TSHA TSHA:

KEY FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION OF EPISODES 1-26

SABC Education

CADRE

curious pictures

Health Communication Partnership

Tsha Tsha
Key Findings of the Evaluation of Episodes 1-26

Centre for AIDS Development, Research and Evaluation

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[1] The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tsha Tsha is an entertainment-education television drama series focusing on young people and dealing with love, sexuality and relationships in a world affected by HIV/AIDS. Audience research utilised by the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) showed that episodes 1-13 achieved an audience share of 48.1% during the first broadcast and 47.4% during the rebroadcast in the 16-24 year age group. Episodes 14-26 achieved 48.4% share.[2]

This report describes the conceptual underpinnings of Tsha Tsha and presents results of research on audience responses to the first 26 episodes. Data collection spanned the period April 2003 to May 2004.

The objectives of the research were:

- To understand the relationship between the theoretical foundations of the series and audience responses;
- To explore audience perceptions of characters and perceptions of dramatic shifts;
- To obtain an understanding of the reception environment of the series;
- To test for potential changes in attitudes, orientations and behaviours that were hypothesised in relation to key intervention themes (many of which were HIV/AIDS-related);
- To contribute to the development of entertainment-education evaluation methodology.

The quantitative component of the study involved a three-wave panel study. A group-administered questionnaire was used to assess audience responses to the series in metropolitan, small town and rural contexts. The qualitative component involved a series of focus groups and individual interviews in these and other settings.

Systematic and random sampling methods were used in the three sites to identify respondents[3] for the panel study. The respondent panel comprised a base of 960 respondents aged 16-26 and research was conducted in waves after episodes four, thirteen, and twenty-six respectively. To estimate the overall impact of 26 episodes of the drama, only the data from the first and third waves were used in the statistical analysis.

Propensity score matching – a relatively new statistical procedure – was used to analyse the responses to the series. This fulfilled one of the aims of the research – i.e. to develop useful research tools for evaluating responses to mass-media education programmes. This method effectively overcomes the problem of confounding variables that influence exposure being associated with outcome variables – an issue that has been one of the most

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2 SABC1 analysis of Tsha Tsha audience performance.

3 Individuals who participated in the panel study are referred to as respondents. Individuals who participated in focus groups and individual interviews are referred to as participants.

vexing challenges in establishing equivalent exposed and unexposed groups for evaluation of mass media interventions.

Exposure was measured by recall of the drama content. Recall among respondents after 13 episodes (wave two) was 57.6%. After 26 episodes (wave three), recall was 67.6%. Some notable differences were found between viewers and non-viewers after effects of propensity to view the series were controlled for. These were:

- Exposure to the series positively affected the score of viewers on a composite index of key attitudes addressed in the drama and a set of HIV/AIDS stigma attitudes;
- Exposure to the series was significantly associated with a range of HIV-related prevention practices including abstinence, faithfulness to partner, deciding to have sex less often, condom use to prevent HIV, and condom use at last sex;
- Exposure to the series also produced a significant association with Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) to determine HIV status.

The focus groups and individual interviews were conducted at various stages. Local youth in the study communities were employed and trained as field workers to assist with recruitment and implementation of the various studies.

It was found that perceptions of characters and dramatic shifts were in line with the objectives of the series and that the theoretical framework provided a sound basis for the series. This was important, given that most of the lessons in the drama were expected to arise from identification with the experiences of the characters and engagement with the drama, rather than through exposure to information contained in the drama.

The qualitative data reflects a high level of visual literacy amongst viewers, and an interest in engaging with the series and its characters. The series was seen as realistic, captivating, entertaining and educational. Setting the drama in a rural context was found to be a novel concept, and appealed to rural and urban residents alike. There were increases in knowledge and general awareness about HIV/AIDS and various self-reported shifts in HIV attitudes, beliefs, practices and behaviours. Tolerance and empathy for people living with HIV/AIDS were enhanced through the series, and this was related to an increased sense of responsibility for the wellbeing of others. The series offered a sustained engagement with the dynamics of living openly with an HIV positive status and the problems and challenges involved in sharing one's status with others. Strong, positive images of young people confronting their HIV positive status were provided and realistic and moving portrayals of a broad range of personal and community issues were faced in the process.

Tsha Tsha was also seen as providing positive role models for women, as well as positive examples of male-female interaction. It was also perceived as creating awareness around parent-child communication issues. It was also noted that viewers engaged with the series critically, finding some elements of the series controversial and unrealistic. Instances of explicit sexual content were seen as problematic when viewed in family settings where

there were young children, parents, and grandparents. In some instances this resulted in alternate programming being selected.

A number of participants noted that they discussed the series during and after broadcast, and that Friday night was not an ideal viewing slot, as it limited opportunities for discussion at school or work the following day.

OVERVIEW OF THE CONTENT OF THE SERIES

Tsha Tsha is an entertainment-education television drama series focusing on young people and dealing with love, sexuality and relationships in a world affected by HIV/AIDS. Set in the small fictional rural town of Lubusi in the Eastern Cape of South Africa, the drama explores young people's lives as they make their way through the passage to adulthood, developing self-efficacy and humanity at an individual and community level. It explores many of the challenges facing young people in South Africa today and aims to enhance their capacity to reflect on problems, to engage in developing solutions, and to become active agents in crafting the circumstances of their own lives.

The first series of 13 episodes was broadcast on SABC1 from April to June 2003 on Fridays at 20h30. This series was rebroadcast from 2 September to 25 November 2003. The second series (episodes 14 to 26) was broadcast from 9 January to 2 April 2004. It was broadcast in Xhosa with English subtitles.

The setting

The setting of the series in a rural area contrasts with the urban setting of most South African youth dramas produced to date. The rural setting was chosen because it allows for the exploration of issues relating to community life, including the marginalisation of youth, and creates an appropriate setting for a character-based drama dealing with personal *and* social transformation. The interplay between the potentials and limitations of rural settings provides a useful context for highlighting the relationships between self-efficacy and environmental resources as factors in personal development.

The story commences with the arrival of a city boy in the fictional small rural town of Lubusi.[4] The tension between what Lubusi offers and his prior life in the city is revisited throughout the series as he and other characters struggle to create personal and social contexts where they can be creative and fulfilled in a personal as well as a social sense.

[4] Lubusi is based on the town of Peddie in the Eastern Cape, which also serves as the location where the series is recorded.

Dancing

Ballroom dancing is used as an organising concept in the drama[5]. It provides a thread of continuity in the eventful circumstances of young people's lives and also brings the characters together. At the same it provides images of creative relationships between people that are not beset by the complexities of life outside of the codes of dance. The ballroom dancing club provides a metaphoric background for exploring relationships and intimacy. Dancing also provides opportunities for the characters to engage with the world beyond Lubusi and to aspire to extend their personal horizons.

> *Dance is like life. You come here to learn to dance, but what you will learn is how to live. How to rise above the everyday, to a place of beauty, life and light. Right. In a circle. Big circle. We start to dance by learning to walk. (Episode 1 – Mrs Kekana)*

The characters

Viwe:
spoiled; relatively wealthy; arrogant; discovers she is HIV positive and learns to face the challenges this brings.

Boniswa:
single mother; introspective; bookish; her heart and mind do not always follow the same path; she is ambitious and challenges convention.

Andile:
struggling to care for a mother dying of AIDS and supporting his younger sister; talented but reluctant dancer.

DJ:
brash; immature city boy exiled in Lubusi and out of tune with a world he gradually embraces.

In addition to the four principal characters there is a group of secondary characters. These include family members, friends and townsfolk, some of whom arrive and leave, providing an eventful and challenging social environment in which the four principal characters learn about themselves and their world. Fantasy, humour and entertaining secondary characters

[5] Hence the name Tsha Tsha ,which is a play on Cha Cha.

also provide dramatic relief and entertainment value. In the latter 13 episodes, Mimi became a lead character.

Educational themes

The series had a specific mandate in relation to HIV/AIDS. Issues dealt with in the series included: the plight of young people having to care for sick and dying parents; financial and social risks associated with the effects of HIV/AIDS on family life; confronting the possibility of being HIV positive and undergoing VCT; personal social challenges of discovering that one is HIV positive; dealing with HIV-related stigma; the challenges of adopting HIV risk-avoidance behaviours, including condom use, secondary abstinence, faithfulness, partner reduction, and use of alternative forms of sexual expression; and recognising the risks of sexual violence. Related themes included unemployment; negative coping strategies such as alcohol abuse; and parent-child relationships.

In addition to these themes the series had as an underlying concern, the representation of the choices which young people exercise in choosing and shaping relationships. This was closely tied to questions of identity, and in particular, the ways in which young people define themselves in relation to others and are in turn defined by the way that others define them. Much of the learning undergone by the principal characters was consequent to interactions with others. The series played strongly on the need to understand how people learn about themselves through others and through taking cognizance of the responses of others.

The environment of Lubusi, being largely impoverished, also provided opportunities to reflect on the meaning of resources -including social resources and money - in the creation of opportunities and resolution of problems.

CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF TSHA TSHA

The foundations of Tsha Tsha drew on the combined resources of Curious Pictures and CADRE[6] in response to a call for proposals for a series concept made by the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) in 2001. Throughout the development, production and research process the dual demands of providing entertainment through drama, as well as ensuring appropriate educational content involved intensive engagement. The drama had to be entertaining and offer new perspectives and approaches to addressing HIV/AIDS content.

[6] Research and development processes for the series were informed through collaboration between Curious Pictures, CADRE and SABC Education. The advice of Patrick Coleman and Larry Kincaid of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health Centre for Communications Programs were also drawn on at various points in developing and researching the education-entertainment process.

Extensive research was conducted into various aspects represented in the series, and emphasis was placed on portraying real life situations and realistic transitions through problems.

The foundational principles of the series were set out in initial concept documents (CADRE & Curious Pictures, 2001a, 2001b). These were further refined through the development and production of a pilot episode and an ongoing research process which accompanied all phases of development.

Tsha Tsha sets out to harness concepts of youth idealism and hope, and at the same time to develop an appreciation amongst youth of the need to equip themselves with the understanding, tools, skills and endurance which are necessary to deal with the formidable challenges of living in a world with HIV/AIDS. These issues are treated with humour, humanity, creativity, and an appreciation of the need of all, (even those anti-heroes who stand on the edge of acceptability and likeability), to want to make a place for themselves in a shared world. The conceptual and theoretical underpinnings included the following:

- ***Creating effective tools for identifying and solving problems:*** There are opportunities for young people to think differently and critically about the causes of negative conditions in their lives. The series development team set out to provoke a critical examination of established ways of thinking, to encourage people to realise which of these form part of the problem, and how solutions can be developed from problems. It is understood that to transform situations we need to think differently about them, and we need to examine how to creatively engage with problems so that they can be transformed. Tsha Tsha's educational approach is about achieving insights through stripping away surface assumptions – showing that things are never as they seem at first glance. It is this 'peeling away' concept that is intended to be internalised by the audience, and this becomes a tool for addressing whatever problem presents itself.

- ***Routes to self-efficacy:*** Tsha Tsha focuses on the development of self-efficacy amongst the drama's characters. People who possess self-efficacy are effective in the world; they respond to obstacles as challenges, and can deal effectively with a situation because they have some level of control over it. Self-efficacy develops out of the ability to develop confidence through solving difficult problems. Steps include recognising and examining a problem and attempting solutions or insightfully applying solutions, and finally reaching some level of resolution. People with low self-efficacy become victims of their circumstances: they tend to blame their problems on the world at large, avoid challenges, and have low aspirations. Young people have a capacity to develop unique and creative solutions to problems. To solve problems we balance understanding of self-efficacy with an individual's capacity to adapt to their environment. Insights developed through problem-solving contribute to empowerment.

- ***Ways of living humanely:*** It is important to recognise the value of a social universe built out of solidarity, cohesiveness, and a sense of belonging in contrast to solitude and isolation. Whilst the characters might express themselves individualistically, their

reflection on their world needs to lead to shared and collective approaches to action. This is not to be confused with activism, which exists largely in the political realm. Rather, the series sets out to portray approaches to 'social action', which are by their nature pragmatic and take place at the levels of systems and relations, rather than at the level of sloganeering. This again leads to the notion of humanising, which can be understood in relation to its opposite – dehumanising. This is based on the assumption that the lived realities of many South Africans are compromised to the point that they are dehumanised. HIV/AIDS has the potential to further dehumanise our world. The disease constrains human development, doing so in subtle ways that are interwoven with social and cultural practices. This subtlety impedes action because it is often intangible, and it is difficult to develop individual and social responses to counter its impacts. Tsha Tsha shows pathways to action – both on the private and communal levels. It shows how solutions lie in developing personal self-efficacy and living consciously and humanely in a community.

Approaches to educational television

The Tsha Tsha approach to entertainment education works from six key principles:

- ***Lessons not messages:*** There is a tendency in HIV/AIDS and sexuality education to try to regulate youth and their behaviour – particularly when it comes to sexuality and relationships. Messages are often framed and communicated in such a way that they focus only on individuals and on individual behaviour with little consideration of the complexities of the power relations that are necessarily embedded in relationships, and contextual factors that influence the way people act. We recognise that behaviour is complex - sometimes willed, sometimes unwilled - and in the case of sexual behaviour, directly linked to dimensions of power that may be beyond individual control. Tsha Tsha sets out to move beyond the concept of messages - particularly in didactic form - which are linear communiques from producers to the audiences. Instead, Tsha Tsha focuses on the idea of lessons – positive and/or negative experiences of our characters which make them look at the world in different ways, and which lead the audience down the same paths of problem-solving. We believe that this is a far more effective approach to learning, and also, that this is the route to great drama: all stories are about characters changing through experience, learning, or failing to draw lessons as a result of experiences they go through.

- ***Identification:*** Identification involves representing characters or events in particular ways, with a view to encouraging audience members to adopt similar approaches in their own thinking, or additionally, to integrate such perspectives into their own practices. Identification is about internal processes – about adopting perspectives that inform one's own emotional, intellectual and behavioural responses, and, in the case of dramatic representation, drawing these perspectives from events in the drama. Cohen (2001, p. 249) sees identification "with characters in books, films and television" as a

means to “extend [our] emotional horizons and social perspectives”. Identification incorporates a sense of affinity with, or relation to, characters that informs emotional and intellectual development of ideas about particular subjects, and about ways one might act or respond to particular situations. This may include responses to negative (antisocial) and positive (pro-social) portrayals. In relation to the former, for example, studies have demonstrated the relation to portrayals of violence (Huesmann et al., 1984) and sex (Collins et al., 2004). Affinity and empathy are important aspects of identification, with characters in a drama shaping a viewer’s perspectives to the point of adoption. The emotional dimension of this is a sense of sharing the world of the character. Tsha Tsha sets out to create complex characters with whom audiences can identify and with whom journeys through problems are negotiated. The concept of identification also extends to identification with the setting, contexts and events portrayed in the series, and with the problems and pathways to solutions adopted by characters.

- ***The power of naming or showing/legitimating:*** Ideas, behaviours, and social activities are all brought into consciousness through the process of naming or showing. Naming things empowers you to see them in new ways. By naming something you can confront it and potentially change it. In Tsha Tsha many practices are named – some for the purposes of challenging a particular idea (e.g. ‘double-dipping’), or for the purpose of legitimising (e.g. wearing a red ribbon).

- ***Understanding change:*** People very seldom change in leaps and bounds and when they do, these changes are often not sustainable. We recognise that human behaviour is the complex product of relationships and experiences, and that consistency of behaviour is not something readily achieved – especially for young people who are negotiating their way through the world. This includes taking two steps forward, and moving one step back. It is okay to fail, to try again and to learn through the process. Sustainable change mostly occurs at the edge of experience, with small movements beyond existing boundaries and frames of reference. Tsha Tsha therefore focuses on promoting the understanding of change as a process.

- ***Limit situations:*** A limit situation is when understanding and ways of dealing with situations fail to provide what is needed in order to adapt or to transform a situation. This would typically happen in the face of new challenges, such as when the world around us changes, or when it fails us. We need to change our circumstances, either by engaging the world and changing it, or by changing the way that we respond to situations which we do not like, or which are beyond our ability to control. We do this by putting resources to different use, by learning new skills, reaching out to others, mobilising new resources, and developing new ways of thinking, feeling and acting. Tsha Tsha’s characters continuously engage with limit situations. For example, DJ having to deal with living in a new environment; Boniswa’s tensions between her relational needs and ideals; Viwe learning she is HIV positive; and Andile having to deal with poverty and the death of his parents. The characters appear limited in their

abilities to deal with these situations and it is intended that the audience relate to their successive attempts to transcend barriers. However, as the characters engage with difficult situations, they are gradually able to find more effective solutions, which move them beyond these limits, albeit onto new challenges. It is through such a progression that the characters are gradually shown to develop as people and as members of their community.

