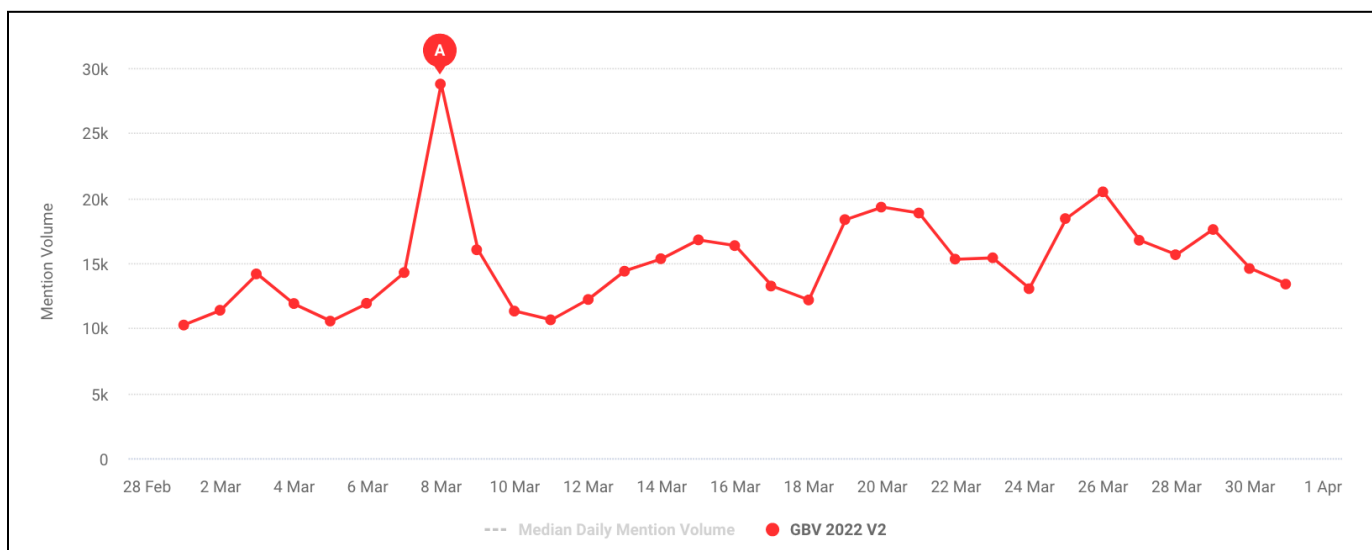


Figure 2: Mention Volume over Time

⁶ <https://www.un.org/en/observances/womens-day/background>

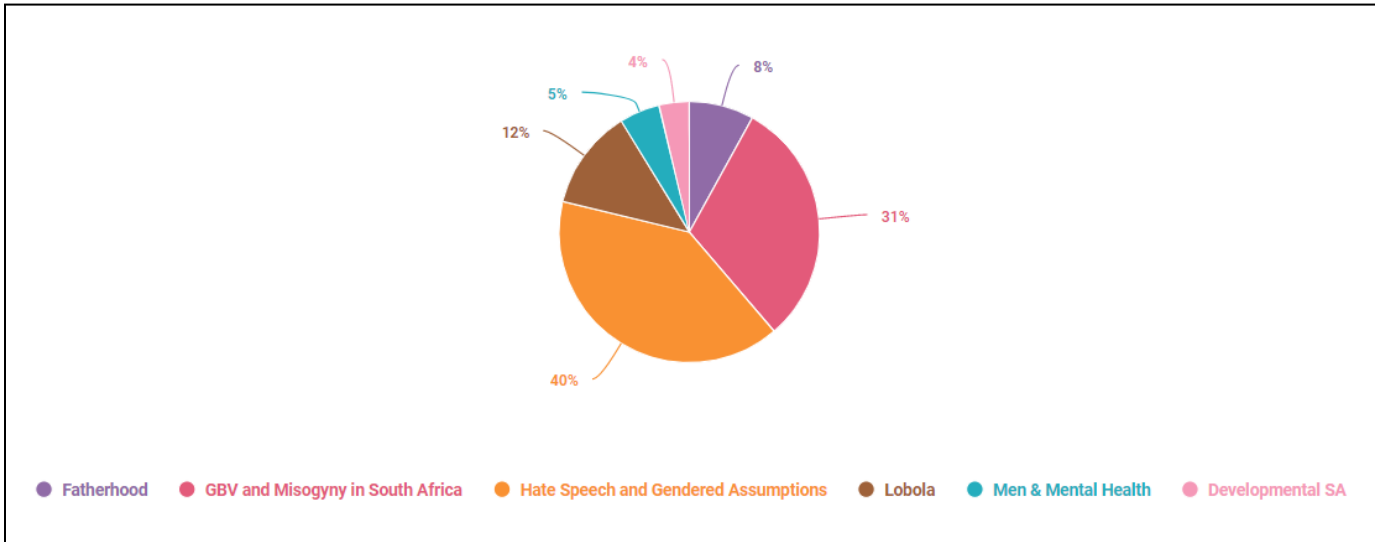


Figure 3: Mention volume broken down by focus area, excluding uncategorised mentions

In the peak on 8 March 2023, a tweet shared by a social media user expressed their opinion that the tradition of lobola, as a relationship building exercise amongst two families, has evolved into a money making scheme (Figure 4). Lobola involves the gifting of cattle by the groom's family to the bride's family, as a symbolic act that demonstrates appreciation to the family of the bride, builds a relationship between the respective families and demonstrates that the groom will be able to provide for the bride⁷. However, as ways of living have changed and urbanisation has continued to increase in South Africa⁸. Certain instances of the tradition have seen equivalent monetary gifts replace the provision of cattle. The use of money in lobola negotiations seems to be a contentious issue within certain circles on Twitter, as expressed by the commentary (see Figure 5), made in response to Figure 4. These responses speak to a specific negative perception of lobola related to urbanisation⁹. As traditions shift and change over time, they provide space for reflection and conversation, providing fertile ground for understanding and engagement when done in good faith (Malesa & Sekudu, 2021).

⁷ <https://umsamo.org.za/ilobolo-its-meaning-and-process/>

⁸ <https://pmg.org.za/page/Urbanisation>

⁹ <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/lobola-moving-from-cattle-to-cash-306552>

Lobola is now a money making scheme, where they sell women. It's no longer only about initiation of a relationship between two families. It's not being stopped because it involves money, but it doesn't change the fact that a woman is being associated with price, which is basically being sold.

7:08 AM · Mar 8, 2023 from Cape Town, South Africa · **121.3K** Views

110 Retweets **8** Quotes **542** Likes **13** Bookmarks

Figure 4: Lobola as money making scheme

I've beeeeen saying! Honestly I feel like this must be regulated because some families are just seeing dollar signs nje. Mina nobody will pull that stunt should I 1 day get married. Banganya 🙌 🙌 🙌

Unfortunately GBV is accelerated by such things. Men take loans to pay lobola, day end they feel so entitled to the woman, they assume they owning the woman, they paid serious cash for her, then the rest will be history

Figure 5: Lobola comments including regulating the practise of lobola and how lobola accelerates acts of GBV

Top Phrases, Hashtags and Topics

The top phrases, topics and hashtags reflect the most commonly returned keywords and phrases from posts that were collected by our keyword based query during the reporting period. Top phrases, hashtags and keywords returned by the heCareZA query included 'black women', '#internationalwomensday' and 'day'. Tweets relating to international Women's Day were found across individual word clouds which collected relevant phrases, hashtags and keywords (see Figure 6). Most of the tweets shared were from brands running [competitions](#) or asking followers to [share](#) and celebrate the achievements of the women they know. #internationalwomensday and #iwd2023 were the primary hashtags used on this day from our dataset.