- ***Edge of convention:*** All social life is rule-bound in some way. We can understand each other because we speak a common language and we can work together and play together when we more or less know what to expect of each other. This does not eliminate surprise, suspense, humour or spontaneity, but actually functions to create these qualities at the edge of expectation and convention. The struggle for youth is to have a place in the world that they can call their own, not one that is passed down by others in the form of rules and regulations. It is recognised that youth exist in a cultural frame which is in a state of change and development that involves a creative hybrid of existing cultures. While they live in a world defined by others, they are especially powerful creators of their own worlds. They create their own language, style and social practices. The drama places a strong emphasis on exploring the world of rules, norms and expectations, in the context of youth striving to live and speak in ways that represent them, while living in a world that does not necessarily always accommodate them.

FORMATIVE RESEARCH

Foundations

Research has been an intrinsic part of the development of Tsha Tsha. The initial research process, which formed part of a competitive bidding process, based on a call for proposals by SABC Education, was conceptual in nature. It involved the setting out of methodological processes and principles of the series along with potential settings, characters and scenarios. The initial conceptual framework was used for the development and production of a pilot episode.

Research beyond the pilot stage involved a team of researchers and members of the production team visiting Peddie, exploring the town, and becoming familiar with the people and places that are important in the lives of the young people living there. Numerous focus groups were run with people representing a broad range of community interests,[7] with an emphasis on understanding key formative dynamics in the lives of young people. People were invited to share stories that were important in their own lives and the life of the community. Various innovative approaches were used in eliciting

[7] These included civic organisations, non-governmental and community-based organisations, and institutions represented by police, clinic staff, and educators.

stories, including providing young people with disposable cameras to document important incidents in their lives. Research included investigation of the culture of ballroom dancing in the Eastern Cape through observation and interviews with dancers and those involved in organising ballroom dancing activities. At the same time, a review of key HIV/AIDS issues relevant to young people in the area were conducted through thematic focus groups and interviews, as well material previously gathered by CADRE in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape. The result was a rich set of research material with which to begin the process of constructing characters and story outlines.

The development process involved moving back-and-forth between creative concepts and research. This included testing early ideas for characters and story outlines through focus group research with young people. These research sessions were conducted in Grahamstown and Johannesburg with the intention of tapping into the perceptions of both rural and urban audiences and ensuring that the emerging product was of interest and credible in both settings.

These processes and resultant findings contributed to the framing of educational objectives and the related development of themes for the series.

Script development research and testing

The script development process involved the creation of storylines that occurred in single episodes, or spanned two or more episodes. This was done in the context of the broad storyline over each block of 13 episodes for each character. In this process the basic elements of characters could be set out in a detailed 'character bible' which defined the history and personality of the main and secondary characters. This incorporated their likely responses to each other and the community. This process embodied, in broad terms, the events to which they were likely to be exposed – for example, it defined that Viwe would be HIV positive and that Andile would be a talented but reluctant dancer.

Development of story-beats fleshed out the main events of the story for each episode and led to further clarification of the characters. Subsequently, a team of writers expanded the beats into a script format. Throughout these processes there was ongoing testing of the developing script through focus groups and participatory workshops in Johannesburg and Peddie. The story was assessed for cultural and social authenticity, for likeability and interest, and for response. Research participants commented in detail on what they expected of characters, what they found jarring or inappropriate and what they felt was being conveyed by the drama. Results of these focus group discussions were compiled into reports that were fed back to the writers who accordingly reworked the scripts. At various points further focus groups and interviews were conducted – for example, with people living with HIV/AIDS and health workers – to check the script from the perspective of their specific experience.

Scripts were translated into Xhosa in language workshops. These scripts were tested in focus groups to assess the responses of the intended audience to the translations. Finally the scripts were prepared for production.

In the process of recording the series, a researcher who had been involved in the script-development research was on-hand to assist with further questions that arose. The preferred way of sub-titling the series was also tested with focus group participants during post-production.

THE EVALUATION RESEARCH

The objectives of the evaluation research were:

- To understand the relationship between the theoretical foundations of the series and audience responses;
- To explore audience perceptions of characters and perceptions of dramatic shifts;
- To obtain an understanding of the reception environment of the series;
- To test for potential changes in attitudes and behaviours that were hypothesised in relation to key intervention themes (many of which were HIV/AIDS-related);
- To contribute to the development of entertainment-education evaluation methodology.

Limitations of this research

This evaluation of Tsha Tsha was conducted by researchers that were deeply embedded in the production processes of the series. The advantages of this were that it was possible to design a research process which was richly informed by the conceptualisation of the drama and which addressed issues that had bearing on how the drama should be developed further. However, the research team recognises that such embeddedness might introduce orientations and biases into the formulation of questions and interpretation of results.

With regard to the generalisability of the findings, probability sampling methods were used to select respondents from the three areas used for the evaluation, thus, technically speaking, the panel survey results are only generalisable to the populations of those three areas and not to all of South Africa. Although the sample may be somewhat similar to the national population within that age group, various characteristics of the respondents from these three areas undoubtedly influenced the observed results, including specific demographic, contextual, and local cultural factors.

The research focus was also oriented mainly through the emphasis on youth in the 18-24 year age group, although some respondents were in younger and older age categories. The viewership of Tsha Tsha extends considerably beyond this age group, and the youth audience comprise just under a quarter of the total audience, when segmented by age.

The budget available to fund the research process placed limits on the extent and range of activities that could be undertaken to evaluate the series. We endeavoured to adopt as cost-effective an approach as possible, whilst still combining quantitative and qualitative methods, and informing further series development.

PANEL STUDY

Research design

A three-wave panel study involving a group-administered questionnaire was used to assess audience responses to the series in metropolitan, small town and rural contexts. Systematic and random sampling methods were used in the three sites to identify respondents for the panel study. These included random sampling of plot numbers, use of aerial photographs, census enumeration areas, and house counts.

The three study sites were:

- ***Vosloorus:*** This township falls within the Johannesburg Metropolitan area, Gauteng Province, and is well-established and typical of many township areas which fall within large metropolitan areas of South Africa. Vosloorus represents the widest spread of housing types and income of the three sites, ranging from informal settlements to owner-built suburban houses in the middle-income bracket. The population is predominantly Zulu and Sotho speaking.
- ***Grahamstown:*** This is a small town in the Eastern Cape Province, which is typical of the many small towns throughout South Africa (population 50 000 to 200 000). Approximately 60% of the adult population is unemployed. The population is predominantly Xhosa speaking.
- ***Obanjeni***: This is a rural area in KwaZulu-Natal closest to the small town of Mtunzini. It is representative of many rural areas which lie between smaller towns across South Africa. The population depends largely on migrant labour and small scale farming. The area is very poor and there is piped water in very few homes. Obanjeni is headed by a Tribal Authority (Chief). The population is predominantly Zulu speaking.

The original respondent panel comprised a base of 960 respondents, 320 in each site, aged 16-26. A three-wave panel survey was used, whereby the same group of individuals was researched after the first four episodes, at the end of the first 13 episodes, and at the end of 26 episodes, giving a time-lagged measure of the outcome variables. The completion rate at wave two was 88% (843 cases) and at wave three was 79% (756 cases). To estimate the impact of all 26 episodes of the drama only the repeat cases from the first and third waves were used in the quantitative statistical analysis (N=756).

Propensity score matching – a relatively new statistical procedure – was used to analyse the responses to the series. This fulfilled one of the aims of the research – i.e. to develop

useful research tools for evaluating responses to mass-media education programmes. This method effectively overcomes the problem of confounding variables that influence exposure being associated with outcome variables – an issue that has been one of the most vexing challenges in establishing equivalent exposed and unexposed groups for evaluation of mass media interventions.

Instrument development

The questionnaire combined a range of demographic, attitudinal and behavioural measures and indices with specific measures designed to understand perceptions of and responses to the series. With regard to the development of the latter measures, focus groups were used to assess the characteristics which they attributed to each of the characters and to discuss the meaning of the series and specific events. The responses were analysed and a draft questionnaire drawn up. This was piloted with a group of respondents and refined accordingly. The final questionnaire was translated into Xhosa and Zulu and again tested.

Procedures

A coordinator was appointed to conduct the research in each site and teams of between 10 and 16 youth residents in each site were selected to assist in the research process. They were trained as fieldworkers and were responsible for recruiting respondents and assisting in questionnaire administration. Respondents were brought together at a community centre or hall in groups of 16 to 20 where they were led through the questionnaire as a group by a trained facilitator. The questionnaires were self-completed on a question-by-question basis with opportunity for respondents to ask questions. Respondents were seated at least 1.5 metres from each other, allowing for privacy in completing the questionnaires. Questionnaires were administered in English, Xhosa and Zulu, with Sotho translation being offered as required.

Respondents for the panel survey and focus groups were compensated for time taken to participate in the research. In Obanjeni however, the tribal authority believed that this could create a problematic context for future researchers in the area, and money available for time compensation was used to provide a meal, hats and posters.

Informed consent

Respondents were required to sign a declaration of consent confirming that: they were participating in the study through their own choice; that they were satisfied that they understood what the research was to be used for; that they had been given the opportunity to withdraw from participating; that they had been given the opportunity to ask whatever questions they may have about the research; and that they were aware that they would be asked questions relating to a television drama series and also questions of a personal nature. It was explained that they did not have to answer any question that they did not want to, and that they could withdraw from the questionnaire administration process at any

time. They were informed that their responses would be treated confidentially and that no identifying details would be included in capturing the results.

RESULTS: PANEL STUDY

Audience reach and recall

According to SABC's audience ratings research, Tsha Tsha had an average of 1.8 million viewers per week[8], and generally achieved an audience share of over 50% during the airing of the first 26 episodes. In the second wave of the study, more females watched the drama than males (62% versus 53%). At this point, viewing levels of Tsha Tsha in Vosloorus were 89%, 74% in Grahamstown, but only 13% in Obanjeni. This is a notable finding in that it shows that the most urbanised of the three sites had the highest percentage viewership and the most rural site had the lowest viewership. It was initially hypothesised that rural and small town audiences would be more likely to find the series appealing. The inverse finding is partly accounted for by the fact that 90% of respondents in Vosloorus had television sets in their homes, compared to 57% for Grahamstown and 56% for Obanjeni. Further, 74% of respondents in Vosloorus watched television four or more days a week, compared to 62% for Grahamstown, and 58% for Obanjeni. These trends explain some of the viewing differences between Vosloorus and Grahamstown, but not the very low viewership in Obanjeni when compared to Grahamstown.

The strongly Xhosa cultural context of the drama may have diminished the popularity of the series in predominantly Zulu speaking Obanjeni. However, this did not apply to Zulu speakers in Vosloorus. Other factors may have influenced the capacity of young people to watch the series in Obanjeni – for example, ability to control viewing times, or use of battery power for television sets, which may have limited the duration of television viewing.

Of the total sample (960), 85% of the survey respondents spoke either Xhosa (38%) or Zulu (48%) as home languages. Among those who spoke Xhosa, 76% watched Tsha Tsha in comparison to 34% of those who spoke Zulu. Among the remaining respondents who spoke other languages, 88% watched Tsha Tsha. Most Zulu speakers are able to understand Xhosa and vice versa.

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8 This estimate only covers relatively wealthy viewers in the living standards measure (LSM) 5 and above and therefore underestimates total viewership. The system of measuring audience on the basis of higher LSMs is designed to provide marketing intelligence for selling of advertising space by SABC and is thus oriented towards assessing viewership of consumers with some degree of disposable income. The system also has an urban bias, as the majority of those falling below LSM 5 are rural dwellers. Nonetheless this is the only measure of viewership available.

Constructing a matched control group

Multiple logistic regression analysis of the data at the end of wave three showed that the following list of variables predicted who watched the drama and hence were used to calculate each respondent's probability (propensity) to watch the drama series. In assessing audience response to the drama, these 15 variables were used to construct a propensity score to create matched control groups for the analysis.

Table 1: Variables related to propensity to watch Tsha Tsha

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Education level
4. Household income
5. Xhosa language
6. Zulu language
7. Frequency of TV viewing
8. Frequency of radio listening
9. Heard about AIDS on television
10. Watched Soul City on TV
11. Watched Gazlam on TV
12. Know someone who is HIV positive
13. Condom use at last sex, t1*
14. Used condoms to prevent AIDS at t1*
15. Decided to be faithful to partner at t1*

(t1 = time one, after broadcast of first four of 26 episodes).*

Programmes broadcast on television can potentially reach anyone who has access to a television set and thus the population cannot be randomly assigned to a group who see a particular programme and those who do not. If there are important differences between viewers and non-viewers at the outset, one cannot simply compare those who watched and those that did not, as these are likely to be essentially different populations and would differ irrespective of whether or not they watched the drama (i.e. viewing or not viewing may be determined by factors external to the television programme). Thus, there is no way of knowing whether or not the observed differences between viewers and non-viewers can be attributed to exposure to the drama. Furthermore, there was no way to control who would watch Tsha Tsha and who would not (i.e. to set up an exposed and control group). This is a problem intrinsic to research of mass-media communication interventions.

The challenge was to find an appropriate unexposed group that is equivalent to a 'treatment' group in terms of characteristics that might affect the outcome of exposure. It was known from the analysis of recall of the drama that viewers and non-viewers were different on the 15 important variables listed above. Given that the most important differences between viewers and non-viewers had been identified, it was possible to use a statistical method to create a 'virtual' control group of non-viewers who could be matched statistically to respondents who watched the drama within the dataset. There is another way to say this: When respondents are matched on variables known to influence exposure and the expected outcomes, the only difference between the results from a matched control group design and random experimental design would be those due to unmeasured variables that were not included in the matching procedure. If none were left out, then the results are expected to be the same.

Propensity score analysis

Propensity score statistical analysis was used to create the matched control group for comparison with the group of respondents that watched the drama (Rubin, 1974; Rosenbaum & Rubin, 1983; Brown & Cudeck, 1993; D'Agostino, 1998; Heckman et al., 1998; Dehijia & Wahba, 2002). As it is not feasible to match survey respondents according to each variable, the variables are used to create a single score that represents the relative effect of all variables together. It represents the 'propensity' to be exposed to the drama series. For the analysis, the continuous measure of recall of the drama was split at the median. Those below the median were not exposed to the drama at all (32%) or had only a low level of recall (18%), and those above the median had a high level of recall (50%). The propensity score was created by regressing high exposure to Tsha Tsha (versus none and low) on the identified variables, and then using the resulting probability of watching predicted by those 15 variables for purposes of matching. The probability (propensity score) in the present case varied between 0.03 and 0.97, with an average value of 0.50, which is the same as the percentage of those above the median with a high level of recall of the drama. The lower a respondent scored on the 15 variables, the lower was his/her propensity score, and conversely, the higher a respondent scored on the 15 variables, the higher their propensity score.

The sample of respondents was divided into six groups across the range of propensity scores. The first group consisted of all respondents with propensity scores below 0.20. The groups ranged from .20 to .40; .40 to .60; .60 to .80; .80 to .90, and those with scores above .90. Within each of these strata or blocks there was no statistically significant difference between the average propensity score of respondents who watched Tsha Tsha and those who did not watch. There was also no statistically significant difference for each of the 15 variables used to construct the score. Thus, within each of these six groups, viewers and non-viewers were statistically equivalent in the same way they would be if they had been randomly assigned to each group.

All statistical analyses of the relationship between exposure to the drama and outcome variables, such as attitudes towards living with HIV/AIDS, stigma, HIV testing, condom use, etc., are calculated separately within each group. To get the overall result of each analysis, the average of the six outcomes (one for each group) was computed, and weighted by the proportion of viewers within each group.

All comparisons reported below are based on:

- A treatment group that had a high level of recall of Tsha Tsha (above the median).
- A matched control group with low or no recall of Tsha Tsha that is statistically equivalent to the treatment group on all of the 15 variables listed above.

Attitude change as a response to watching Tsha Tsha

Table Two compares treatment and matched control groups on each of 13 HIV-related attitude items. A higher score indicates more positive attitudes in response to the item. The treatment group scored more positively on all items, although only the first seven items listed showed statistically significant differences. All of these attitudes were touched on in the drama and some of them were very specifically dealt with (e.g. openness at funerals). It is not surprising that some of the items do not show significant changes across the two groups. For some of these items both groups score high in the first place, whilst for others, exposure to the drama may, for example, have created a degree of uncertainty and hesitancy about e.g. openness. Sometimes, being exposed to the realities of a situation can be expected to foster anxiety and negative perceptions, as the complexities of a situation are unpacked in a drama series. For example, the question concerning talking about HIV/AIDS openly in the family was dealt with in the drama in a 'problematising way' and its resolution is the concern of the drama as a whole, rather than of this series of 26 episodes. The character, Viwe was exposed to much stress on account of her family's negative reactions to the disclosure of her HIV status, and this could well lead a viewer to be wisely reticent about the effects of disclosure. In short, when a drama unsettles or creates tension, we should not expect the hoped for outcomes to show immediately or intensively.

Table 2: Difference in each attitude item between the treatment and matched control group by propensity score method

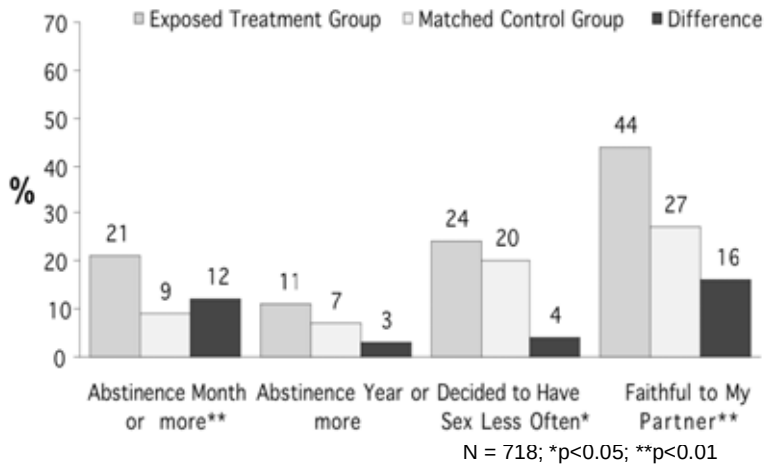
All males and females at the third wave	**Treatment Group % (n=368)**	**Matched Control Group % (n=350)**	**% Point Difference (std. error)**
1. HIV positive people can have a satisfying relationship	83.7	62.6	21.1**
2. I will be embarrassed to be seen with somebody everyone knows is HIV positive (reversed)	79.6	63.3	16.4**
3. When you learn that you have HIV your life is over (reversed)	86.7	72.9	13.8**
4. I would dance with a person that I knew was HIV positive	90.1	80.0	10.1**
5. It is possible to live a happy life, even if one is HIV positive	84.5	77.4	7.1*
6. AIDS should be talked about openly at funerals of people who have died of the disease	76.5	69.8	6.7*
7. People with HIV/AIDS should not be treated differently	82.5	76.2	6.3*
Mean % of agreement in 1st 7 AIDS attitude items	**84.3**	**71.7**	**11.7****
8. People with HIV will soon lose their friends	57.9	55.1	2.8
9. I will tell my friends if I find out I am HIV positive	63.4	60.7	2.7
10. People should talk openly about HIV/AIDS in the family	93.1	91.5	1.6
11. I would hug a person who I know is HIV positive	90.1	89.7	.4
12. A person who is unsure about their HIV status should have an HIV test	92.0	91.7	.3
13. I am willing to help care for a family member who is sick	89.6	89.2	.3
Mean % of agreement in all 13 AIDS attitude items	**82.2**	**75.4**	**6.8****
** p<.05; ** p<.01; Coefficient of reliability, a= .64 (7 items), a= .74 (13 items)*			

The above thirteen items have a high reliability coefficient (.74), meaning that the way an individual responds to one item corresponds well with their responses to the other items. Given this, it is reasonable to create a composite attitude score made up of all thirteen items. A 7% net difference was found between the attitudes of those with a high level of exposure to the TV drama and the matched control group who were not exposed. This statistically significant difference ($p<0.01$) means that it can be inferred that watching the drama made a significant difference on a global attitude scale. The internal reliability of the scale comprised of only the first seven items is .64. The mean agreement with this subscale is 84% among respondents with a high level of recall of the drama and 72% among those with none or a low level of recall. The difference attributed to high exposure of Tsha Tsha is thus 12 percentage points ($p<0.01$).

Impact of watching Tsha Tsha on self-reported behaviour

Figure One shows the comparison between the treatment group and the matched control group on each of a number of behavioural response indicators.

Figure 1: Behavioural responses to sexual restraint and faithfulness at wave three



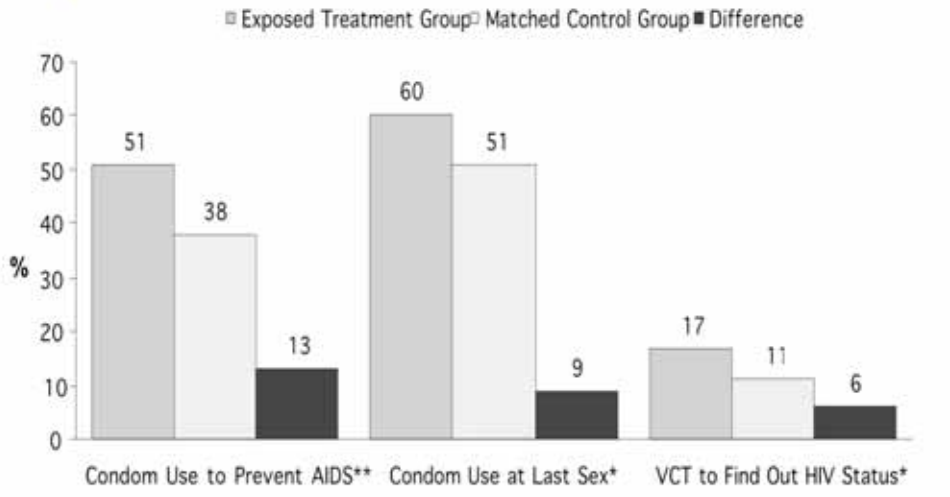
N = 718; *p<0.05; **p<0.01

The chart provides compelling evidence that the 26 episodes made a difference in respect of three of these four behavioural responses. The most significant outcome of watching Tsha Tsha relates to the decision to be faithful to one's partner, followed by abstinence for a month or more, and a decision to have sex less often, which is a proxy for sexual restraint. The one area that did not show significant difference was abstinence over a year or more (although abstinence is relative to sexual opportunity). Given the average age of respondents (21 years) and that 81% of respondents have had sex before, it is not surprising that Tsha Tsha is not associated with long term abstinence. The above data shows that for those that watched and recalled Tsha Tsha, the experience was supportive of inclinations to contain sex in a relationship or to restrain sexual activity, without actually giving up sex.

The issue of abstinence was specifically dealt with over a number of episodes. In the drama, Boniswa was confronted with this issue in her relationship with DJ and it was the main problem she had to deal with as she grew closer to DJ and the two of them fell in love. At one point she explicitly made it clear to him that he should always show her respect, be honest, and not engage in any 'double dipping' (i.e. sex with others). Technically speaking, the decision to be faithful is not a behaviour or an action *per se* – it is an orientation. Respondents' orientation to this idea does not necessarily translate into long-term action – but it does show a resonance of the drama series with this approach to prevention.

Figure Two shows the impact of watching Tsha Tsha on condom use to prevent HIV/AIDS, condom use at last sex and VCT. Statistically significant relationships were found between all three measures. This is a particularly compelling finding considering that the control group was matched to the treatment group on both of these variables (as well as 13 other variables described above), meaning that the difference can be attributed to watching Tsha Tsha. The exposed treatment group is also significantly more likely than the matched group to have had VCT to find out HIV status. VCT was explicitly dealt with in Tsha Tsha and it was one of the most sustained storylines. It is thus relevant that Tsha Tsha had a notable effect in this area. Assuming that the two groups are matched, Tsha Tsha exposure accounts for the 6% uptake of VCT by Tsha Tsha watchers.

Figure 2: Behavioural responses to condom use and VCT at wave three



N = 718; *p<0.05; **p<0.01

What makes the difference?

Having demonstrated that Tsha Tsha has made a difference to attitudinal and behavioural responses, the challenge becomes one of understanding what made a difference. What was it about the drama contributed to a behaviour and attitude change process? To understand how young people transform in engaging with Tsha Tsha there is a need to understand the process of engaging with drama and one of the central concepts at play here is that of identification.

Identification with characters in the drama as a catalyst for change

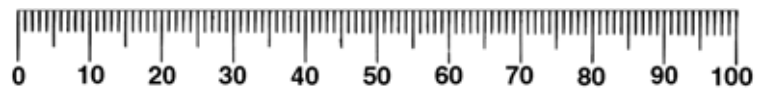
Much formative research and conceptualisation went into creating characters that were interesting and real and with whom young people might identify. In studying identification, the 'affinity' approach provides a conceptual framework that has to do with measuring an audience's positive relation to various aspects of the drama, including characters. This depends on an overarching identification with the series itself. This is expressed in terms of viewership (i.e. viewing of initial and subsequent episodes), but it can also reflect a deeper psychological affinity with the context of the story, the characters, and the story arcs of the characters. Affinity with characters may be with one character only, or aspects of one character's personality or story, or with multiple characters. Audience members may also differ in the extent to which they are amused, annoyed, disappointed, encouraged and so on by the words, thoughts, feelings and actions of characters.

As part of exploring *how* the drama of Tsha Tsha influenced people, two modules were included in the questionnaire. The first focused on the importance of identification with characters, and the second dealt with the role of talking about events seen in the drama. Variations in response in terms of these two areas were explored in relation to outcome measures.

In exploring identification with central characters in Tsha Tsha, the following questions were asked:

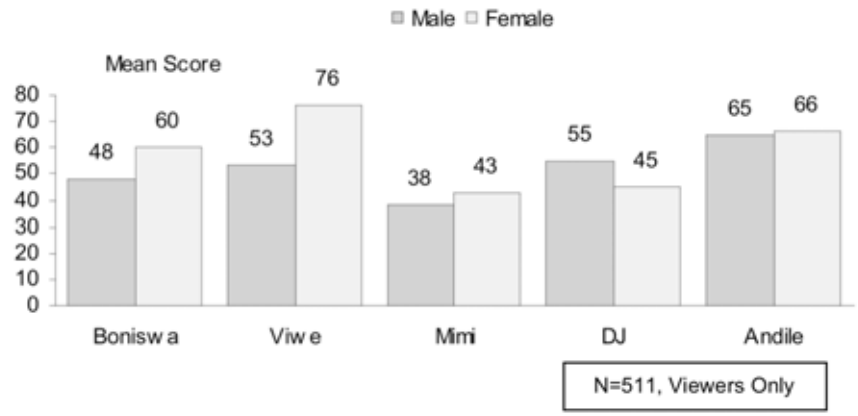
- How similar do you think you are to___?
- How much would you like to be like ___?
- How much do you care about what happens to ___?

Respondents were required to assign a numerical score on the following visual analog scale.



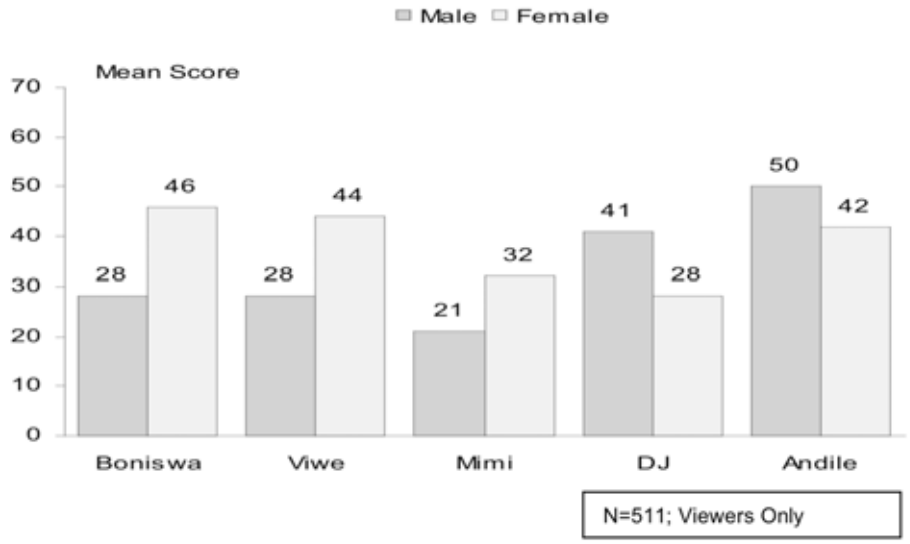
The scale allowed respondents to select the exact point value of their response. For example, if respondents were to indicate how much they liked Tsha Tsha they could select any point between 'not at all' and 'completely'. The results of their responses to the above questions are presented in the three charts below for males and females separately (Figures Three, Four and Five).

Figure 3: How much do you care about what happens to each character by gender?



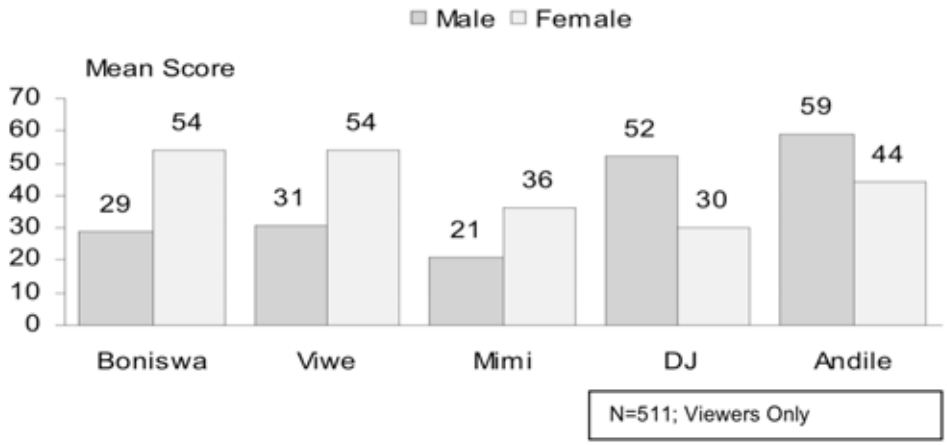
It is apparent that males and females cared about characters in notably different ways. Females tended to care about what happened to female characters much more than they cared about what happened to male characters. Males similarly cared more for their own sex. However overall, males also tended to care less for any characters than females did.

Figure 4: How similar do you think you are to each character by gender?



Males tended to think of themselves as more similar to males and females tended to think of themselves as more similar to females. However, females identified themselves as similar to Andile almost as much as men did. Generally the ratings of similarity were lower than ratings related to caring, suggesting that there is a factor in caring which exceeds the influence of simple identification through similarity. Interestingly, although female respondents cared more about what happened to Viwe, they did not feel more similar to Viwe than Boniswa. Their caring more about Viwe was prompted by her plight in the drama, rather than because they were more like her.

Figure 5: How much would you like to be like each character by gender?



This question shows similar trends to the 'how similar are you' question. Males and females wanted to be more like their own sex characters than other sex characters. This contrasts with the trends regarding 'caring about' – showing, as did the similarity question, that caring about a character does not need to rely on external characteristics of sex role identification and must therefore be driven by influences relating to the plight of characters.

Figure 6: Mean level of identification with five main characters of Tsha Tsha by gender

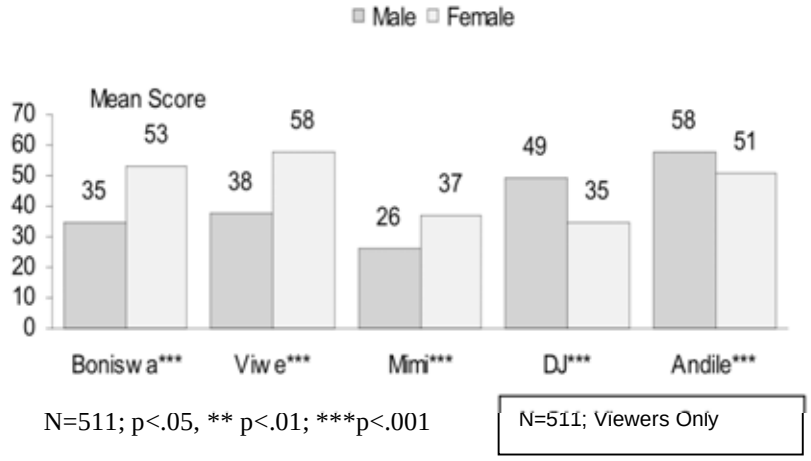


Figure Six shows the aggregated scores on all three measures of identification. Statistically significant differences between males and females were found in relation to all characters. The gender of the character in each case was associated with the likelihood of whether men or women care more about the character.