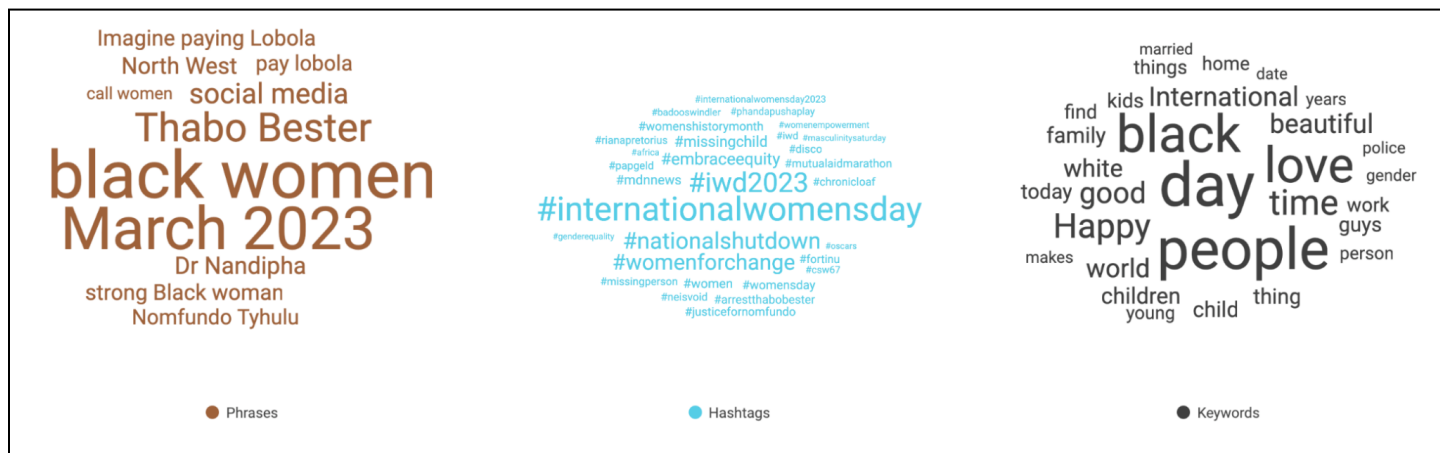


Figure 6: Top phrases, hashtags and keywords

Tweets shared with the commonly used phrase ‘black women’ included the perception that women were receiving degrees at a higher rate than men. This was based on an observation a Twitter user made after a graduation ceremony at the University of South Africa (Figure 7). This is not a misinformed view according to research conducted by VitalStats Public Higher Education¹⁰, cited in an Outlier article, which indicated that 60% of university graduates from 2014 to 2019 were women.

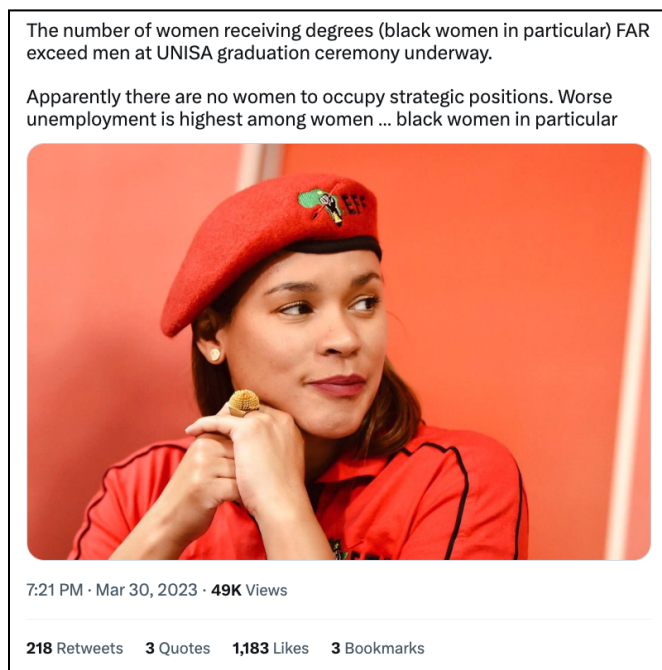


Figure 7: Number of female graduates exceeded male graduates

In Figure 6, the names of Thabo Bester and Dr Nandipha can be seen within the “phrases” keyword cluster. Thabo Bester, a convicted rapist and murderer, was photographed at a shop in March, driving public interest towards his case and implying that he could have escaped from prison. This was confirmed by independent news outlet GroundUp¹¹, whose reporting indicated that Thabo Bester had facilitated an escape from Mangaung Correctional Centre by faking his death in prison on 3 May 2022 through burning the body of Katlego Bereng¹², within his prison cell. Dr. Nandipha Magudumana has been a central figure in this story, having recently been arrested alongside Thabo Bester while attempting to flee through Tanzania¹³.

This news received a lot of social media attention and sparked various social media conversations including, the lack of protection received by Bester’s victims (Figure 8 & 9), and the possible victimisation of Dr Nandipha. An interesting comment was found in these threads saying that there is a mentality that women can’t be criminals. The relationship between gender and crime has sparked research and popular cultural interest¹⁴¹⁵. The categorisation of female criminals appears to rely mainly on gender norms. Hence, rendering the idea, for example, that women can’t or don’t commit murders¹⁶.

¹¹ <https://www.groundup.org.za/article/man-resembling-facebook-rapist-thabo-bester-spotted-in-sandton/>

¹²

<https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2023-05-07-katlego-bereng-whose-body-was-used-as-thabo-bester-decoy-is-laid-to-rest-in-bloemfontein/>

¹³ <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2023-04-08-thabo-bester-and-nandipha-magudumana-arrested-in-tanzania/>

¹⁴ <https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/female-killers-obsession-why-women-kill>

¹⁵ <https://www.tuicakademi.org/gender-and-crime-why-do-women-commit-less-crime/>

¹⁶ <https://mg.co.za/news/2022-05-29-women-killers-categories-that-rely-on-gender-norms-not-useful/>



Figure 8: Checking up on Thabo Bester's victims

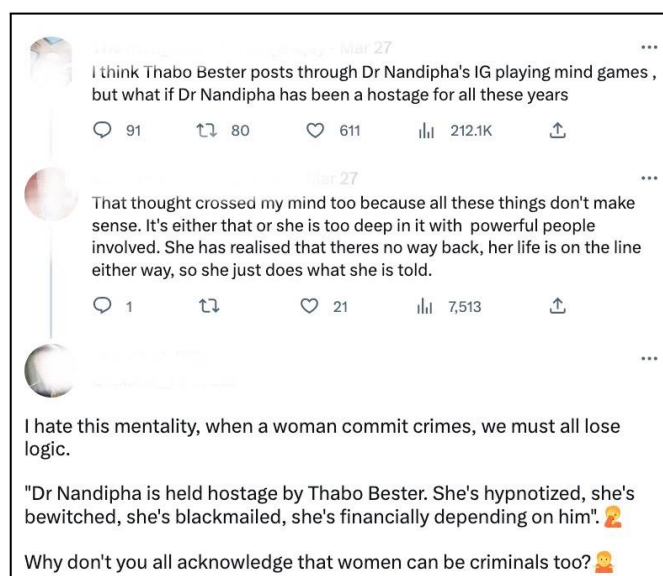


Figure 9: The victimisation of Dr Nandipha

Some reasons behind why people questioned Dr. Nandipha's involvement with Thabo Bester's prison escape was her physical appearance and her success as a medical professional (Figure 10). Social media users wondered why a beautiful and successful woman would risk her life for a criminal. This thread led some social media users to the conclusion that Nandipha is also a victim of Thabo Bester in order to make sense of their perceptions.

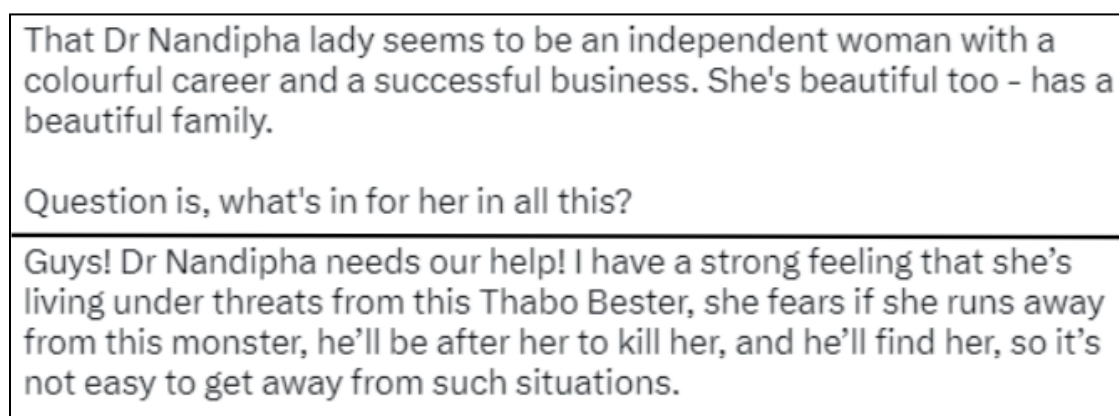


Figure 10: Questioning Dr Nandipha's intentions

As the story of Thabo Bester's escape began to circulate and gain a degree of virality online¹⁷ individuals on social media began to debate and discuss the involvement of Dr. Nandipha Magudumana. A popular post (see

¹⁷ See: [GroundUp News reporting on the escape](#) ; [See Independent Online's up-to-date timeline of events](#)

Figure 11), centred on the stereotype that women are attracted to “bad boys”. Replies to the post by a variety of men, saw them share their thoughts on the stereotype (see Figure 12). Particular emphasis is drawn to the second post, which contains a list of qualities which supposedly attract women. Posts such as these are reminiscent of the “manosphere”, a particular type of social media behaviour predicated on misogyny (Ging, 2018).

Dr Nandipha is proof that given the chance, a woman will always choose a dangerous guy as he offers excitement over a good guy as he is boring. This woman right here risked everything all for a convicted criminal, they're addicted to danger, makes them w€t

Figure 11: A popular post, viewed over 430 000 times uses the example of Dr. Nandipha to stereotype women as attracted to danger

All the good girls we grew up with, all those that were doing well at school, at tertiary, those that every boy wanted at school, those that never qomard, today ba ngamaphara or drunkards. Coz they got hoodwinked by a bad boy.

This is true.

A nice guy is boring to women. So stop being a nice guy...

Because women want a man who:

- is dangerous
- can take risks
- is confident
- is capable of getting other girls
- does not care about losing her
- knows how to tease and disqualify her.

I will remain a good guy even if it means I get no pussy. I'm not going to pretend to be a dangerous bad boy for a woman.

Figure 12: A compilation of responses to the tweet seen in Figure 11

Posts which focused on Dr. Nandipha's sex compared her to other women linked to high-profile investigations and court cases (see Figure 13), notably, Rosemary Ndlovu¹⁸ and Terry Pheto. The assertion that South

¹⁸ Context on the women mentioned: [Rosemary Ndlovu](#) ; [Terry Pheto](#)

African women are to be feared or that they are equally evil is an interesting point made in both tweets, as women in South Africa are far less likely to be incarcerated (Steyn & Booyens, 2018). This may speak to a potential feeling by the individuals who posted these tweets that men are being targeted or portrayed in a specific way that women are not subjected to.

Dr Nandipha is giving me Rose Ndlovu's vibe right now. Women are equally evil beings 👍

Dr Nandipha and Terry Pheto have so much in common:
Both are heartless, conniving, brutal, greedy, selfish and pretentious.

I hope when they are convicted they share the same cell so they can bond for eternity.

I fear SA women more than anything in the world

Figure 13: Responses which compared Dr. Nandipha to other high-profile women implicated in crime

A further dimension of responses to the case (see Figure 14), saw men indicate their views on Dr. Nandipha's participation. The replies below generalise broadly to women in South Africa and seek to emphasise the stereotype that women seek validation.

Yet another proof that women don't really know what they want in life. Look at this lady Dr Nandipha. A well qualified someone who had a great chance of making her good money but chose a gangster who ruined her life. How sad!!!

The number of women falling for scams such as those run by "Thabo Bester" is worrisome. It seems these women are looking for validation outside, and would fall for any scam if it promises them some level of validation. #ThaboBester #DrNandipha

Figure 14: Replies from men which generalised perceptions of Dr. Nandipha to all women

Replies related to Dr. Nandipha played heavily into stereotypes and tropes associated with women. Claims tended to be made in a broad and generalisable sense.

Topic Wheel

The topic wheel below (Figure 15) is a visual representation of the frequency at which keywords from the heCareZA query appear in the dataset. The inner ring shows the most commonly used keywords and phrases during March. The outer ring shows the keywords or phrases used in combination with each segment of the inner ring. The main topics on the topic wheel were about men and women, as these are broad keywords that are included in the query. Most of the tweets found in the topic wheel were about the relationship dynamics between men and women.

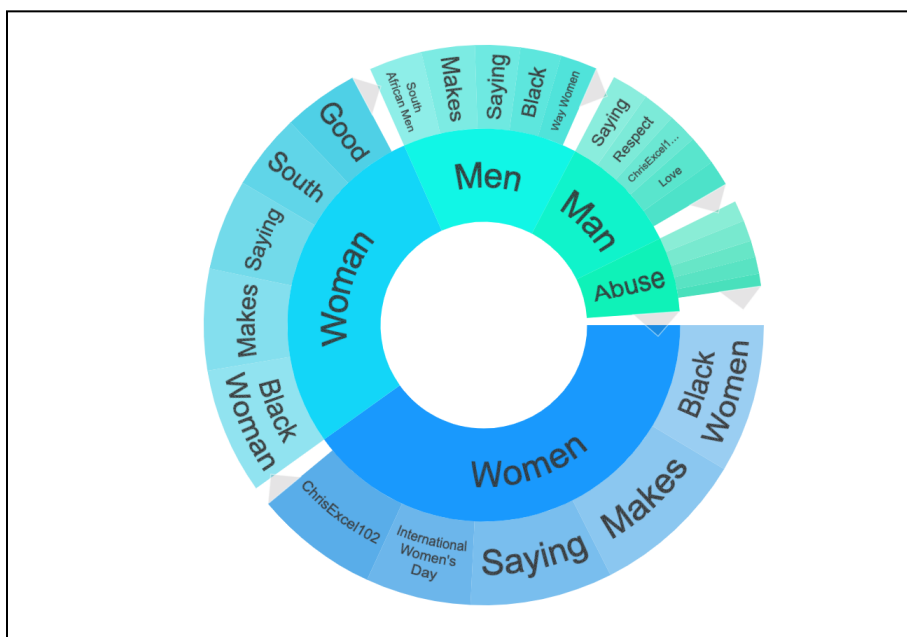


Figure 15: Topic wheel that represents the frequency of keywords from the dataset

In the compilation of tweets below (Figure 16), individuals shared that the perception of a societal pressure to please women could cause mental issues for men. Comments under the original tweet included people praising the poster for sharing such an opinion and starting a conversation that highlights some of the social and financial difficulties faced by men. Replies to the original post indicated the opinion that people shouldn't allow others to bring them down to the point of a mental breakdown, as well as that the fear of being perceived as weak may prevent some men from speaking up and asking for help.