Taking into account how level of recall of the drama can elicit response, two types of effects in changing attitudes towards HIV/AIDS can be considered. Higher recall has already been shown to be associated with better attitudes towards AIDS in the comparison

of a high recall group (exposure measure) with a matched low recall group (relatively unexposed) on HIV/AIDS indicators. This is a direct effect of exposure to the drama. But it is also apparent that identification with a character in the drama can have an additional and indirect effect that probably functions at a more emotional and subliminal level. The combined direct and indirect effects accrue in relation to attitude change.

Talking with others about AIDS topics seen in the drama

A further possibility for indirect effects to accrue is through the mechanism of people talking to each other about topics in the drama. Table Three shows the percentages of people who discussed AIDS topics seen in the drama with others. A score for each respondent was constructed by adding up the number of topics each one discussed (from 0 to 7).

Table 3: Discussion of HIV/AIDS topics with others

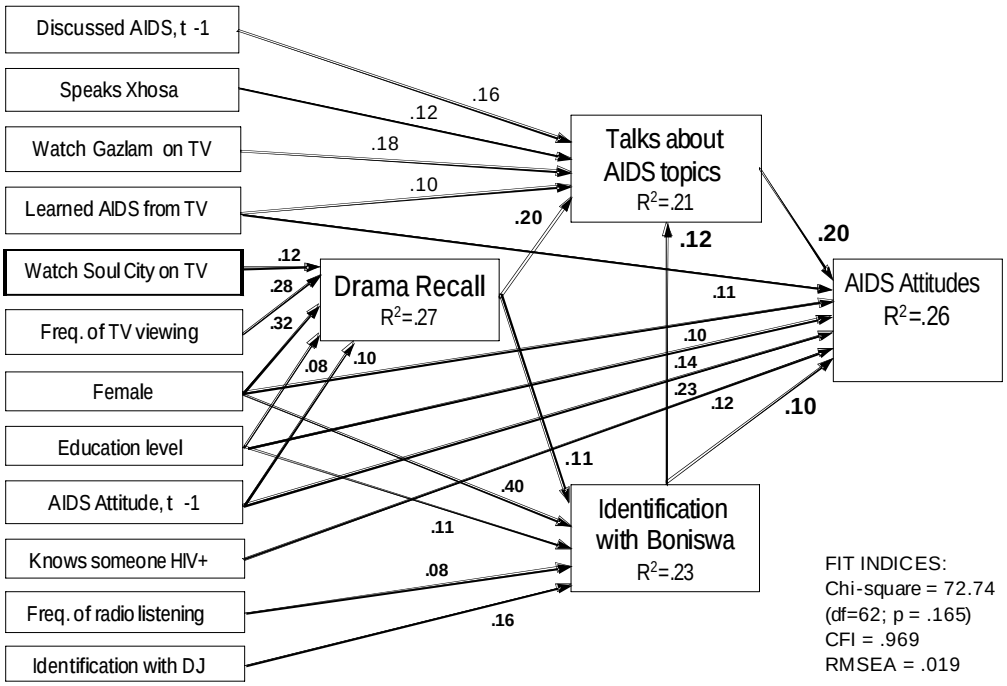
Topic	%
Condom use	50.7
HIV prevention	52.0
HIV testing	42.7
HIV disclosure	32.6
Supporting people with HIV/AIDS	41.9
Anti-retroviral drugs	31.8
AIDS stigma	36.9

The observed relationships between recall of the drama, identification with Boniswa, talking about AIDS topics, and one's attitudes towards AIDS were examined. It was assumed that the impact of the drama would be greater on viewers who had greater exposure to the drama as measured by their recall of more aspects of the drama. The impact analysis above shows that viewers with higher recall of the drama had more positive attitudes towards HIV/AIDS than low and non-viewers. Our expectation was that this relationship was mediated by identification with one of the characters, Boniswa, and also by talking to others about topics related to AIDS that featured in the drama. In other words, viewers with greater recall of the drama were expected to identify more highly with Boniswa and to talk more about AIDS topics than viewers with low recall (exposure) to the drama. It was thus expected that those with higher levels of identification and who talked about more AIDS-related topics, would also have more positive attitudes towards AIDS. Theoretically, this means that exposure to the drama has an *indirect* effect on attitudes by means of its direct effects on identification with Boniswa and talking to others about AIDS. These expected relationships were confirmed by the multivariate statistical analysis.

These relationships are shown in the path diagram presented in Figure Seven. Each arrow represents a statistically significant relationship between the two variables that they connect, controlling statistically for all of the other variables that are also related to that variable. The arrowhead indicates the direction of the relationship, from left to right in the diagram. The best predictors of recall of the drama were frequency of watching television

and being female. This meant that young women and those who watched television very frequently had a higher level of recall of the drama. The relative size of the relationship is indicated by the number (standardised beta coefficient) next to the arrow, which can range from 0.0 (no relationship) to 1.0 (a perfect relationship). Because a variable is usually accounted for by several other variables, the size of any one predictor is usually much less than 0.50. However, the predictors shown for each variable are independent of one another and additive, which means that together their joint effect is greater than that shown by any one of them in the diagram. For example, the combined size of the effects of all five variables with significant paths to recall of the drama is 0.52 (multiple R). When this number is squared it becomes 0.27, which is the percent of variance of drama recall that is explained by these five variables (shown as R^2 in the diagram). The combined effect of the seven variables shown as related to AIDS attitudes is about the same size, 0.52, indicating that 26% of the variance in AIDS attitudes is explained by these 7 variables ($R^2 = 0.26$).

Figure 7: Path model of the effects of recall of the drama on identification with Boniswa, talking about AIDS and AIDS attitudes among viewers



The path diagram reveals that when 'talking about AIDS' and identification with Boniswa are included in the regression analysis of AIDS attitudes, recall of the drama is not statistically significant (hence, no arrow is shown). The diagram shows clearly that the drama has an *indirect* effect on AIDS attitudes by means of its direct effect on talking about AIDS with others and identification with Boniswa. If these two mediating variables were not measured or otherwise not included in the analysis, there would be a statistically significant, direct path between recall of the drama and AIDS attitudes. This is exactly what the propensity score analysis revealed. The same type of indirect effect was also

shown in the significant path between identification with Boniswa and talking about AIDS. Respondents who identified highly with Boniswa were also more likely to talk about AIDS with others (0.12). This means that identification has a direct effect on AIDS attitudes and an indirect effect through its effect on talking about AIDS. Continuing backwards in the diagram, it shows that recall of the drama has a *third indirect pathway* to identification, talking to others, and finally attitudes towards AIDS.

Attitudes towards AIDS were measured at wave one (the baseline) after the broadcast of the first four episodes of the drama, and then again after all 26 episodes at wave three. This made it possible to control for prior AIDS attitude in the regression analysis of AIDS attitude after the drama. Once prior AIDS attitude was taken into account, the effects of the remaining variables in the path diagram (and regression analysis) were only on the 'change in AIDS attitude' (the difference between wave one and wave three). The significance of taking this into account is particularly apparent given that one's AIDS attitude at wave one before the drama unfolded (shown in the left-hand column as t-1) is the best predictor of one's AIDS attitude at wave three after the broadcast of all 26 episodes (0.23).

Also notice that the size of the effect of talking to others about AIDS (0.20) is about as strong as one's prior attitude (0.23). The size of the effect of identification with Boniswa on AIDS attitude (0.10) is about the same as knowing someone with AIDS (0.12), being female (0.10), learning about AIDS from other shows on television (0.11), and level of education (0.14).

It is evident that the pathways to improved attitudes towards HIV/AIDS are complex and act in both direct and indirect ways. The fit indices shown in the box in the lower right hand corner of the diagram indicate that this model fits the survey data quite well. The fact that probability of the Chi-square statistic (72.74) is greater than 0.05 indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the model and the data. The comparative fit index (CFI) for the model as a whole is 0.969 (maximum of 1.00), which also indicates a high degree of fit of the model to the data. The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) indicates that the residual variance after fitting the model to the data is quite low (0.019). Values of RMSEA less than 0.05 are considered to indicate a close fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1993).

Since talking about AIDS topics raised in the drama has an important effect on changes in AIDS attitudes, it may be a good communication strategy to optimise such a possibility by more actively promoting discussion around the series by other means, such as through radio talk shows, discussion in churches and schools, and so forth. This was not done during the broadcast of episodes 1-26. It appears that the more interpersonal discussion generated around the series, the greater its impact will be on attitudes towards AIDS and living with HIV/AIDS. The findings also suggest that a character that the audience is expected to identify with, such as Boniswa, should have dramatic scenes in the drama in which she herself talks about AIDS with others. In this manner, the character can model

for the audience how to talk about AIDS, especially in terms of language use, attitude, and emotion.

Talking to others about topics related to HIV testing

A similar statistical analysis was conducted to examine the pathways from recall of the drama to HIV testing as a societal means of prevention. Table Four presents the percentages of those respondents who watched the drama who have spoken to others about topics related to VCT. A score for each respondent was constructed by summing up the number of these topics they said they had discussed.

Table 4: Further discussion of HIV/AIDS topics with others

Topic	%
HIV prevention	52.0
HIV testing	42.7
HIV disclosure	32.6
Supporting people with HIV	41.9
AIDS stigma	36.9

Viwe, one of the central characters in Tsha Tsha was shown getting a blood test at a clinic to determine her HIV status. This plot line was one of the most important elements related to AIDS prevention and living with HIV/AIDS in the first thirteen episodes (series one). A full path analysis like the one above was not conducted because the outcome variable, getting tested, is a categorical variable (yes/no), rather than a continuous variable like AIDS attitude. However, a multiple regression analysis confirmed the expected relationships between recall of the drama, talking about VCT to others consequent to the drama, getting tested for HIV, and identification with Viwe. The results showed that the higher the level of recall of the drama, the greater the number of VCT topics discussed (0.21) and the greater the likelihood of getting tested oneself (0.11). Higher recall of the drama was not significantly related to identification with Viwe. However, the greater the identification with Viwe, the greater the number of topics discussed (0.16) and the greater the likelihood of getting tested for HIV (0.12).

Key findings from the panel study

- Exposure to Tsha Tsha had a positive, direct impact on attitudes towards AIDS and living with HIV/AIDS, and on important behaviors required to prevent getting HIV/AIDS, controlling for other (confounding) factors.
- Identification with characters in a drama was measured and explained in terms of the perceived qualities of the characters.
- Identification with the two leading female characters played an important mediating role for the effects of the drama on viewers. Identification with Boniswa was related to improvements in AIDS attitudes and identification with Viwe was related to getting an

HIV test to help prevent AIDS. Identification with both female characters was related to the audience talking about more topics related to AIDS.

- Recall of the drama was found to have direct effects and indirect effects by means of identification with female characters and getting the audience to talk to others about AIDS and VCT topics featured in the drama.
- The observed relationships among these variables were consistent with the objectives of the drama and with the intent of the writers who designed the drama and who wrote the scripts.

QUALITATIVE STUDY

Research design

Focus groups discussions were conducted separately for male and female participants in each study site. Participants were drawn from the panel sample, and were required to be regular viewers of Tsha Tsha. Semi-structured question guides were used to inform the research.

The focus groups were conducted at the end of the broadcast period of the first 13 episodes of Tsha Tsha. Participants were able to engage in discussion in their home language and sessions were audiotaped. Tapes were then translated and transcribed. Topics explored in the focus group discussions included: the viewing context; highlights of Tsha Tsha; aspects least and most liked about Tsha Tsha; responses to the small town setting; discussion following each broadcast; changes in ideas or actions as a result of watching Tsha Tsha; reflections on HIV testing; reflections on HIV disclosure; reflections on Andile's caring for his mother; and discussions about the relationships between the drama's characters.

In addition, a series of individual interviews were conducted after the broadcast of 26 episodes. Twelve respondents aged between 15 and 33 were recruited from the surrounds of Johannesburg, Grahamstown and Obanjeni through convenience sampling in combination with snowballing approaches. Perceptions of the series, likes and dislikes, resonance of the series and reflections on direct and indirect effects of the series, were explored during the interviews.

Tape-recorded data was translated, transcribed and analysed using computer-based qualitative analysis software.

RESULTS: QUALITATIVE STUDY

These findings are based on research data from all focus groups and interviews conducted. The data thus includes reflections on the series at various stages of broadcast over the 26 episodes. In general, Tsha Tsha was seen as an entertaining series, and was perceived as

valuable in terms of educational dimensions: "Geez man, it's superb, you know, I like it. It's a local brand and it's brilliant. It makes you think as well"[9]; and "Tsha is fine because it is educational drama. It also shows us how as families to deal with HIV/AIDS if one has been infected and affected by the disease. Tsha is enjoyable and fun to be watched".[10]

Setting

Tsha Tsha is set in a small, impoverished rural town with a view to portraying an alternative frame of reference to the dominance of urban-based local television drama. The setting allows for an exploration of the interplay between the limitations of growing up in a context of poverty and the need to develop self-efficacy. A number of themes emerged in relation to the setting, including realism and novelty; rural and urban lifestyles; expanding worldviews; and cultural resonance and divergence in values.

Realism and novelty

The portrayal of rural life was seen to be realistic, novel and original in the context of local South African television drama. This aspect was related to the concept of being African and being rooted in a rural environment.

> *It's superb… It's an African thing. It's a local thing. I like that.*[11]

> *I think the setting was crispy man. I mean the way they emulate Lubusi rural area and, like, you know seeing goats running across and mamas that are selling veggies on the pavements, and you've got quite a noise pollution from the taxi guy. It's crystal clear what is happening in the rural area. I like that. It reminds us of where we come from as individuals and I think it is quite superb.*[12]

The value of showing life in a small town, and the novelty of seeing a rural setting portrayed on television, was appreciated for providing insight into life in such places. Tsha Tsha's portrayal of rural areas provided a sense that enriching experiences could occur in spite of resource constraints.

> *It is good that everyone should see how we live…It shows…that you can have an interesting drama even if the setting is rural, no matter how small the town is.*[13]

> *It showed that South Africa has the potential to produce good things. For example, most people are very much familiar with urban lifestyles like Johannesburg, so it was nice to experience another lifestyle… Even if the province is small and poor, there is always something good that can come up from a certain place.*[14]

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9 P4: H&N Tsha2 Eval Transcript2.txt p. 9
10 AT Tsha2 GHT transcript1.doc p. 1
11 P4: H&N Tsha2 Eval Transcript2.txt p.28
12 P4: H&N Tsha2 Eval Transcript2.txt – 4:8 (181:185)
13 Gtn M Rnd 2.txt - 2:43 (445:459)
14 VLRS M Rnd2.txt - 6:22 (246:256)

Participants also described the need to be sensitive to the culture of Lubusi and the values and differences between urban and rural contexts. This contributed to a sense of respect for 'other' cultures.

> *I saw a comparison of two different cultures, and the lesson that it is always important to respect other people's cultures. As you see with DJ, he was from a township and he moved to a small rural place. He had no respect for those people, he used to speak 'tsotsi taal'*[15] *and no one could understand him, and I think what they're showing us here, or what I've seen, is that when you move to live with other people you've got to learn their culture and respect it so that you also feel accepted by those people.* [16]

These perspectives confirm the value of setting the series in a rural area – particularly given that the setting opens up possibilities for debate around cultural heterogeneity and affirmed the value of different cultural perspectives. This perspective was, however, not uniform, and some participants living in Grahamstown commented on portrayals which they believed were inconsistent with their understanding of rural life. For example, the Satisfaction, a bar where youth are seen drinking alcohol, was singled out as being unrealistic, given that the levels of poverty and unemployment common to such rural areas were unlikely to allow for high levels of alcohol consumption.

> *[Tsha Tsha] is unrealistic in some ways because there is a difference between rural way of living and urban ones. The activities of rural areas are not the same when compared to urban areas. The issue of alcohol for instance, people in rural areas do not have that kind of life to be in bars and buy alcohol at all times.*[17]

However, participants from the rural area of Obanjeni spoke about how the depiction of youth indulging in sex in combination with drinking alcohol reflected their own experiences, and this was interconnected with unemployment and boredom.

> *Sex and alcohol seem to go together. I am also exposed to that situation. To go and do the 'jol' (party) and having one-night stands. We do have some taverns and shebeens in my area. We as the youth, we drink a lot. Drinking is something we do because of the high unemployment rate and it is the thing to while away time.*[18]

> *I can give Tsha Tsha ninety percent in showing reality in terms of sex and alcohol. This is what really is happening even in my village. There is nothing to do and we take sex and alcohol as something [to fill] time.*[19]

Rural versus urban lifestyles

The rural setting of Lubusi was equated with concepts of community life - caring, involvement, and responsibility for one another - and was encompassed in the overall

15 Slang, typically spoken in urban townships
16 Obanj M Rnd 2.txt - 4:11 (47:56)
17 P 2: AT Tsha GHT transcripts.txt – 2:4 (35:39)
18 AT Tsha2 Obanjeni transcript2, p. 5
19 P 1: AT Obanjeni transcripts.txt – 1:65 (427:430)

notion of 'ubuntu'. In comparison, urban life was seen as alienating, as 'impersonal and uncaring'. Urban respondents who were familiar with, or had knowledge of community life, expressed this sentiment. For example, a 25 year-old Xhosa speaking male, who was born and grew up in the Eastern Cape, but who was currently living in Johannesburg, described what he thought were the essential differences between urban and rural life. He noted that this aspect was an additional motivating factor for watching the programme.

> *Participant: We learn a lot from Tsha Tsha. A lot of things…. You know what I learn it's about this guy, DJ. This guy, he's from Johannesburg… You know the life here in Johannesburg, it is for each and every person just 'It's none of my business'. But when you go out there in the Eastern Cape you will see there each and every person is caring about you… they are responsible for you as you grow up.*
>
> *Interviewer[20]: So in Johannesburg you're a bit more isolated? You're not so connected to people…*
>
> *Participant: Ja, that's the thing. Johannesburg - 'It's none of my business man' you know. You know, like how we are living in Johannesburg, urbanised life, but in Eastern Cape they are living the life, the community life. So there is no community life here. It's like when you are in suburbs there's no person who greets you even if he or she is your next door [neighbour]. Just go do what you do. There in Eastern Cape they took DJ on circumcision school. They made DJ to be responsible because he's getting old now so he's supposed to get some responsibilities, because he can run his uncle's business, he must do this and this and he must get circumcised because he's growing up. But here in Johannesburg, there's nothing like that, you understand. So I like it more when it becomes that, the rural life and the urban life.[21]*

Events, practices, and activities referred to as examples of being part of a caring community included dance, initiation rituals and rites of passage, and the general involvement of the community in the wellbeing of its members.

> *I mean now he [DJ] is trying to fit in with the people of rural area, because now there is a part whereby Andile is about to go to Jozi and he is raising funds… They are so close man, they are very connected. I like that spirit and what I like about DJ, he doesn't… want to import that he is from Johannesburg. He fits in quite well.[22]*

Expanding worldviews

Both urban and rural participants described how viewing Tsha Tsha had offered them insight, and at times 'learnings' about life in a place that was different to where they lived. Some participants held preconceptions about what life was like in other places. A 15-year old male urban respondent described how he has had no experience of rural life, and that

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[20] The person who conducts the individual interviews is referred to as the interviewer. The person who facilitates focus groups is referred to as the facilitator.
[21] P 3: H&N TSHA QUAL EVAL SERIES 2.txt – 3:16 (253:271)
[22] P 4: H&N Tsha2 Eval Transcript2.txt – 4:23 (320:323)

he was taken aback to see that there was life – 'goings-on' – in a rural area that was similar to his experience of urban life.

> *Participant: The setting is attractive. In the rural area, in a place like this, that something like this could happen!*
>
> *Interviewer: Something like?*
>
> *Participant: Something like Andile and Viwe dancing and then Andile comes to Gauteng because he is a good dancer. Viwe, ah, she's like teaching people how to dance and then…working at a beauty salon. Then there will be a tavern, they will dance there. I was so surprised.*
>
> *Interviewer: To see that this could happen in a rural area?*
>
> *Participant: Ja.*
>
> *Interviewer: Do you like the rural setting?*
>
> *Participant: Yes, yes. I like it. It's nice. I never thought it would be like this. You know that there will be a town, that there are people saying, 'Oh ja, what's up man?' something like this.*[23]

HIV/AIDS and homosexuality were discussed by participants and these illustrated the point that Tsha Tsha introduced new concepts to viewers which challenged their sense of 'geographical' heterogeneity. The point about HIV/AIDS not being a 'big city' problem, was made by an 18year-old male living in Obanjeni:

> *The drama did influence me a lot because it has taken place in the rural area, which literally tells us that not everything is in the big cities. The issue of HIV/AIDS is all over and is real.*[24]

The inclusion of a storyline in the series about lesbianism drew a lot of interest and was talked about by most participants and elicited strong responses. One participant said that such relationships were treated with disdain in his community. This was attributed to ignorance and to living in a small community which was not informed about, nor exposed to, such phenomena.

> *As we are coming from the rural area the issue of gay and homosexual relationships – we are not exposed to them. Maybe it is an issue of those who are staying in the big cities that they really know about it. But to us we disapprove of such relationships. What we hear is that this kind of gay relationship happens in prison and is known as sodomy… Another friend of mine commented that if someone came to the village and wanted to have a gay relationship with his girlfriend, he would kick that woman. This shows that we are hostile in that kind of relationship, as we are not exposed to it. It is good that it has been shown in the Tsha drama so that we can be able to see what is happening outside our village, as we are also part of community who*

23 P 5: H&N Tsha2 Eval Transcript3 (1)_.txt – 5:42 (728:749)
24 AT Tsha2 Obanjeni transcript2, pp. 1-2

deserve to know what is happening around the world without being left in the dark.[25]

In the case of this participant, the portrayal of gay relationships in Tsha Tsha resulted in reflection to the point that it appears to have been transformative:

Tsha shows a very interesting part of gay relationships. It also shows how the community, especially in the rural areas, should accept gay issue. I think the reason is that the community must respect each one's feelings and how he or she wants to live in life. In a nutshell, the community must respect each one's feelings.[26]

In another example, a participant described how the drama series expanded his world-views through creating awareness of social phenomena, such as lesbianism. This was related to the perceived realism of the series.

Like when that girl who Cedric wanted to rape, Mandisa… Boniswa opened her arms and said: 'You can come and live with me', and Boniswa and Mandisa lived together for two days… and then they kissed. I said, 'Oh, this thing really happens. I didn't know that it's for real'.[27]

Cultural resonance and divergence in values

Whilst Tsha Tsha attempts to represent the culture of Lubusi (which is in turn, related to that of Peddie, the small town where the series is based), it is not always possible to achieve an authentic representation. This could be seen, for example, in the series' portrayal of circumcision and the status of women. With regard to circumcision, these differences were only likely to be known by participants who had been part of communities where Xhosa circumcision rituals are practiced:

Participant: When DJ comes back from the bush, the whole issue was depicted differently from what we know.

Facilitator: When you say it wasn't the way you know it, do you mean it was just different or are you saying it was wrong?

Participant: It was wrong.

Participant: It was not right in that he did not cut off his hair, as is the custom; he was greeting everyone when he was supposed to be looking down respectfully. Even with the ceremony held in his honour, you don't play that kind of music, and he was also sitting on a chair chatting, eating and drinking with the crowd!

Participant: It was also wrong of him to go off with a girl after he had been drinking.

25 AT Tsha2 Obanjeni transcript2, pp. 2-3
26 AT Tsha2 Obanjeni transcript2, p. 1
27 P 5: H&N Tsha2 Eval Transcript3 (1)_.txt - 5:47 (898:908)

Participant: He also should have gone to the dam to wash but he washed in the bath.[28]

Although participants recognised that DJ might relate to the practice differently, there remained a concern that circumcision was being portrayed incorrectly and that such a portrayal on television might have negative effects in relation to the relative rigidity of the ritual itself.

Participant: Because people always follow a trend that is set on TV. This is a real problem for us because once people see something on TV they want to do it, especially young people. For this reason I feel that a lot of young people will be misled by what was shown there. He should have been shown doing the proper thing, even if he's from Johannesburg.

Participant: Yes, we didn't even see how he had lived in the bush, and the traditional 'play of sticks' by old men to welcome initiates was not shown.

Facilitator: Even the old men on the scene do not reprimand him for all the wrong he's doing. He's not supposed to wear pants under the blanket. It misrepresents the culture and affects the way you feel about the drama, as these discrepancies are very notable. [29]

One participant expressed strong opinions about the depiction of circumcision being an opportunity to engage with current related health issues, and disappointment that this did not take place.

Last year or two years back there was an issue of initiates in the Eastern Cape dying… The issue there was the weapon being used to do it, to cut the foreskin.[30] *They are quite bad on that and like whether it's been cleaned and whether it's the right weapon to use… That wasn't really explored…. The issue is quite contentious in the rural areas in the Eastern Cape and partly in Cape Town. But now in Tsha Tsha, I don't know what happened. They were just like you know, very superficial about it…I think it's a bit rosy…one-sided.*[31]

Women's status within marriage was discussed from a cultural perspective, with participants focusing on Mrs Sibaya's relationship with her husband. Clearly, participants wanted to see Mrs Sibaya take a clear and firm position toward her bullying husband, but they also expressed that the subservient role assumed by Mrs Sibaya was in line with 'cultural tradition'. In other words, though some participants do not support the discriminatory treatment of women, they agree that Tsha Tsha provides an accurate portrayal of what they deem to be 'culture' or tradition.

Interviewer: Have you noticed anything about the gender roles and the way males and females tend to be portrayed?

28 Gtn F Rnd 2.txt - 1:7 (32:50)
29 Gtn M Rnd 2.txt - 2:20 (161:188)
30 The 'weapon' referred to has to do with the use of a sterile cutting instrument to avoid infection, and potentially HIV infection.
31 P 4: H&N Tsha 2 Eval Transcript2.txt p. 2

Participant: You see, I think from Xhosa families, it is realistic. The position that has been taken by that father, it is realistic. Because I know we've got that thing that a father is a father, you can't change him. He's like a dictator in the house. If he issues orders, they must accept that. So I will understand the person, you see the lady, the mother, is taking a submissive position there. It's because of the tradition there.[32]

The role of dance

Dance was incorporated into the series as a mechanism for providing a space for young people to meet, and to explore aspects of relationships. There was a clear sense that viewers were attracted to watching the series because they initially believed it to be about ballroom dancing and that this concept was captivating.

First of all I thought it's a dance thing you understand. Because in the Eastern Cape there was this thing we call it 'cha cha cha', where the people gathered and dance and all those things. The first time I saw it, I thought it was a dance thing and I was interested in it. Because I also like dancing, but I don't know how to dance.[33]

There was a concern that the link between the role of dance and HIV/AIDS was not clear. Tsha Tsha was seen to be popular and to draw its audience based on its strong branding as a drama about ballroom dancing, yet it was often simultaneously perceived to be an HIV/AIDS drama.

For me it [Tsha Tsha] is enjoyable, but now I'm looking at the title itself…'Tsha Tsha'. Initially I thought it was about dance, these people are about dance. I mean when they start talking about AIDS I'm battling to understand the link between the title and what is happening in the series itself, because if you analyse it, it's about AIDS, teaching people about AIDS, but Cha Cha the dance, what is the relationship? I found it difficult to find the link between the two.[34]

Maybe they can little bit swerve the name Tsha Tsha to be portraying about HIV/AIDS, because everything there, it's all about HIV/AIDS, you understand, because Tsha Tsha, it's something else to me. As I told you that I thought it was about dancing, when the series go ahead, 'Ei man, this thing is having a lot of things to do with HIV/AIDS' you understand… Maybe they must change the name a little bit…swerve it a little bit, because this thing it's all about HIV/AIDS now.[35]

These perspectives are related to the broader development of the Tsha Tsha series at a conceptual level – i.e. that over time, the meaning of the words 'Tsha Tsha' shift from being associated with dance to an association with the values within the series that include HIV/AIDS.

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32 P 9: HN Tsha2 Eval Transcript1.txt - 9:79 (916:930)
33 P 3: H&N TSHA QUAL EVAL SERIES 2.txt – 3:12 (222:225)
34 P 9: HN Tsha2 Eval Transcript1.txt – 9:20 (247:263)
35 P2: H&N TSHA QUAL EVAL SERIES 2.txt p. 17

Dance was also perceived as intended – as a metaphor for engaging with the world. This was captured by one participant who described how willingness to 'dance' (or engage with the world) had at its core, the belief in one's self and ability to succeed, and not giving credence to factors that erode one's self-confidence, for example, other's opinions, or one's physical attributes.

> *Interviewer: What do you think of the dancing in Tsha Tsha?*
>
> *Participant: Dancing in Tsha Tsha is nice. It's telling other people that if you are out there dancing, you can be successful in life. It's not like people saying, 'Ugh, we won't make it 'cos our bodies are fat, or we are lazy', or just to Cha Cha for fun.*[36]

Dance was also perceived as reflecting the spirit of 'ubuntu' at community level – an aspect that was identified as typifying rural life. Dance was seen as creating common spaces for people to be together, and this was seen as being different to the relative social isolation in urban environments.

> *We learn a lot from Tsha Tsha. A lot of things…. HIV/AIDS and urbanisation, and also the dance, you understand? The dance, like I like dance but I don't know how to dance… I also like the dance. It's inspiring me. It shows the ubuntu… It shows togetherness because in rural areas most of the people they are always, they are together… So that they gather in one place and do something valuable, something that can put them somewhere… because in rural areas, what I believe in, when you are in rural areas there are no facilities there [so] dance it's one of those things we can do.*[37]

In addition to dance being seen as a 'link' to community life that nurtures a sense of belonging, it was also seen as a uniting factor that kept youth occupied and off the streets.

> *Interviewer: What would you say about the type of dancing taking place there…. ballroom dancing?*
>
> *Participant: Mmm, well, the dance is perfect, like it collects the youth from doing bad things, so it unites the youth…. It's like a sport.*[38]

In relation to dance, it was pointed out that the opening dance sequence and music, which depicts the beating of drums and a distinct 'African' style of dance, was inconsistent with Latin American ballroom dancing (i.e. the form of dance that is actually portrayed in the series).

> *When I see the beating of the drums - I mean, that kind of dance is not depicted in the Tsha Tsha scene… But now if they were doing ballroom, then I think it would unite quite well with the ballroom dance school that they have in the scene.*[39]

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36 P5: H&N Tsha2 Eval Transcript3 (1)_.txt – 5:33 (595:599)
37 P3: H&N TSHA QUAL EVAL SERIES 2.txt – 3:19 (286:300)
38 P 13: VM Tsha Qual Evl Srs3Obanjeni2.txt – 13:23 (295:306)
39 P 4: H&N Tsha2 Eval Transcript2.txt – 4:58 (1183:1188)

If you had to say 'Tsha Tsha' and in the opening scene depicting these guys doing the Cha Cha, then that will be quite nice. But they not doing the Cha Cha in the opening scene, it's just like beating the drums and Viwe and Boniswa are just dancing. That is not Cha Cha. That is an African dance. That to me doesn't fit quite nicely with what is happening… We don't want to see African dance. We want to see the Cha Cha or the ballroom dancing.[40]

Identification with characters

The utility of identification as a theoretical approach in Tsha Tsha has been consciously integrated in the series development, including a central focus being on identification with the progress of lead characters through transformative situations. In the series, the interplay between the opportunities and limitations of the rural setting provides a useful context for highlighting the relationships between personal self-efficacy and environmental resources as factors in personal development. Tsha Tsha's characters face problems, go through processes of critically examining and reflecting on them, and adopt one or more strategies towards their solution.