Many men experience depression as a result of the need to please women.

Some even commit suicide .

A man that allows that to himself is to blame not any woman. How do you even allow another person to drag you down to a point where you even get depressed simply because you cannot meet their demands. Some men must learn to say no, I can't, not now and accept her taking a hike.

Actually men are going through a lot out there. It's a combination of so many factors that drives him to the edge cause he can't say "i can't cope anymore ", the society and his family will be quick to call him weak.

Figure 16: Male users speak about difficulties born from a perceived need to please women

Under the theme 'women', two tweets from different social media users shared differing factors that can be detrimental to relationships between men and women. The first tweet (Figure 17) asked men to avoid dating women with emotional trauma from previous relationships, while the second tweet (Figure 18) narrated how engaging with unpleasant men can negatively impact role expectations in future relationships. Although both of these tweets were targeted at different gender demographics, they both highlighted how if not treated or addressed emotional trauma and mistreatment of others can cause negative effects in relationships and create negative perceptions amongst men and women.

Avoid dating a woman who has emotional trauma from past relationships. That woman will drain your energy .

Runaway away from that woman. you will never be in a happy relationship with her!

8:53 PM · Mar 30, 2023 · **206.6K** Views

370 Retweets **30** Quotes **2,390** Likes **43** Bookmarks

Figure 17: Effects of dating women with past relationship trauma

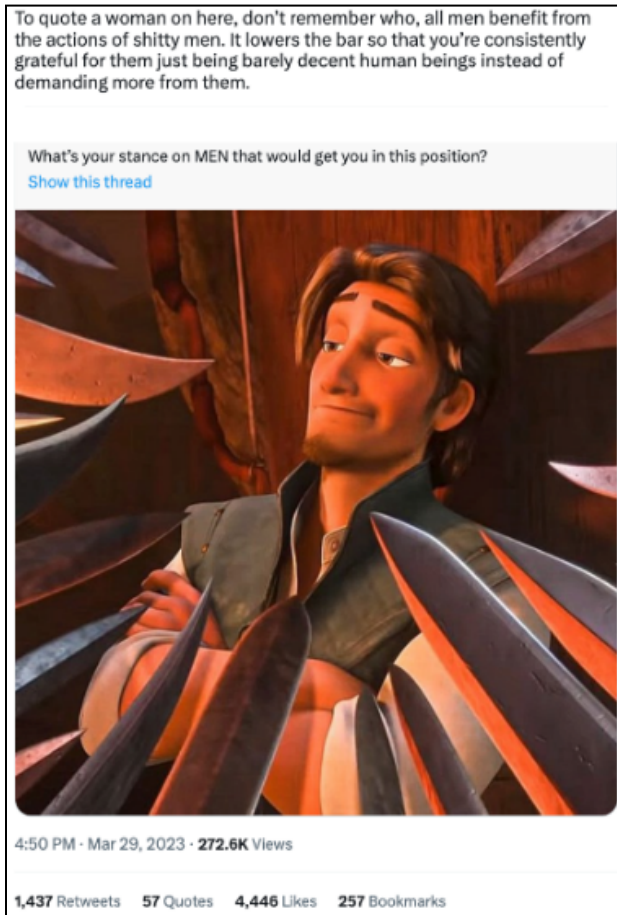


Figure 18: Unpleasant men lower dating standards for women

A Twitter thread under the theme 'man' was found of men sharing their fearful ride-hailing experiences with each other (Figure 19). Male social media users shared experiences where their taxi drivers had called to confirm their identities and some shared experiences of feeling scared that their taxi drivers might take advantage of them and rob them. This thread highlighted the fear men feel about other men, a common social reaction which is not often spoken about online (Kret et al, 2011).



Figure 19: Men are scared of men too

This social media conversation was picked up by women, who observed that when men talk amongst themselves about feeling scared of other men, none of the men made a disclaimer that 'not all men' are dangerous and none of the men mentioned the fear women constantly face when engaging with men (Figure 20 & 21).

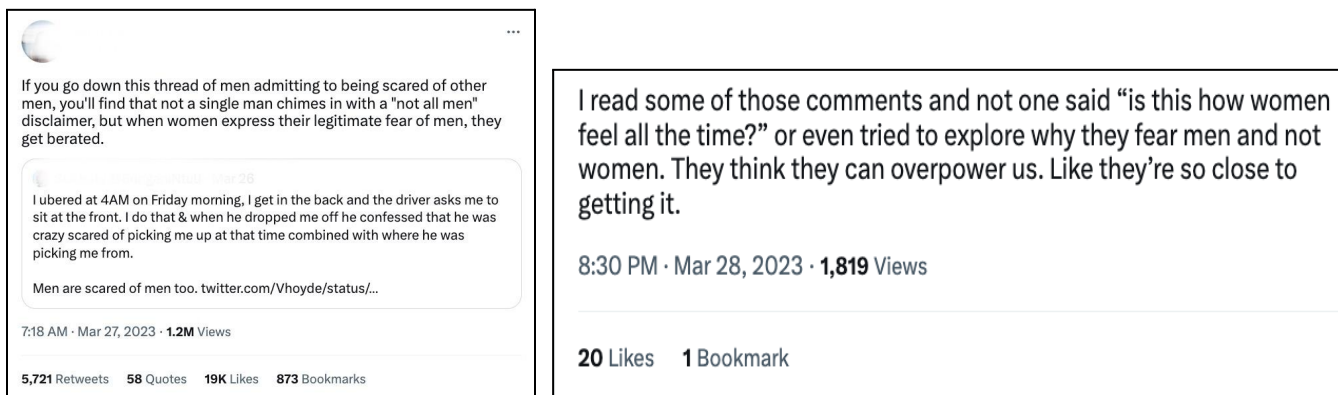


Figure 20 and 21: Men's fear of each other doesn't acknowledge the fear women have of men

Lobola

Lobola (or Lobolo) is a longstanding cultural tradition across Southern Africa, which is practised widely in South Africa. It is a marriage tradition, not dissimilar to the concept of a dowry, but unique in the fact that the transfer of cattle or in some cases financial payment stems from the groom toward the bride's family. Lobola is negotiated for the purpose of expressing gratitude toward the bride's family as well as demonstrating that the

groom is capable of taking care of the bride (Heeren et al., 2011; Sennott et al., 2020). The specifics of lobola differs across the diverse cultures present in the country.¹⁹

Our lobola focus area utilises only the keywords “lobola” and “lobolo” to segment the overall conversation being brought in by our query.