In Tsha Tsha, identification occurred with a number of characters – particularly the lead characters. Andile, for example, coped with the adversity of his mother's death from AIDS, unemployment and needing to care for his sister. This was interpreted as representing what it means to be 'a man' and was linked to personal identification with the character:

What I really liked... this guy Andile... he was a man. He was a man to his mother, a father to his sister, the father she did not have... who passed away a long time ago. Even though he had nothing, no work, he persevered. He knew that his sister had to go to school and his mother needed vegetables, which she couldn't get herself anymore. We see him sleeping outside that business place waiting for the business owner to give him whatever job, even if it meant sweeping the floors in order for him to bring food home. I really wish I could be like him.[41]

The concept of Andile's representation of an alternative masculinity overlapped with the lesson that had to do with stretching the bounds of social definitions of masculinity:

I think it's a lesson to all who were watching Tsha... It teaches that caring for the sick is not a woman's job, it's everyone's responsibility.[42]

If it could happen now, perhaps you would first assume that your sisters will do the job, but you will remember how it happened in Tsha Tsha and that will definitely prick your conscience… Then you will realise that you too should be helping.[43]

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40 P 4: H&N Tsha2 Eval Transcript2.txt – 4:59 (1194:1204)
41 Obanj M Rnd 2.txt – 4:15 (67:77)
42 P 2: Gtn M Rnd 2.txt – 2:83 (797:801)
43 Gtn M Rnd 2.txt – 2:86 (827: 831)

Identification with Viwe was particularly strong. In the series the character offered an interplay between her social status as the girl in the town who has wealth and beauty, but at the same time was struggling with her HIV status. She was recognised for her leadership and courage in relation to her transition over time. Her courage in the context of adversity resonated strongly, including with viewers who were themselves living with HIV. This included supporting the disclosure of one's HIV status and was particularly strongly felt in relation to Viwe:

> *What I like best is when Viwe accepts that she is HIV positive and disclosed her status. I was also diagnosed as HIV positive and did not know what to do or who to tell. But the way Viwe discloses her status also gave me courage not to be scared about my situation that I am living HIV positive. It also gave me courage to tell my girlfriend that I have tested and results were that I am HIV positive. She also went for testing and her results also were HIV positive.*[44]

> *I like the way Viwe is approaching things. First we must understand that Viwe is HIV positive. She disclosed to her parents that she is living with the virus. But her father did not take her HIV positive status well. Although her father did not support her, instead had an attitude to her, Viwe was not that disappointed, instead became a strong character. It educated us youth that whatever problem you are having, go and tell your parents. If they take it or not, is their own business. It also comes to the situation if you tested HIV positive that is not the end of the world.*[45]

> *The thing I like most about the drama is Viwe's character. She accepts that she is HIV positive and that means it is not the end of the world. She was denying it at first but as time goes came to terms with that particular situation. Disclosure is another important factor because it takes some courage to do that. The thing is to accept your situation first, then you disclose. Just as what Viwe has done, to tell herself that she is living with the virus, then she discloses.*[46]

A similar relation was found with Boniswa. She was seen as approaching life from a different perspective. She was honest and open about her life and her feelings, and was thus seen as a positive role model. This was related to the participants' own situations.

> *Boniswa, you see that she has an attitude so when you compare yourself, you will want to change and develop from that.*[47]

> *What I can highlight in the drama that is similar to my situation is Boniswa's story. Boniswa is a single mother, and on the other hand furthers her education. It is not easy to look after your child and at the same time be involved in studying. I know from my experience [as] a mother of an eight-year-old child. I want to do what Boniswa is doing and I know I am capable of furthering my studies and looking after my child. Boniswa gave me courage*

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44 AT Tsha2 GHT transcript2.txt p. 1
45 P 1: AT Obanjeni transcripts.txt – 1:16 (72:80)
46 AT Tsha2 GHT transcript1.doc p. 1
47 VLRS M Rnd2.txt - 6:27 (326:329)

> *to do so… I will simply adopt Boniswa's style in order to grow in life without depending on anyone.*[48]

> *I mean, she's working in a shebeen, and she wants to get a degree. I like that as well. It shows perseverance. Because I mean it's like even if you are poor you can get a degree regardless.*[49]

DJ, who is largely portrayed as an anti-hero in the first thirteen episodes, was perceived as behaving unacceptably, holding a superior attitude, and being 'tough'. However, it was noted that he was able to adjust and change – and he could be forgiven for his shortcomings:

> *We can't blame DJ for everything. There are also good things about him. When Boniswa was almost raped by that guy, DJ did not say it served her right, but he comforted her. Even when he had sex with that girl he might have had incorrect information or belief. Boniswa tried to reason with him to show him that he was wrong and DJ ended up accepting his mistake.*[50]

Participants identified the following key events and moments in the series as particularly memorable: portrayals of living openly with HIV; Andile's mother's funeral; Viwe's HIV testing; Viwe's HIV disclosure to her parents and to others; Mr Sibaya's rejection of Viwe; DJ's cultural ineptitude; gender relations; the attempted rapes of Mandisa and Viwe; Andile's strength of character; Wheels' lotto win; and incidents relating to sexual negotiation. They also related incidents that reflected their own experiences in life, suggesting that the series had resonated with them and caused reflection on their own life experiences.

There were some examples of Tsha Tsha being used referentially in community and social contexts – for example, being seen as imitating a character, or as representing a particular set of attributes:

> *In terms of imitating and calling a type of person by one of the character's names is so famous around here. Most of the young people imitate DJ's way of speaking as Zulu 'tsotsi taal'. To give you an example of what I am really saying, there is a small boy at Obanjeni Primary School who is named after DJ. He is well known as DJ, the way he does things, like walking, speaking and dressing. According to us as ladies, we like the way Viwe dresses. We imitate her in fashion and walks. Those are two characters imitated when it comes to fashion and style.*[51]

> *When DJ and Bonsiwa and Viwe and Andile are dancing, every day at school, at about lunchtime at the main hall, it's 'Let's go Tsha Tsha' and we dance cha cha cha. We dance cha cha cha..*[52]

48 P 1: AT Obanjeni transcripts.txt 1:25 (133:141)
49 P 4: H&N Tsha2 Eval Transcript2.txt 4:87 (1560:1580)
50 Obanj M Rnd 2.txt - 4:55 (379:385)
51 AT Tsha 2 Obanjeni transcript1 p. 4
52 P 5: H&N Tsha2 Eval Transcript3 (1)_.txt 5:32 (564:593)

There was also some concern that the portrayal of negative characters (e.g. Cedric and Mr Sibaya) and negative behaviours could lead to an unintentional process of legitimating negative behaviours.

> *The part I did not like is the attempted rape that was done by Cedric to Mandisa. That was the lowest point in the drama, because there are copycats who would do exactly what Cedric has done.*[53]

> *If you have been tested HIV positive some people would give you support and others make that distance from you. That is the situation and everyone must get used to it. There are positive and negative elements in communities that we live or grew up in. It is possible that you can be discriminated against, even by your biological father if found out that you are HIV positive. But I don't think that attitude should be condoned, as there are many copycats who will follow Viwe's father's trend.*[54]

> *[I did not like] Andile's excessive use of alcohol to confront his problems, as it gives a wrong impression to us that liquor can solve your problems.*[55]

One participant described that there were some young men in the community where he lived - that had taken on Cedric's character - imitating his actions and who even called themselves 'Cedric'. In the second quote, the participant described how he and his friends like Cedric.

> *There are some other people like Cedric, they act like Cedric. I ask them, 'Why do you take the negative side from Tsha Tsha? Cedric is acting so bossy', and then they say, 'Ugh, iskoko', it means, 'He's the boss, he's clever'… When I see them they act like Cedric, doing like he talk you know and saying, 'Oh, you are a fool, come join me, we have money'.*[56]

> *One thing we talked about was like Cedric… We think he's cool… He like bullies everybody, you know, he's like this deviant kind of person, he likes that deviant kind of stuff.*[57]

Impact of drama series in relation to HIV/AIDS

Tsha Tsha focuses on youth living in a world affected by HIV/AIDS and other social problems, such as alcoholism, poverty, unemployment and the like. There was a uniform response in both focus groups and interviews that identified Tsha Tsha as a series that was specifically to do with HIV/AIDS.

Overall, the drama was seen as important for its contribution in communicating about HIV/AIDS, and participants hailed it for its realism.

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53 P 1: AT Obanjeni transcripts.txt – 1:45 (288:291)
54 P 2: AT Tsha2 GHT transcript1.doc p. 3
55 P 2: AT Tsha GHT transcripts.txt – 2:60 (306:307)
56 P 5: H&N Tsha2 Eval Transcript3 (1)_.txt – 5:31 (514:551)
57 P 3: Kim Tsha transcript.txt – 3:21 (251:280)

[Tsha Tsha] It's doing a lot of things to me. Because we are youth, you understand? So it shows, it portrays clearly that HIV/AIDS, it's around us. It's not in other people. It's around us. We must be responsible for it. We must take care of ourselves, you understand. [58]

Increased knowledge and awareness

Self-reported learning about HIV/AIDS through watching Tsha Tsha was common among participants of the study. Knowledge gained about HIV/AIDS included understanding the difference between HIV and AIDS. In some examples, participants compared the symptoms of AIDS with the relative symptom-free picture of being HIV positive and healthy.

[Tsha Tsha] defined clearly the term HIV/AIDS and now I have a better understanding towards it. It defines clearly, because I know that there is a difference between someone who is HIV positive and the one who has AIDS. That if you are HIV positive you still have time to live in life, but AIDS you can die any time.[59]

It also comes to the situation if you tested HIV positive that is not the end of the world. The impression of the drama is to educate us [that] you can live longer in life even if you are HIV positive. To be HIV does not mean that you got AIDS.[60]

I learned about HIV that HIV doesn't make you a different person. What changes to you is that your immune system, your body is infected with HIV. It doesn't mean you are a monster, or that you come from another planet.[61]

Tsha Tsha helped to demystify ideas about 'who' is affected by HIV. Several participants reported learning that HIV/AIDS exists among all age groups, whereas they had previously thought it was a disease specific to youth.

Andile's mother, she was HIV/AIDS, you understand. She was HIV/AIDS but it surprises me, because each and every other person is saying: 'Ei, no man, this HIV/AIDS thing, it's for kids, it's for youth,' you understand. So it gives me the question mark. No, HIV/AIDS is also possible with the older people … It doesn't discriminate among people.[62]

Others described learning that class and wealth are not barriers that protect people against AIDS, and that no matter who you are, or how wealthy you are, engaging in risky sexual behaviour - such as unprotected sex - may result in HIV infection.

[Viwe] is coming from the rich family and being a spoilt brat, but now she is HIV positive, [she] made her lifestyle different. She got everything she wanted from her family and being model of Lubusi in terms of fashion. But now she has to get off her high horse. This shows that the HIV virus does not care how

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58 P 3 H&N TSHA QUAL EVAL SERIES 2.txt – 3:11 (212:214)
59 AT Tsha2 Obanjeni transcript2 p. 3
60 AT Tsha2 Obanjeni transcript 1 p. 2
61 P 5: H&N Tsha2 Eval Transcript3 (1)_.txt – 5:15 (162:191)
62 P 3: H&N TSHA QUAL EVAL SERIES 2.txt – 3:20 (310:319)

well off is your background, how poor are you, but it will get you if you are not playing safe. Viwe became a supportive and caring individual and that made a mark to others to learn from it.[63]

Tsha Tsha was successful in fulfilling key educational objectives of the series, including those of normalising AIDS and emphasising the humanity of living with the disease.

The affair of Viwe who is positive and Andile who is negative and both knew their status, but became lovers. This is to show people living with AIDS should be accepted and live a normal life in the community that they come from, not be ostracised.[64]

The experience of watching the drama has made me to fully understand those who are HIV positive or living with the virus. I will not treat them like dog but as human beings who deserve to live in life.[65]

Knowledge extended to the reality that HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are spread rapidly and that every one is at potential risk for infection. Infidelity was described as a prime example of how one can be at risk for HIV and STIs without even knowing it. Beliefs about being able to identify a person's HIV status based on physical appearance were acknowledged as incorrect, as was the idea that being in a relationship protected one from the dangers of HIV and STIs. Quite contrary to relationships being seen as 'safe', participants described learning that infidelity is a key example of how HIV and STIs are spread rapidly between people because of unprotected sex.

I think the major HIV lesson is that it is spread very rapidly. The way it's spread is scary. And the other major lesson is that we are all potential victims of HIV because you might think that you, um, especially when they show people who are still fine, who look okay, then you think that the person is fine, only to find that the person is already positive. So there is a lesson that this thing is spread very fast. And all of us we are faced with danger, because if you have a partner who is not honest with you and then is sleeping with another partner without using a condom, you might find yourself contracting this disease.[66]

Participants referred extensively to the Tsha Tsha storyline of DJ contracting an STI as a result of a one-night stand, and its impact on his relationship with Boniswa, when describing increased knowledge or awareness about HIV/AIDS and STIs.

Some participants described how watching Tsha Tsha had resulted in direct learning about HIV prevention and particular options/choices that could be taken up in pursuit of 'safer sex'. Tsha Tsha stood out as having provided a forum where condoms were normalised:

63 AT Tsha2 Obanjeni transcript 1 p. 3
64 P 1: Andile 1&2.txt – 1:27 (74:77)
65 P 1: AT Obanjeni transcripts.txt – 1:58 (376:382)
66 P 9: HN Tsha2 Eval Transcript1.txt – 9:74 (1162:1187)

> *This is also the case with use of condoms. The man forces you to have sex and refuses to use a condom even if you want to. This was also different in Tsha relationships, as no one appeared to have a problem with using condoms.*[67]

> *Ja, we have learned a lot from the series where it really says, 'No condom, no sex', but sometimes you find out that it is difficult. When you really want to have sex and there is no condom, and then you realise that without a condom, really, you are not safe.* [68]

The rationale of going for VCT was seen as an important element of HIV prevention:

> *I did have some discussions about various episodes with my close friends. We touch on issues about what we have gained from watching Tsha episodes. This resulted in debates about Viwe and Andile's relationship though Andile knew that Viwe is HIV positive. One of my friends told me that he would never engage in a relationship with someone that he knows is HIV positive. I asked him how he would know about if she is positive or not. He said they must go for HIV test before engaging in sex and use a condom. This shows that we are learning a lot from the drama and I was so surprised by the answer.*[69]

> *We are very lucky to have programmes like Tsha Tsha because now nine out of ten of us are very keen to go and test for HIV, so Tsha Tsha has played a big role in encouraging that. If you don't know your status it is more like you are living with it so it is better to know your status rather than not knowing, because if you know your status at least you will get counselling and you will know how to live positively with it.* [70]

Another participant reflected on the educational value of Tsha Tsha in highlighting behaviours that lead to sexual risk-taking, and resultant consequences. Tsha Tsha was perceived to provide important information.

> *The themes dealt with in Tsha Tsha are very important… Alcoholism is taking its grip and as the youth we must understand outcomes. Getting in casual relationships because of our drunkenness leads us to unprotected sex… The other thing I like about Tsha drama is to have awareness of risks we are taking, like to get STIs.*[71]

The role of alcohol in relation to risk-taking behaviour, including the consequence of sexual violence, was a theme that participants applied to themselves or to others in highlighting the dangers of being drunk.

> *I have discussed Tsha drama with my girlfriend who is also HIV positive but drinks a lot, trying to make her understand that getting drunk every time cannot solve our problems. To get drunk every day, you risk your life, especially when you are HIV positive. Reflecting on an example from Tsha drama is Viwe's drunkenness that ended up with her in the wrong place at the wrong time. [There was a] narrow escape from being raped by Cedric. So I*

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67 Gtn F Rnd 2.txt - 1:88 (631:636)
68 VLRS M Rnd2.txt - 6:66 (917:922)
69 P 1: AT Obanjeni transcripts.txt – 1:54 (334:341)
70 VLRS M Rnd2.txt - 6:45 (487:495)
71 AT Tsha2 GHT transcript1.doc p. 3

told my girlfriend that the same thing could happen [to her] if she won't stop drinking.[72]

Alcohol can lead you to things you not prepared to do. Once you drink and get drunk then you will end up doing something that you see is bad, but because you have drunk, you will do it.[73]

Living openly, disclosure and stigma

The concept of living openly with HIV was reflected on by participants. For example:

What I remember about Andile's mother, who was HIV positive, was that she had encouraged Andile. He was not ashamed of telling people that his mother was HIV positive and he also encouraged Viwe through saying that when you are HIV positive it is not the end of your life and you should live with other people. [74]

Living openly was also related to a process of resistance to perceived social norms – a process of standing up to others, and requiring courage. For example Viwe "wore the red ribbon to the funeral even though her father didn't want her to"[75], and that she "did not bow to pressure from her parents to hide the fact that she is HIV positive"[76]. In the case of Andile: "Although the priest had said they should not disclose, Andile wore a red ribbon to show that he wanted to make a public statement."[77] Vukile's disclosure to Viwe was also noted as showing strength of character.

Failure to disclose was noted as a feature of community life, as the following focus group discussion illustrates:

Participant: There is a huge problem with families who do not want members to disclose and 'bring disgrace upon the family'.

Facilitator: So would you say that in most cases people are willing to disclose, but it's their families who discourage this?

Participant: Yes, most people disclose to their families and, like in Viwe's family, parents especially do not want this to be known and therefore will forbid disclosure outside the immediate family circle.[78]

Issues around family disclosure were however also related to feelings of guilt and shame and participants drew on their own situations to describe these kinds of difficulties: "It would not be easy. I would be afraid that they would think that I had been promiscuous, that I was a bad girl."[79] Another noted: "The moment you disclose to a person she will then

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72 P2: AT Tsha GHT transcripts.txt – 2:50 (243:249)
73 P 13: VM Tsha Qual Evl Srs2Obanjeni2.txt – 13:9 (83:91)
74 VLRS M Rnd2.txt - 6:2 (31:37)
75 Gtn F Rnd 2.txt - 1:4 (20:23)
76 Gtn F Rnd 2.txt - 1:15 (97:99)
77 Gtn M Rnd 2.txt - 2:12 (97:100)
78 Gtn F Rnd 2.txt - 1:54 (362:372)
79 Gtn F Rnd 2.txt - 1:76 (583:591)

think that you had been with many boys, and you're also not using a condom, I think that is very scary, in fact I know it is frightening."[80]

However, failure to disclose was noted to limit the potential of community level support:

> *If the family does not admit to being sick from AIDS, the neighbours are kept at bay. People are willing to help but the family is closed off to any suggestions of help for fear that people will find out that they have AIDS.*[81]

Living openly was seen as a healthy choice for Viwe: "If she had kept her status to herself it would have haunted her and affected her physical and mental health badly. The fact that she was open about it was good."[82] Disclosure by a neighbour in the Grahamstown site was noted as being directly influenced by Tsha Tsha:

> *There is a woman who lives next door to me who disclosed and was helped to find support groups… She can now talk about her status openly… She says that she felt free to talk about her status after she had seen Viwe telling Andile about her status and she then felt strong enough to tell the people she lives with, and they gave her valuable advice and were very supportive.* [83]

In another instance:

> *I also know of someone who lives in my area… We had long been suspecting that she had the virus… She told me about it and specifically said that she had seen in Tsha that there was nothing wrong with telling people about it.* [84]

In Obanjeni, however, disclosure was viewed as being more complex: "Like I said before, it is difficult to tell something that you know will be difficult for the other person to deal with, you know it because it is difficult for you to tell. It is better to keep quiet."[85] It was also noted that disclosure was a step-by-step process:

> *To disclose to a person is a very difficult thing, you have to think carefully before you do it. A person could be very frightened or even distance herself from you, that's why I say when you decide to tell you should do it in such a way that the person sees that you have given it thought, so that when you finally tell you should be very comfortable with yourself. A person should see that you are still alive and you still have dreams. Don't tell a person while you are still uncomfortable with the news – deal with your own fears before you do it. If you have a group of friends don't tell them all at once, tell them one at a time.* [86]

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80 Obanj F Rnd 2.txt - 7:34 (377:381)
81 Gtn F Rnd 2.txt - 1:34 (194:199)
82 Gtn M Rnd 2.txt - 2:16 (128:132)
83 Gtn M Rnd 2.txt - 2:54 (553:565)
84 Gtn M Rnd 2.txt - 2:56 (567:571)
85 Obanj M Rnd 2.txt - 4:47 (335:338)
86 Obanj M Rnd 2.txt - 4:44 (319:330)

Change in attitudes, practices and behaviours

The findings described above touch on a range of issues to do primarily with increased knowledge and awareness. There were also more explicit references to changes in attitudes, practices and behaviours.

There were numerous examples of Tsha Tsha contributing to shifting attitudes. For example, in relation to people with HIV/AIDS:

> *It changed the way I used to think about people with AIDS. I used to think that people with AIDS were different from other people. I did not even think of them as living on the same planet as ourselves. I saw in Tsha Tsha that we need not discriminate against people with AIDS. We need to take care of them because I would expect the same from other people.*[87]

Increased knowledge about HIV/AIDS (including modes of transmission), was closely related to positive shifts in attitudes towards people living with the disease, and especially away from attribution of blame towards the development of empathy:

> *With me, it has changed the way I used to think about a person with AIDS… I used to tell myself that I wouldn't live together with a person with AIDS because I would contract it myself, but I learned that even if I touch a person with AIDS I won't contract it. I also used to tell myself that I wouldn't render any help to a person with AIDS because she would have caused it to happen to herself.*[88]

Empathetic attitudes towards people with HIV shifted towards the direction of acceptance:

> *The change I can mention is how I look at things differently. At first someone who is HIV positive I take as someone who has been careless and who likes to fool around. I never had an idea that one can be infected in many ways…. Now what I understand is that there are many factors related to being HIV positive. Now what I do know and understand is that these people are losing hope. I would like to tell them that they can live longer and to be HIV positive does not mean this is the end of the world. Everyone must think positive in life. I think I show them care and support.*[89]

> *I've learned from Tsha Tsha what to do in that situation, like when for instance a friend comes to me and says, 'I'm HIV positive', I don't say: 'Ja, I told you, ja, I said you going to get HIV because you did that and that'. I would give the support…. I would accept him.*[90]

> *I suppose it must be hurting to know that you are sick and must live under treatment for the rest of your life. But the way Viwe accepted her status and how she disclosed makes her feel stronger. This is a learning process to most of us that in life you come across such issues. People tend to look down upon*

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87 Obanj M Rnd 2.txt – 4:29 (168:174)
88 Obanj F Rnd 2.txt – 7:26 (299:308)
89 P 1: AT Obanjeni transcripts.txt – 1:28 (145:152)
90 P 5: H&N Tsha2 Eval Transcript3 (1)_.txt – 5:27 (452:464)

you when being tested HIV positive. Tsha has taught me how to treat and sympathise to the ones who are infected with the virus. If a person who is HIV positive comes to you and wants to share her or his situation by disclosing, you rather give support and sympathy and not judge that individual.[91]

Such empathy was also applied directly to some of the respondents' life circumstances – for example, to a relative who was living with HIV:

I have also a cousin sister who is HIV positive. But what I learned [from the drama] is to accept her instead of judging her situation. I also learned how to take care of others, like the way Andile is caring about Viwe and being responsible for his sister Unathi.[92]

Initial negative attitudes were not uniformly held, and the series also played a role in supporting and reinforcing existing positive attitudes:

For me it was not so much a question of Tsha changing the way I see things, but rather, the drama reinforced my beliefs. For example, in how to treat a person with AIDS, I have always believed that they shouldn't be treated differently.[93]

Whether positive attitudes were held or adopted, for some respondents these were developed to the point of imagining future commitments to the care and support of people living with HIV/AIDS:

This thing, it's all about maybe in the future, in my future, I can be more, more, more, more, more, more, more, more, more, more, more responsible about HIV/AIDS, that is the thing. I could take care of anyone next to me, or my friend, or my whatever, anyone who's affected by HIV/AIDS, you understand. It taught me to care, that is the thing. It's like I was caring, but not that much, but when it comes on Tsha Tsha, it made me care a lot.[94]

The example of Andile caring for his mother, resonated strongly as a concept of caring that worked against concepts of masculinity that were antagonistic to men as carers:

This guy Andile… made wonderful things to his family. Like his mother was sick so he was caring…. looking after her a lot, and looking after the family also. He was struggling to get money, to look after the family, so that is what I also like about Andile's behaviour…. Taking responsibility while at his age… Because what we believe in, we believe you can be responsible when you are reaching thirty years old… It was a good lesson, it was a good lesson to me, because I learnt, why, Andile is a man but he can take care of his mom… It's usually for girls, but showing that Andile was caring a lot, he didn't let his mom alone, that 'Uh no, you are HIV positive so I can't do it, you my sister, you can", you understand. That is what we believe in most cases with guys. So I like the way Andile treated his mom, that is the only thing, and he was

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91 P 1: AT Obanjeni transcripts.txt – 1:13 (48:56)
92 AT Tsha 2 GHT transcript1.doc p. 2
93 Gtn F Rnd 2.txt – 1:48 (319:324)
94 P 3: H&N TSHA QUAL EVAL SERIES 2.txt – 3:35 (672:677). Note that this respondent had also indicated that he himself was living with HIV.

struggling, he was struggling a lot, washing her, doing all the necessary things.[95]

The series also contributed to supportive values and concepts being conveyed to respondents who were themselves HIV positive. This included feelings of confidence:

The drama has changed the way I look at things. It gave me confidence that I must not be confined by my problems. Like to accept I am HIV positive, disclose my status so I can be free and live positively in life. Before the screening of Tsha drama I was alone and being frustrated individual. But after seeing the drama I acted different because I believe that there is a leeway even if you are HIV positive. It is better to know your status than not.[96]

Changes in attitudes extended to strategies for HIV prevention which included the expression of intentions to always use condoms when having sex and, or to reduce one's number of partners:

I also decided to myself that I must play careful in whatever I am doing in terms of sex. It is better to have one partner and to use a condom because it's difficult to abstain.[97]

The major one is the one I was talking about, that if your partner suddenly says, 'Let's use a condom' I'm not going to ask her why. In fact, I'll say, 'From now on, we'll continue using condoms'… before I would have asked. But now if she says, 'Let's use a condom' I'll say, 'Fine, we are not going to use a condom only today, we'll continue to use a condom until we go and test first'.[98]

Partner reduction and its relation to alcohol abuse, as well as being faithful, were also noted. In the case of the respondent cited below, the storyline was reconstructed in relation to its application to his own circumstances:

I can say that there is something that I have gained because you see, what I can say, maybe before I used to love girls, but I will reduce because I have seen where that leads to. And alcohol, alcohol, there they portray it in many ways which are taking place. So I think if ever I continue dealing with alcohol, I will end up in such conditions, or I will end up doing things that are not right.[99]

I would say I have changed because of watching it [Tsha Tsha], because sometimes I saw another episode, there's a girl ne, that girl was talking to Boniswa, then DJ and his friends came to this girl, they were many and then they just grabbed her. So once, I was doing that. I remember one day I was in that situation, so I realise it's not the right thing to have many boyfriends. So I changed when I saw that part.[100]

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95 P 3: H&N TSHA 2 QUAL EVAL SERIES 2.txt pp. 14-15
96 P 2: AT Tsha GHT transcripts.txt – 2:28 (229:234)
97 P 1: AT Tsha2 Obanjeni transcript 1 p. 2
98 P 9: HN Tsha2 Eval Transcript1.txt-9:55 (732-740)
99 P 13: VM Tsha Qual Evl Srs2Obanjeni2.txt – 13:11 (97:104)
100 P 6: H&N Tsha2 Eval Transcript4_.txt – 6:18 (453:463)

When Boniswa and DJ broke up but were still in love with each other and they come back again. I compared that situation with my girlfriend when we broke up and seemed to not care for each other but deeply we were both lying. The reason why Bonsiwa and DJ broke up is because DJ slept with Cedric's girlfriend. That made Boniswa to have fight with DJ and he did not even use a condom. She was asking him what risk did he take by not using a condom. Also mentioned that DJ is a womaniser that can't help himself. The same thing happened to me and my girlfriend. We had some differences over to give one some space because we are still young. She did not agree on that and that is when I had a one-night stand. She found out about it and was so furious and that is when she ended our relationship. We talked things out by promising her I will never be unfaithful again. She really understood what I was saying and rely on me.[101]

The series also affirmed existing practices – for example abstinence:

Participant: I like Boniswa's part, trying to convince DJ that: 'You can't have this at this stage, please you know'. That's fine. That was great…

Interviewer: It wasn't caused by Tsha Tsha, you were already doing it [practicing abstinence], but it affirmed it?

Participant: Ja, I think it might have elevated me to a different stage, I think so, but not made me do it. I think it might have enhanced what I am doing.[102]

Relationships and gender

For some, Tsha Tsha was perceived as providing positive role models for women – specifically the strength of character shown by Viwe and Boniswa who stood up for what they believed in. The male and female characters were seen as facing similar problems, and tackling them head on, irrespective of gender:

Tsha Tsha has shown that women can do it; wherever they want to be they can be, they have all the powers to do it. So no one should tell them that they couldn't do ABC and D because they are females, or you cannot do that because you are a man. So women should not look back and they should have power to do whatever they want to do in life.[103]

Tsha Tsha has shown me something especially with these two characters, Andile and Viwe, it was kind of equal because they've both faced difficulties. They both went to that dance competition, but they left their homes with difficulties. For example, Andile's mother was very sick at that time. Another thing that I've noticed is that there are four people there, Boniswa and DJ and Viwe and Andile and in their relationships I've noticed equality. You can't say Tsha Tsha has reflected boys as being more powerful than girls. [104]

[101] P 1: AT Obanjeni transcripts.txt – 1:25 (133:141)
[102] P 4: H&N Tsha2 Eval Transcript2.txt – 4:50 (970:984)
[103] VLRS M Rnd2.txt - 6:54 (673:679)
[104] VLRS M Rnd2.txt - 6:55 (682:695)

The notion of exploring gender power relations and portraying them as equal was not necessarily uniformly observed, and this was perceived critically:

> *I think power relations, I look at males as having more power in the whole series. Because you look at that teacher, he used his power to influence Boniswa by saying: 'I will help you with your schoolwork' and then tried to attempt to rape her. And then… Cedric. I mean there is male domination, it's like we are still living in this male-dominated world.*[105]

The concept of male domination was also perceived as being perpetuated through the character of Viwe's father, who remained unchallenged by his wife – for example, when he rejected Viwe following her disclosure of her HIV status.

> *I mean it is real, but she [Mrs Sibaya] is so quiet, she doesn't say much, geez man, she's got a lot of opportunity to say it. To say to her husband, 'Like you have to understand that our kid is suffering from this', but she is not [using this opportunity]. She is like a shadow to Viwe's father and I do not like that. I mean to me, it does not sit well with me.*[106]

The portrayal of DJ's circumcision and his subsequent casual sexual encounter with a young woman was also perceived as a contradiction to values embedded in traditional circumcision practices in a way that was disrespectful of women:

> *I think DJ lost track because when you are at the mountains one thing that they teach you is respect, they teach you how to respect other people and how to gain respect from other people. Bragging about your manhood is not what they teach you and sleeping around with women is not what they teach you, but what they really teach you is respect.* [107]

> *[What I did not like] was when DJ came from the mountains and then he slept with that girl, Angela…DJ was not acting so cool. He was like selfish to want to have sex just because he came from the mountain. That didn't mean that he was a man…He was acting like a boy, because he said he wanted to test his manhood.*[108]

It was also noted that the predominance of female HIV positive characters implied that women were more likely to be spreading HIV.

> *We don't see males playing the role of being positive. We see women coming up being positive. Now the message that we are getting here is that the infectors are women. We don't get a clear message that a man can also be infected.*[109]

The notion of female assertiveness when it came to choosing when to have sex, and the relationship between love and sex was also described:

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105 P 9: HN Tsha2 Eval Transcript1.txt – 9:73 (1138:1160)
106 P 4: H&N Tsha2 Eval Transcript2.txt – 4:6 (151:154)
107 VLRS M Rnd2.txt - 6:61 (760:775)
108 P 5: H&N Tsha2 Eval Transcript3 (1)_.txt – 5:11 (84:97)
109 P 9 HN Tsha2 Eval Transcript1.txt – 9:73 (1138:1160)

> *We have the belief that if your girlfriend refuses to sleep with you it means she doesn't love you, which is totally wrong. Sometimes a guy would say to a girl: 'If you say you love me then you should prove it by having sex with me'. This is totally wrong. Love does not mean having sex. You have to abstain.* [110]

This was however also viewed cynically by one participant: "I really don't understand what they mean by not being ready… how can an eighteen year old not be ready? What is she not ready with?" [111]

Lessons, values and problem solving

A theoretical principle underpinning Tsha Tsha is that the series should promote lessons that incorporate insights into critical thinking and problem solving. Tsha Tsha also promotes particular values, such as taking responsibility and living humanely.