Total mentions	Unique authors	Total retweets	Total reach
16.29 _k	11.64 _k	12.68 _k	50.65 _m
↗ 223% Previous period: 5040	↗ 179% Previous period: 4172	↗ 419% Previous period: 2443	↗ 214% Previous period: 16.11m

Figure 22: Descriptive volume of the lobola conversation within our data set during the month of March

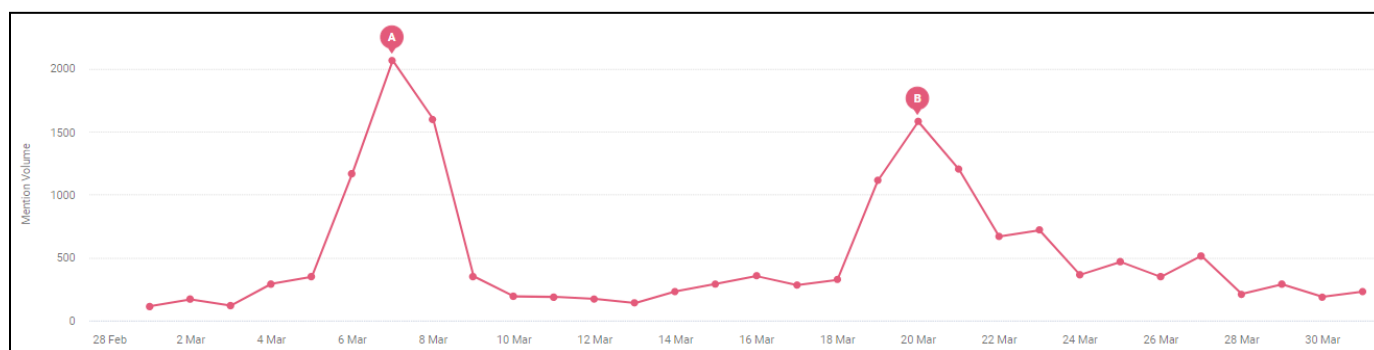


Figure 23: Mention volume over time for the lobola conversation in our dataset during the month of March

During the month of March, our segmented lobola conversation returned 16 290 mentions, 11 640 unique authors contributed to the mention count, a ratio of 1.4 mentions per author. The conversation was mainly driven by retweets rather than original content, resulting in a conversation comprising 78% retweets and 22% original content (see Figure 22). The conversation held two pronounced peaks of activity from 6 to 8 March (see Figure 23), which contained 2066 mentions (five times larger than normal for the date range) and 19 to 21 March, which contained 1597 mentions (nearly four times larger than normal for the date range). An estimated 50.65 million accounts were reached by lobola specific content within the reporting period.

¹⁹ <https://www.legalwise.co.za/help-yourself/legal-articles/lobolo-understanding-basic-principles>

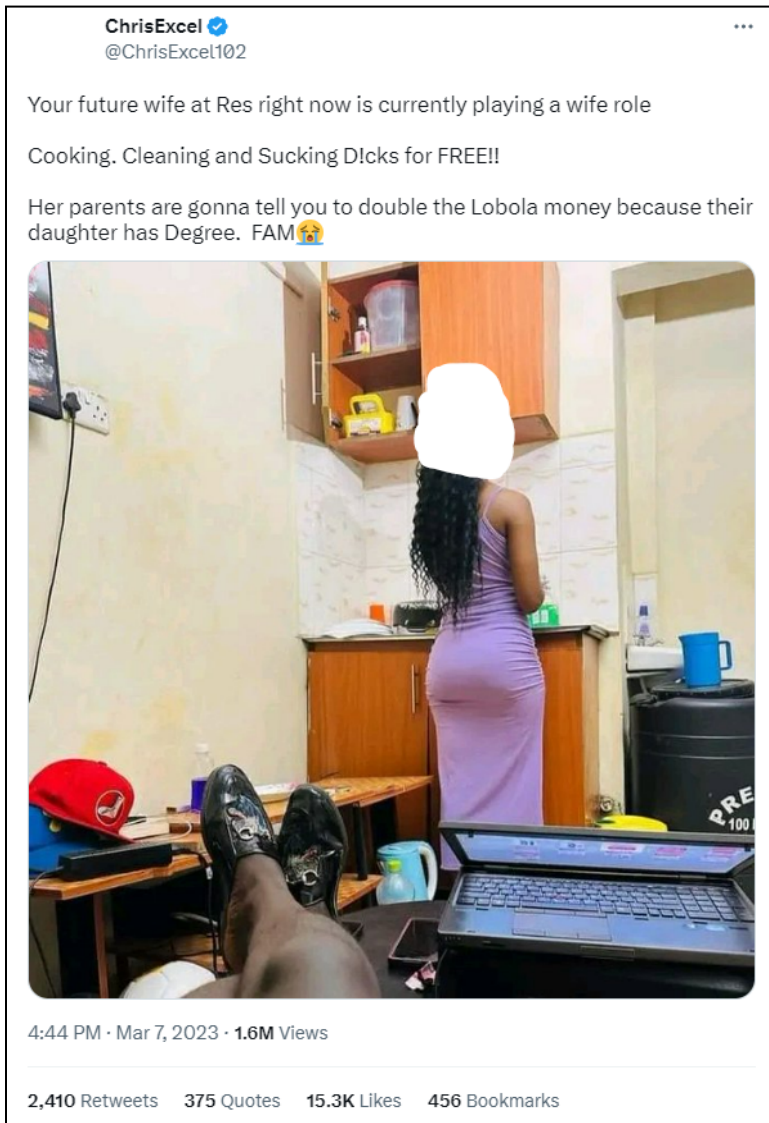


Figure 24: @ChrisExcel102 comments on “res wives” and lobola

The most highly engaged with tweet in our dataset was a post from @ChrisExcel102 (see Figure 24), a very popular account which posts controversial opinions focused on trending content in order to gain followers and promote engagement. This post claimed that in their opinion women at University are currently playing the role of “res wives”. A res wife is a term used to describe a female student who lives on-campus and in university accommodation. The term denotes a relationship between two students, where the female student cooks, cleans and provides for their partner and is rooted in gender discrimination on the basis of gender roles.

The post further includes a sexual aspect, a common theme which emerged in posts about lobola which centred on evaluating women based on their physical appearances and behaviour (see Figure 25).



Figure 25: Two posts on lobola which include a sexual aspect.

Another influential and controversial account, @AdvoBarryRoux, reported a story (Figure 26), which included reference to tattooing as a potential deal breaker in lobola negotiations. The post made further reference to the controversial practice of virginity testing²⁰, which raises an opportunity to engage individuals around their perceptions as to the relationship between cultural practice, gender inequality²¹ and bodily autonomy²².

²⁰ <https://www.soulcity.org.za/news-events/news/what-is-the-truth-about-virginity-testing>

²¹

<https://deeply.thenewhumanitarian.org/womenandgirls/articles/2016/10/03/culture-or-crime-the-clash-over-virginity-testing-in-south-africa>

²² <https://mg.co.za/article/2019-12-12-00-ban-harmful-virginity-testing/>



Figure 26: @AdvoBarryRoux posts about an unsuccessful lobola negotiation. The purported reasoning for the breakdown in negotiation is due to the bride having a tattoo.



Figure 27: A thread by a popular legal practitioner

A popular [thread](#), which garnered almost 500 000 views, communicated a legal perspective on lobola and customary marriage (Figure 27). Customary law, derived from the traditions and customs of the country's indigenous communities is a crucial element of the South African legal system²³. The thread relays the recognition of customary marriage in the context of a full actioning of traditional practice. This included the act of introducing a partner, the completion of lobola negotiations and subsequent payment as well as the

completion of ritual acts. After the passing of the husband, contestation as to the validity of the marriage was brought forth but summarily dismissed and the plaintiff ordered to bear the costs of the action. Lobola and other such customs do not exist only in a social sense in South Africa, the living nature of customary law produces a tension between the natural development of the law and the imposition of common law.

Replies to the thread varied but were mainly made up of thanks to the author for introducing and examining the judgement. Replies which expressed their view on the issue (Figure 28) centred on questions of family and the legal context of cultural practices..

As a woman, how do you even begin to get married to someone who doesn't get along within his family? If I had a daughter I'd advice her to avoid such situations. Not that she'd listen, but I'd have tried.
I think on day 1 of lobola negotiations, families should agree on all requirements that should be met before a couple is considered married. With so many events, and some of them half done, there are too many permutations
I hate that our customs and traditions are interpreted by ongamla and Christians who never cared about our culture but in this instance the mother, uncle, and son are mad. It's the deceased's fault for not doing things the right way. Give the wife everything due to her!
I still don't get it why people don't register their customary marriages 🧑 🧑 You allow room for opportunistic family members who some failed the test themselves and won't let such an opportunity pass them to make another person life miserable 🧑🧑

Figure 28: Various replies to the details of the case

The cost or price of lobola was another point that sparked debate. Posts which sought to set a range or cut-off for lobola varied (Figure 29). Posts which sought to speak on the nature of the cost mentioned that greed, and an emphasis on the monetary value of a bride rather than the relationship between the couple saw a denigration of the tradition.

Still thinking about that guy who said they made him pay R100K in January 2020 for lobola but now his divorce, some of yall families get hungry on other people's children
The family can keep their daughter if they charge from R25k. I am paying R20k maximum...
I'm not going to pay anything over 30k. Is lobola is not they are selling her.
in the world we living in today, am never paying that much for lobola... marriages benefits women more than it does for men... so 20k or less will do
If a family would charge me above 60K, I would call off everything... they can keep their daughter
Okay I've noticed gents are talking about lobola and all that well according to my understanding lobola is all about bringing families together and also helps in preparing wedding preps it doesn't matter if it's 15K or 25K nalapho its tricky because if the families agreed on.. A specific amount ngexesha elithile then the guy has to keep his promise and pay the remaining amount..

Figure 29: Posts related to the price of lobola

Opportunities for Engagement

- There is a rich opportunity to engage with men on a broad set of traditions which represent the great diversity of South Africa. Concepts and traditions such as arranged marriage, white weddings, traditional weddings and practices as well as questions of bodily autonomy in marriage may spark strong dialogue and reflection. Furthermore, linguistic specificity may broaden our understanding of these practices across ethnic groups, for example the term “magagi” or “mahadi” is used in the sotho-tswana language family. Other forms of relationships which speak to cultural implications such as “vat en sit”, where an unmarried couple live together may bring in relevant content in future
- The dual systems of customary and common law, as well as the changing attitudes to long-held practices may provide a platform for discussion. The understanding of how culture may intersect with the broader society it is present in, is a much debated issue in a country as rich in diversity as South Africa. Engagement in this context relates to deeply held perceptions and may result in deep discussion around the original intentions of traditional practices and how they may have changed or been misrepresented over time.

- Engaging men on their understanding and beliefs related to women, gender identity, femininity and womanhood may provide a strong conversational space for reflection on individual experiences and how they may direct the way we think about groups of people generally.
- Social media anonymity and its connection to misogynistic content merits further research. Engaging men on why they follow these types of accounts, whether they agree with the majority of the content these accounts post and how they come to find and follow these accounts may prove interesting in deepening our understanding of how masculinity may be developed online in the South African context.

Dialogue Facilitation

The Dialogue Facilitation team is responsible for facilitating direct and indirect dialogue online that; 1) encourages critical engagement with mis- and disinformation, 2) calms negative, toxic or frenetic narratives, and 3) prevents and heals social ills perpetuated through hate speech or the promotion of violence. This is achieved through skillfully designed engagements that consist of bringing people into a process of self-reflection and healing at scale.

The impact of these efforts is increased by engaging with change agents through a variety of different platforms to train and mobilise citizens to facilitate online dialogue. This includes the use of Turn.io to train change agents in dialogue facilitation and the team takes shifts to monitor the platform for opportunities to engage. Turn.io is an interactive additional platform for dialogue facilitation training and resources. To look at the menu individuals can WhatsApp “hi” to +27 (60) 011-1011 or click on this [link](#) to go there directly. The team is responsible for creating dialogue facilitation Canva designs to facilitate conversations online. The dialogue facilitators provide insights into online conversations and narratives internally to the other units within the CABC.

We harness social media platforms as dynamic spaces to foster relationships with men through online dialogue and to engage them as allies in order to dismantle gender discrimination and violence. Fathers are an important focus group of the project as men will be changing harmful gendered norms of behaviour for the benefit of themselves, and for the improved safety and wellbeing of their children and partners. Additionally and critically, for sustainability and long term impacts, modelling these new attitudes and practices to sons and daughters so that they are likely to adopt the practices as they grow up, thus fundamentally disrupting the intergenerational transfer of misogynistic practices.

Dialogue Facilitation Metrics

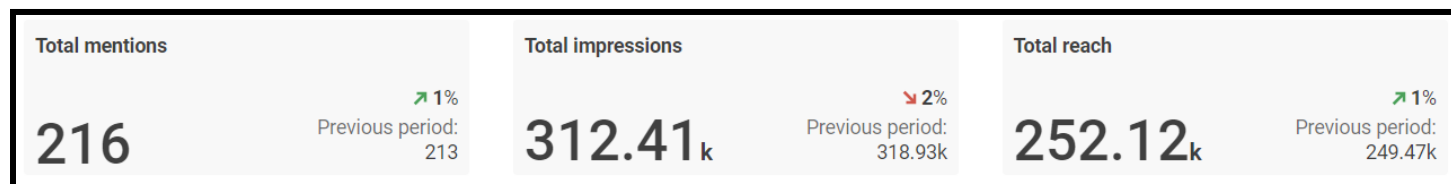


Figure 30: Dialogue Facilitation Metrics

Figure 30 above represents the CABC Dialogue Facilitation team's total activity, inclusive of retweeted content from 1 March to 31 March 2023. Over this period, the dialogue facilitators posted and commented 216 times with an overall spread metric of 312,410 impressions (indicating the number of times the mentions had the potential to be seen on someone's timeline), as well as a reach of 252,120 accounts. Reach is heavily influenced by post engagement and traffic for the author or site in question. Our social media analytics platform's proprietary algorithm uses each of the available metrics and applies various content source specific assumptions, based on previous observed behaviour, to infer how they may translate into the number of individuals that are likely to have seen a given post.

Using Report Insights in Dialogue Facilitation

The second heCareZA Research Report provided valuable insights that the dialogue facilitation team, once again, utilised in their dialoguing and discussions, as well as social media design creation. These reports serve as a strong basis where facilitators gain a deeper understanding of the broader online conversation which guides our own work. This section aims to show how we leveraged the insights from the second report to actively seek out additional online conversations and respond effectively. One of the insights from the report touched on the changing role of fathers in contemporary societies and conceptions of masculinity. Figure 31 addresses the importance of fathers in their children, and especially a woman's life. Another significant insight from the report was with regards to the abuse allegations against AKA and Tibz, after their passing. Facilitators engaged with several conversations around abuse over the month of March, such as access to justice, as well as the inaccurate notion that women are free to leave an abusive relationship at any time (see Figures 32, 33 and 34).



Figure 31: Fatherhood



Figure 32: Women Abuse



Figure 33: Women Abuse



Figure 34: Ignoring Male Abuse

Dialogue Facilitation Designs

We have created 24 dialogue facilitation social media designs in multiple languages and these have been used by the dialogue facilitators and digital activists while engaging online. These dialogue facilitation social media designs are developed from online dialogue facilitation and research insights. They are designed to support the work of dialogue facilitators, digital activists and partner organisations. These dialogue facilitation designs are unbranded and are created to blend in naturally with the conversations that social media users are having

online. They use colloquial language, slang and have an unpolished look and feel to encourage interaction. We've found that this promotes engagement and self-reflection rather than coming across as an organisation who has all the answers. Some examples of the unbranded designs can be seen below.