There were many examples of problem-solving skills that respondents attributed to learning from Tsha Tsha. These included learning new approaches to addressing obstacles and problems. For example, the series provided insights into addressing the challenges of poverty and adversity through the development of a positive and confident attitude.

> *The drama did influence me a lot… It also touches how the person struggles in life. Like the issue of Andile, who is dealing with poverty and HIV/AIDS. Tsha has influenced me in that in any situation there are things you come across with. It is not always in life that you [are] born with silver spoon in your mouth. This is the situation of Andile who is caring and looking after his family. This has informed me a lot about how do go in life if things are going tough. You must not panic and things will get well for you.*[112]

Having dreams and the tenacity to pursue them were also identified as ways of overcoming adversity.

> *Boniswa had to write an essay, but she's tired. She wakes up at two or three and she's got a kid as well, but she wants to do this [study]. I like that edge… I mean you can do anything man, regardless of whether or not you are poor or what, you can do it. I mean she's a cleaner in a shebeen and a waitress but she's trying. She's trying quite hard… She comes home late, at midnight, she sleeps three four hours, she wakes up and she studies. And she's got a kid as well… It's beautiful… She wants to do it. I like the edge, the eagerness.*[113]

Believing in one's self and abilities was seen as key to success.

> *[Tsha Tsha] is good… We see people have different talents. Others are dancing, others are doing other things… It's a good thing to show that a person can do whatever she or he believes in doing, and that there is*

[110] Obanj M Rnd 2.txt - 4:23 (111:117)
[111] Gtn M Rnd 2.txt - 2:94 (910:912)
[112] AT Tsha2 Obanjeni transcript2 pp. 1-2
[113] P 6: H&N Tsha2 Eval Transcript4_.txt – 6:29 (865:888)

something that he or she needs to do to get to where they want to be. A person can succeed in anything that they like to do.[114]

In addition, having strength of character and not allowing others to unduly influence or erode one's self-confidence or beliefs, were seen as important to self-actualisation.

[I learn] you must also be a strong character in life and just forget about those who will undermine your style of living and how you approach things. Rather stay focus to things that can make you happy and alive.[115]

In another example, a young girl described learning that her life and its course was her personal responsibility, and expressed the realisation that peer pressure and listening to friends' advice was a recipe for disaster/failed relationships.

Well, I have learnt a lot from the drama that we as girls, there are many things that we are doing just to impress our friends, but I've learnt that one can do her things without consulting other people…. If you are in a relationship, you alone can make it succeed besides relying on friends, because friends can let your relationship down in such a way that you end up not understanding your role in that relationship.[116]

In the following examples, respondents described learning about the meaning of relationships and key concepts such as not being selfish, as well as trust, love, responsibility, and acceptance.

I see it as teaching us as youth because if we take a look at our dreams, everybody has a dream and there are many ways to make our dreams come true, and in relationships, the relationship is not only about sex, but it's also about loving each other, knowing each other and understanding and loving someone for who he is, irrespective of his background.

I liked the one of Boniswa and DJ when they first become like girlfriend and boyfriend. I liked it because it teaches us how to behave in a relationship, not to do this and that… It taught me that in a relationship it is not just about me, me, me, that it's always about me, but it's also about other people.[117]

What I like [about Tsha Tsha] was Andile and the way he's doing things, because at the end, he ends up being a dancer… he's a hard worker… Boniswa was working at the Satisfaction… when maybe she got some money she went to her mother and maybe gave her something because she had a child.[118]

The other thing the drama shows that everyone must be responsible in life. Look at the case of Andile when his mother died. Andile had to look after his sister Unathi and that is to take responsibility of being a parent.[119]

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114 P 12: VM Tsha Qual Evl Srs2Obanjeni2.txt p. 8
115 P 1: AT Obanjeni transcripts.txt – 1:19 (89:93)
116 P 12: VM Tsha Qual Evl Srs2 Obanjeni1.txt pp. 3-4
117 P 5: H&N Tsha2 Eval Transcript 3 (1)_.txt 5:10 (78:80; 145:153)
118 P 6: H&N Tsha2 Eval Transcript4_.txt – 6:31 (891: 902)
119 P 1: AT Obanjeni transcripts.txt – 1:43 (278:280)

For some, Tsha Tsha offered problem-solving- and life-skills about topics such as sex and communication.

> *I can't talk to my parents about sex. I learn it from TV and when I take my choice when I'm like with my girlfriend and then I'm like, I don't know what to do, I just ask my brother… 'When it's like this, what should I do?' and he tells me. But going to my parents, I can't. And sometimes when I watch Tsha Tsha I see, 'Oh, I should do this'.*[120]

> *So for me the lesson is that I don't trust blindly. And also, the other lesson is that communication can come in various forms. You shouldn't expect someone to say, 'This is the situation'. A person can tell you through their behaviour.*[121]

Participants identified the need for support when faced with problems or difficulties as critical for developing positive coping skills. Alcohol abuse was understood to be a negative coping mechanism.

> *The other thing I experienced in watching the drama is anyone will come vulnerable if they do not have support from their own family. Viwe has been put aside by her father because of her HIV status. Now facing those problems she sees alcohol as one that can mend broken heart. She loses hope and drinks.*[122]

> *The other thing [that stood out] is Andile who sees alcohol as problem-solving when things are going tough. Whenever he is in trouble, to resolve that situation he just hits the bottle. To me I can't solve my problems by drinking alcohol. Alcohol is making things worse than solving them. You can run and hit the bottle because you want to solve something, but that problem will not simply vanish but wait for you.*[123]

> *I've learnt a lot about how to solve your problems in life. That is not to hit hard the bottle when you want to solve your own problem. Rather stay in focus, be strong and think positive.*[124]

In a personalised example, one participant described learning the value of open communication and sharing of problems, which was contrasted with isolation.

> *Like um, ubani Viwe ne, when she told Andile about her HIV status, then I realised that it's not a right thing to keep quiet about a thing that's not right. You have to tell someone. Maybe that person will help you somewhere. So I started to change. I was like that, if there's something that bothers me, I can't talk to somebody about it. I learned that I have to talk to someone, maybe that person will help me.*[125]

This participant summed up the meaning the series had for her by saying:

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120 P 5: H&N Tsha 2 Eval Transcript 3 (1)_.txt 5:21 (302:316)
121 P 9: HN Tsha2 Eval Transcript1.txt – 9;74 (1162:1187)1
122 AT Tsha2 Obanjeni transcript 2 p. 4
123 P 2: AT Tsha GHT transcripts.txt – 2:33 (215:219)
124 P 2: AT Tsha GHT transcripts.txt – 2:9 (54:56)
125 P 6: H&N Tsha2 Eval Transcript4_.txt – 6:15 (284:315)

I learn about many things from it [Tsha Tsha], like HIV/AIDS, respect, trust and to be honest to other people.[126]

Critical perspectives

Though viewers who participated in the research study had overwhelmingly positive sentiments about Tsha Tsha, critical perspectives were also offered. These were often related to what were perceived to be limitations or shortcomings of the drama. These predominantly centered around sexual ambivalence in the context of having an HIV positive partner; concepts of law, order and justice; the meaninglessness of violence; the stereotypical portrayal of women as submissive (which has been addressed elsewhere in this report); explicit sex; and viewing times.

An aspect of HIV/AIDS that was identified as not being realistic was the ease with which Andile entered into a relationship with Viwe, showing no ambivalence or concern about being involved with a person who was HIV positive. Some viewers thought that given Andile had lost both his parents to AIDS, he would not necessarily want to engage in an intimate relationship with someone who was HIV positive.

Say you fall in love with this person… the person says: 'I'm HIV positive, but here are the condoms. We can use them'. You are not going to say, 'No, I understand'… Andile, it's not realistic his part. If you look at Andile, the way he portrays, 'No, I understand these things about AIDS'. Yes, it's true that his mother was HIV positive but… I should think he would be more skeptical than anyone else, because eventually his mother died. Now he wants to engage in sex with this woman. He says, 'No, we can use condoms'. I don't think that any person can accept that easily. When we use condoms we always say we use condoms to protect ourselves from AIDS, but if the person says to you, 'I'm positive, here are the condoms', I doubt that people would engage in sex. It will take time. It's going to be difficult.[127]

Some participants were vocal about the absence of action following the attempted rapes of Viwe and Mandisa and pointed these out as areas that needed to be followed up and resolved. There was a strong sentiment that the crimes should have been reported to the police, and these were linked to concepts of portraying law and order, as well as to women's rights.

The issue of attempted rape by Cedric is the bad one. Mandisa should have reported Cedric. I believe that South African citizens do have rights. If someone has tried to violate your rights and that is where you should take her or him to the court of law.[128]

The issue which is not quite clear to me is the attempted rape of Mandisa and Viwe by Cedric. Rape is rape, even if it is attempted one. For me it was

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126 P 6: H&N Tsha2 Eval Transcript4_.txt – 6:6 (44:53)
127 P 9: HN Tsha2 Eval Transcript1.txt – 9:26 (315:322)
128 P 1: AT Obanjeni transcripts.txt – 1:149 (306:309)

supposed Mandisa and Viwe to open a case about Cedric, not just to leave him that there was nothing happened.[129]

But now in that scene to me, it was like… no follow up, nothing, nothing from Viwe. Viwe didn't go to the police, she didn't even bother to lay a charge… It was like Viwe took it trivially, but to me it's a huge thing that needs to be investigated. [130]

The portrayal of violence in the series – particularly the taxi violence – was questioned. The violence was seen as detracting from the overall tone of the series, but also represented in a way that was not meaningful.

I don't want to see [taxi violence]. No, no, ugh, please not, man… I think it would be too much because now there will be taxi violence competing against what we love… No, I think it would be too much. I think it would not link quite nicely, man, because having taxi violence and having a scene of HIV and AIDS, no, I don't think it would make sense to me.[131]

I would like to see for instance, like when they fight, I would like to see investigations, like show what happened, the problem between the taxis or taxi drivers.[132]

I'm not sure if the theme was about crime, the one where the taxi industry was fighting. Also that one was about crime but I'm not sure what message they were trying to put forward.[133]

The explicit portrayal of sex in the series was viewed as problematic by some participants in all three communities. This was a particular concern when the series was viewed with parents or grandparents. For example:

My grandmother enjoyed watching Tsha, but was uncomfortable with the sex scenes as she believes that older people should not be watching with 'children'. For example in the episode where DJ and Boniswa were making love, we couldn't watch it with her. [Second participant] Yes, they will either change the channel or ask that the TV be switched off… [134]

It was only with the sex scenes that there would be problems and this had to do with being embarrassed about watching them together (i.e. old and young). [Second participant] Yes, my mother changed channels when they showed the scene with Mimi and Andile having sex. [Facilitator] Were there children in the room? [Participant] No, it was just the two of us… it gets embarrassing. [Facilitator] Are you saying it is a problem for you to watch with your parents? [Participant] Yes, I know that my mother likes to come in when she hears stuff that interests her and so I turn the volume down when

[129] P 2: AT Tsha GHT transcripts.txt – 2:20 (105:108)
[130] P 4: H&N Tsha2 Eval Transcript2.txt – 4:17 (247:259); 4:18 (265:273)
[131] P 4: H&N Tsha2 Eval Transcript2.txt – 4:63 (1236:1253)
[132] P 5: H&N Tsha2 Eval Transcript3 (1)_.txt – 5:46 (874:888)
[133] P 9: HN Tsha2 Eval Transcript1.txt – 9:68 (1080:1096)
[134] Gtn F Rnd 2.txt - 1:44 (276:288)

steamy scenes are on so that she does not come in… so I don't have to watch with her… [135]

I used to watch it with my grandmother but then it got like embarrassing because of like all the sex scenes, so I would go and watch it at my friend's house… It's just not easy to watch it with my grandmother… She likes to watch it [Tsha Tsha], but when those types of scenes come up, it's a bit awkward for her.[136]

In some instances these concerns led to alternate viewing strategies:

My parents used to tell us to change the channel. If they tell us to change the channel, we would run to our neighbour to watch it [Tsha Tsha] there, because there were no old people staying there.[137]

Content and viewing times

A range of insights and recommendations were shared with regard to changes that could be made to the series, or issues that could be dealt with in more depth. In summary, these included: showing actual HIV counselling processes so that insight may be gained about what transpires behind closed doors; a focus on living positively and effectively managing living with HIV/AIDS (suggestions included the depiction of support groups, and the promotion of a holistic approach to health. For example, focus to include nutrition, exercise, psychological wellbeing, stress reduction); and more direct information on antiretroviral treatment. There was an interest in seeing the progression of HIV to AIDS. This was contrasted with the notion that with the exception of Andile's mother, people with HIV were shown as healthy. Although there was a strong focus on HIV prevention, it was noted that accessible condoms were not visible and that these should be put in public places.

A concern highlighted during the initial broadcast period was that Friday nights were not ideal for watching Tsha Tsha, as this reduced the opportunity to view the series (as a product of being out on Friday nights), and to discuss the series the following day.[138]

Why do they play this on Friday, this important thing, this is very important. SABC is supposed to make it on days where all people can watch it at least, you will learn a lot of things there. [139]

The fact that Tsha was shown on Friday… we usually discuss what was shown the previous day, like… at school… with friends. The problem with Tsha is that by the time you meet up on Monday you have other things… stuff from the weekend… to talk about. Perhaps a match that was played on Saturday… so, if they could change the slot… [140]

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135 Gtn M Rnd 2.txt - 2:49 (516:536)
136 P 3: Kim Tsha transcript.txt – 3:22 (284:293)
137 P 12: VM Tsha Qual Evl Srs2 Obanjeni1.txt – 12:16 (279:284)
138 The series was rebroadcast on Tuesday nights.
139 VLRS F Rnd2.txt - 5:52 (453:458)
140 Gtn M Rnd 2.txt - 2:45 (470:478)

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluative research on entertainment-education television drama series is a relatively undeveloped field. This evaluation incorporated a complex of quantitative and qualitative approaches, including conducting research at various points over the duration of the series. This allowed for a comparative understanding of initial and changing perceptions of the series, but more particularly, through the utility of multiple wave panel research in combination with propensity analysis, it was possible to control for exposure.

Regression analysis and propensity score analysis with matched treatment and control groups confirmed that watching the drama had significant effects on attitudes and behaviour commitment related to HIV/AIDS. It also allowed for the quantification of viewer identification with characters. This innovation has contributed towards expanding approaches to evaluation of similar entertainment education products.

The qualitative components suggest that South African television viewers have a highly developed visual literacy and are interested in and accepting of the concept of integrating learning with drama. There is clear evidence that the drama is emotionally captivating, that there is strong identification with characters, and strong concern with their plight. This illustrates the potential of the Tsha Tsha series as a longer-running production.

The conceptual framework guiding the series suggests that the theoretical grounding was incorporated into the actual production, and that this framework contributed importantly to the resonance of the series and to its educational potential. Tsha Tsha was seen as original and appealing as a product of its being set in a rural area. The research that was conducted at the outset of the series, and on an ongoing basis directed towards informing script development, contributed to the perception that Tsha Tsha was realistic and was based on real-life situations. It was also seen as inspirational – particularly in relation to portraying hope in the face of adversity (poverty, unemployment, disease).

Tsha Tsha contributed to increases in knowledge and general awareness about HIV/AIDS. The self-reported shifts in HIV attitudes, beliefs, practices and behaviours reflect the development of greater understanding, tolerance, empathy and caring about people living with HIV/AIDS. This was matched with indications of an increased sense of responsibility for the wellbeing of the self and of others. Shifts towards the development or fostering of positive/empowering values, attitudes, and behaviours were not limited to the context of HIV/AIDS, but extended into other areas of relevance to youth such as relationships (sexual, friendships, parental), poverty, and other social problems, such as alcohol and drug abuse, crime and violence, and unemployment.

The concept of lessons informed problem-solving skills, and in many instances, were applied to respondents' own situations. This extended to values, including personal responsibility and the need to provide support to others. In relation to identification, some participants indicated close affinity with Tsha Tsha characters to the point of 'wanting to be like' particular characters.

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