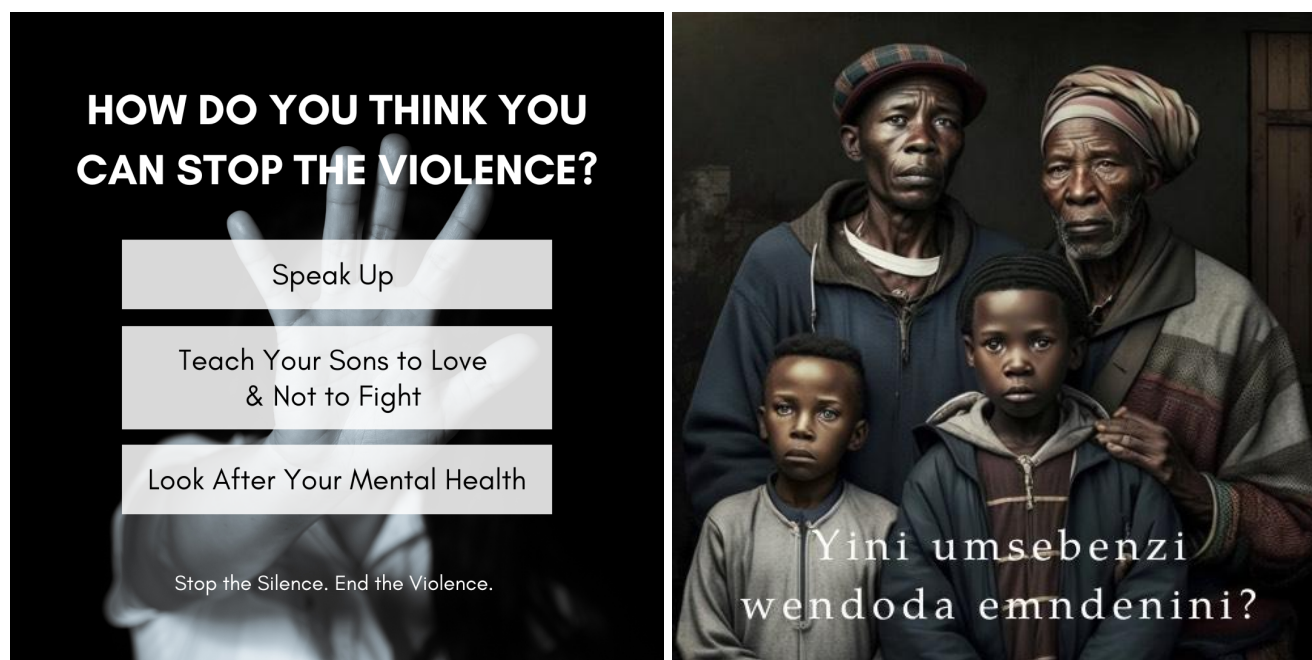


Figure 35: Dialogue Facilitation Canva Designs

Using Report Insights in Dialogue Facilitation Designs

In addition, these insights were used to inspire the dialogue facilitators to create designs and spark interest around these popular focus areas of conversation online. These are some of the designs that the dialogue facilitators made using the insights from the second research report. *Figure 36* was inspired by the insight from the previous report that notes how there is a high opportunity for engagement and self-reflection in threads concerning high-profile cases, such as the death of AKA and Tibz. These conversations are used as an opportunity to gain access to the conversation and open up engagement around the issue of GBV and misogyny. *Figure 37* used the insight around co-parenting and how critical it is for parents to demonstrate mutual respect for each other in order to ensure that their child feels safe and secure in the environment they are growing up in. This is important in terms of psychological safety for the child, as well as ensuring that the cycle of intergenerational trauma is not perpetuated. *Figures 38 and 39* speak to another insight from the report that showed that men feel that they need to “man up” or that there is shame in seeking help. These designs aimed to raise awareness around these issues, and allow men to self-reflect and share their own experiences around mental health.



Figure 36



Figure 37

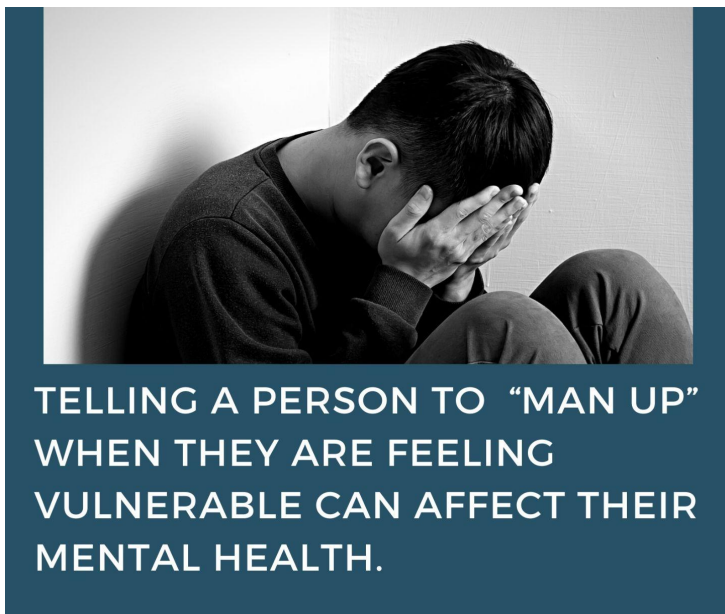


Figure 38

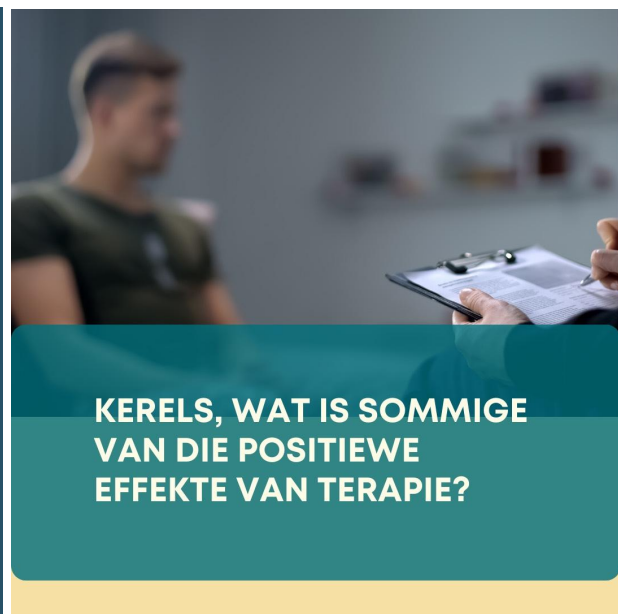



Figure 39

heCareZA Dialogue Deck

#HeCareZA

DIALOGUE DECK




APPROACH

Dialoguing is a way to help and support men who are caught or stuck in spaces that encourage hatred and violence toward women. This deck will help you change men's toxic ideas of women and help men express themselves differently.

HOW TO USE THE DIALOGUE DECK

- Use the responses below to give you ideas for your replies.
- Make the suggested tweets your own.
- Remember to use #IsonoSethuYini at the end of all your tweets
- Set yourself a daily tweet and retweet target
- Get the squad involved. Make teams of 2 or more who have your back and retweet each other




SAMPLE TWEET

A lot of you don't understand there are millions of 18-30 year old men who have grown up with no (or weak) fathers, in a society that constantly tells them their gender is the source of all problems, women don't need them, their masculinity is 'toxic', and everything is hopeless.

4:04 PM · Jan 9, 2023 · 1.3M Views

SUGGESTED RESPONSES

- What do you suggest should be done to help those that are raised in such environments?
- How can we stop such a mentality to all fathers in our society?
- How accurate is your statistic and how did you come up with its conclusion?
- We have to approach this issue by not isolating men nor women from the conversation. How do you suggest we open this conversation with men?
- How do we know that a man is weak?



PUBLISH AND SHARE

You can publish on social networks and share with the team or ask for assistance.

Find more examples on the following page

Figure 40: heCareZA Dialogue Deck

The heCareZA team has put together a Dialogue Deck for digital activists to explore and make their responses their own. The dialogue deck is a collection of sample tweets with responses from the dialogue facilitators that allies can use to see how facilitators approach a statement and frame their own responses to similar tweets as well as use for inspiration and an example for their own dialoguing. By making these decks freely available online, allies are able to engage on Twitter using the dialogue methodology and critically engage and dialogue with those who make harmful statements. Dialoguing is a way to help and support men who are caught or stuck in spaces that encourage hatred and violence toward women. This deck will help you change men's ideas of women and help men express themselves differently. View the heCareZA Dialogue Deck [here](#).

We shared the Dialogue Deck on our Digital Activism WhatsApp group to inspire the members to get involved in online conversations. Are you currently involved in gender-based violence prevention? We would love to hear from you. Send us an email and join the heCareZA Collective. Email us at info@hecareza.co.za



Reach Out for Help

Lifeline: 021 461 1113

GBV Command Centre: 0800 428 428

Rape Crisis Centre: 021 447 9762

Sonke Gender Justice: 021 423 7088

You can also send a please-call-me to a Social Worker by dialling *120*7867#

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Appendix

Appendix A: heCareZA Ethical Considerations

In our work, we abide by specific ethical principles to ensure that we do no harm. We are particularly influenced by the recommendations made by the Partners for Prevention in their report, “Using social media for prevention of violence against women.” (Liou, 2013). Below we list these recommendations and explain how they relate to our work.

Anonymity and confidentiality: All research findings will be sufficiently aggregated to ensure that no one community or individual can be identified. Where case study findings are presented, we will change sufficient detail to ensure that the source of the information cannot be identified. In our study, we focused exclusively on content that is publicly available. Nonetheless, we are aware that the boundaries between public and private are dynamic and often blurred in the social media space (Markham, 2018). For example, although social media users may consent to sharing their content publicly and with “third parties” at the point of sign up (Samuel & Buchanan, 2020; Williams, Burnap, & Sloan, 2017), they may not agree to their words and personal identities being subject to academic scrutiny and publication. Therefore, to ensure our research is ethically responsible and that we protect the privacy of social media users, we do not include their names, Twitter handle or profile picture.

Stigmatisation: We will be scientifically rigorous in our dissemination of research findings and highlight that GBV and VAW are cross-cutting phenomena that exist in all communities and socio-economic groups. We will reiterate that these issues do not exist in one setting and are not perpetrated by specific ethnic groups.

Retraumatization and counselling: The heCareZA programme involves the facilitation of dialogue from an empathetic perspective. Rather than judging or shaming men, our facilitators are trained to support constructive conversations amongst men that address the cycle of violence, problematic social norms, and challenge discriminatory language and actions, from outright insults to sexist jokes. Moreover, we encourage perpetrators of GBV to reach out for healing.

Since this is a sensitive topic, and mental health is a growing concern among South African men we regularly post contact numbers for the GBV Command Centre, who has 24/7 counselling for survivors and perpetrators or to the non-profit, free counselling service of Families South Africa (FAMSA). In the event that we identify anyone that needs more comprehensive support, we always refer them directly to these same support services. Lastly, we also share appropriate referral contact numbers on the heCareZA website and on our regular social media posts.

Informed consent: In our analysis of mass data on public social media, we will not be able to ask everyone for consent. However, as mentioned above, all of this data is publicly available and will be rigorously aggregated to ensure that all identities and communities are protected.

For the change agents, we will send a message to men who speak out against GBV online, and we will invite them to visit the website or join the Facebook group. The nature of the Facebook group is that they can leave the group at any time without any negative repercussions. We will not seek informed consent from all Facebook group members.

Appendix B: Exclusions

NOT("Meghan Markle" OR "Jeremy Clarkson" OR "Buckingham Palace" OR "World Cup" OR "Super Cup" OR "Section 89" OR Ramaphosa OR Zuma OR State OR RET OR Football OR "Prince Harry" OR Messi OR Morocco OR #BBTitans OR #BigBrotherTitans OR DM OR "Follow & Retweet" OR #thewifeshowmax OR #t20worldcup OR crypto OR #eth OR #btc OR NFT OR #gamblingtwitter OR #bitcoin OR bitcoin OR #nsfwtt OR #fifaworldcup OR #betredemption OR #gvfip OR #NBA OR #tiktok OR #NFL OR #Soccer OR #Win OR President OR ANC OR God OR Jesus OR Rwanda OR Kagame OR "Heavenly Father" OR Pope OR Pray* OR Holy OR John OR Psalm* OR EFF OR DA OR Christ OR Meghan OR Substance OR Drug OR Church OR Uganda OR Saudi OR @MiaCathell OR Tax OR Euro* OR AOC OR Fascist OR Dudula OR PSAF OR Xeno* OR race* OR Balenciaga OR Politic* OR Citizens OR Vote OR Zimbab* OR #PhalaPhala OR "Phala Phala" OR "State Capture" OR Apartheid OR ZanuPF OR CR17 OR Immigration OR OUTA OR Bank OR Apple OR Android OR #Unplayable OR Netflix OR #PutSouthAfricansFirst OR "Put South Africans First" OR Monarchy OR Eskom OR Loadshedding OR #supportlibraries OR "Please Retweet" OR #Ostfuza OR Ukraine OR Russia OR "Big Brother" OR COVID* OR Corona* OR #PremierLeague OR "Manchester United" OR #Nigeria OR biafra OR Nigeria OR Holocaust OR Taliban OR Afghanistan OR Iran OR "African National Congress" OR "Economic Freedom Fighters" OR "Democratic Alliance" OR #enoughisenough OR #StandUpSA OR #womensart OR #womeninbusiness OR #phyna OR Bloat OR #savewarriornun OR #davidukpo OR #beatriceekweremadu OR #runningiwthtumisole OR #fitness OR Amapiano OR Afrobeat OR Studio OR #Sete OR song OR #Python OR #ai OR #womenintech OR #blackexcellence OR #LuthuliHouse OR #BBTitians OR #womenwhocode OR #NYEEdition OR #datascience OR #malibongwe OR #machinelearning OR #Renewal OR Rwandan OR Pre-season OR "Tory Lanez" OR Belinda OR Migor OR "Belinda Migor" OR Pitbull)

NOT ("Riot Police" OR "Timothy C. Roth" OR Roth OR "Chris Brown" OR "#rho*" OR #grammys OR @loveisland OR #onemorefan OR #hazardsofvalentinesday OR SONA OR #sona2023 OR #reddwarf OR #ZeeNunewXVamino OR #KataBiz OR #mufc OR "black history month" OR #blackhistorymonth OR taehyung OR "Black seed" OR rhodurban OR "Tshepi Vundla" OR "Map Editor" OR MK* OR "Super Nintendo" OR hibernation OR cock OR "andrew tate" OR "man* city" OR Arsenal OR Chelsea OR Earthquake OR NTA OR Assam OR "Leonardo DiCaprio" OR "Viola Davis" OR Casemiro OR "Cory Booker" OR Bruno OR Ronaldo)