

Beyond the Screen of Fathers Matter Series:

How Entertainment-Education Collaboration Transforms Fatherhood Norms

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Abstract

Recognizing the underestimation of fathers' active presence and the prevalent issues of low child support and high child abuse rates, Heartlines - the Center for Values Promotion in South Africa initiated the entertainment-education (E-E) intervention by producing Fathers Matter series to communicate these concerns effectively and advocate for transformative changes in social norms surrounding fatherhood and paternity. This research investigates the collaboration between film production professionals and social change professionals in shaping the development and content of the series, addressing the question: *How does the collaboration between film production professionals and social change professionals shape the development and content of the film series Fathers Matter, which aims to reshape societal norms surrounding fatherhood in South Africa?*

The study adopts an exploratory qualitative approach that combines content analysis of the Fathers Matter series and in-depth interviews with six experts, including social change professionals and media professionals involved in the makings of Fathers Matter. The analysis is guided by a thematic method and incorporates theories of E-E strategy, the E-E media mapping model (Bouman, 2021), and storytelling to derive research findings. Notably, the findings highlight the substantial impact of E-E collaboration on the content of Fathers Matter through the practice of negotiated authority and power over the decision-making process. The results suggest that Fathers Matter effectively leverages resources from sustained relationships between collaborators fostered through E-E collaborative efforts characterized beyond trust and respect.

Overall, this paper contributes to the existing body of academic literature on E-E interventions by providing valuable insights into the collaboration processes, power dynamics, and the integration of diverse professional expertise in producing E-E media products. The findings also encourage further research on promising forms of E-E intervention in broader areas beyond health communications, emphasizing their potential to create a positive societal impact.

KEYWORDS: *Entertainment-Education, popular media, storytelling, fatherhood, role modeling*

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1. Introduction

The significant role of paternal involvement within the household has been extensively discussed in scientific literature. Notably, scholarly studies have consistently highlighted the positive impact of fathers' participation in various aspects of child development. For instance, research conducted by Jarret (1994) has shown that children raised in households where fathers are actively engaged tend to experience more favorable developmental outcomes. Jarret (1994) and Richter (2006) further argue that paternal involvement validates and supports the maternal role, thereby fostering a sense of affirmation for mothers. Moreover, investigations conducted by Engle et al. (2006) suggest that when fathers are present and involved, children are more likely to benefit from improved nutrition, healthcare, and educational opportunities. These findings underscore the crucial influence that fathers' presence and active engagement exert on their children's lives (Donnelly et al., 2022). Nonetheless, it is essential to acknowledge that the magnitude and nature of these influences are contingent upon the specific sociocultural and socioeconomic contexts in which families operate.

Meanwhile, the significance of fathers' presence has been underestimated in South Africa, where the lowest marriage rate on the continent is reported (Ritcher & Panday, 2006). The region is known for low rates of child support from the father (Khunou, 2006) and alarmingly high rates of child abuse and neglect by men (Richter & Dawes, 2008). Anticipating a need for social change, Heartlines, a South African non-profit organization, took the initiative to use "edutainment" programs to promote social change. In 2019, Heartlines implemented the Fathers Matter campaign, communicating to society the importance of fathers' active presence and its positive effects on children's social, emotional, and intellectual development. Based on formative research, Heartlines developed the film series Fathers Matter to effectively communicate these issues to the public and advocate for transformative changes in social norms surrounding fatherhood and paternity. This series comprises six short films: *Family Portrait*, *In Time*, *Everything a Boy Could Want*, *Melodi*, *Airwalker*, and *Manskap*. Set in different South African contexts, each explores the complexities of fatherhood and children's relationship with their fathers in South Africa, where most children grow up without their biological fathers (Heartlines, 2022).

Integrating educational content into entertaining dramas is a phenomenon that has been around for a while and can be traced back to the 1900s (Frank & Falzone, 2021, p.4). Over time, this approach has become more prominent, particularly as the media landscape expands to offer a wide range of linear, online, and digital media formats, including transmedia ones (Bouman, 2021). As the primary consumers of media production, the audience learns and conceptualizes the world through

observation and modeling, going beyond direct experiences with the environment (Bandura, 2004). Aligned with Bandura's social cognitive theory, Slater (1999) suggests that narrative engagement, achieved through absorption and identification with characters, is crucial for attitudinal and potentially behavioral change. This acquisition of knowledge in an entertaining manner is known as the Entertainment-Education (E-E) communication strategy (Bouman, 2002).

In this context, Fathers Matter film series effectively utilizes E-E interventions as “a social mobilizer, advocate, or agenda setter, influencing public and political initiatives in a socially desirable direction” (Wallack, 1990; Usdin, Singhal, Shongwe, & Shabalala, 2004, as cited in Papa & Singal, 2009, p.187). This approach supports and promotes the positive and active role of fathers in the lives of children. Previous research has highlighted several positive effects of E-E television broadcasts, such as engaging men as advocates for women's rights (Lapsansky & Chatterjee, 2013), or fostering more positive attitudes toward people living with HIV and AIDS (Hajjiannis, 2007, as cited in Makwambeni & Salawu, 2018). Singhal and Rogers (1999) emphasize that the primary goal of E-E program addition to exploring the effectiveness of the E-E strategy through concepts like social cognitive theory, storytelling, and narrative engagement, investigating other aspects of E-E interventions in practice is of many researchers' interest (e.g., How have E-E interventions been applied in different contexts? What are the theoretical and creative elements involved in designing stories for social change?). While Bouman (2002) focused on collaboration between health communication professionals and television professionals in E-E television programs, examining if similar practices are conducted in broader social issue communication and education is essential. Have there been any differences in the collaborative work between social change professionals and media professionals? This study aims to provide in-depth insights into these areas.

Considering the research's focus on the collaborative process in designing and producing the series Fathers Matter, the following research question is formulated:

How does the collaboration between film production professionals and social change professionals shape the development and content of the film series Fathers Matter, which aims to reshape societal norms surrounding fatherhood in South Africa?

Two sub-questions are proposed:

SQ1: What are the key factors that influence the decision-making process of professionals involved in the collaboration for creating the E-E film series Fathers Matter?

SQ2: How does the collaborative process shape the narratives portrayed in the E-E film series Fathers Matter?

Scientific relevance

Several studies have recently acknowledged the significant impact of E-E programs on the target audience. These programs employ strategic modeling techniques to challenge prevailing gender norms, such as masculinity, and stimulate critical dialogue (Lapsansky & Chatterjee, 2013). Moreover, research examining the role of emotions has demonstrated that effective identification with characters can serve as a powerful stimulus of behavioral change among viewers (Edisua, 2017; Bouman, 1999).

Despite the increasing recognition of the effectiveness of E-E interventions, there is a need to focus more on the collaborative processes involved in E-E design. Bouman (2002) emphasizes the crucial role of collaboration among stakeholders and highlights its importance in the success of E-E strategies. Collaboration in this context entails stakeholders coming together and engaging in a resource-intensive process, sharing their resources, e.g., expertise, time, and energy (Guo & Avar, 2005). Bouman further argues that E-E collaboration should be regarded as an ongoing "process way of thinking" rather than a one-time event, requiring continuous commitment and effort from all collaborating partners, hence necessitating an "E-E communication strategy" (Bouman, 2021, p. 63). In parallel with Bouman's study, Makwambeni and Salawu's research (2018) underscores the significance of E-E collaboration between practitioners and scholars in the field of development communication to unlock the potential of E-E interventions fully.

Notably, collaboration in the context of E-E interventions goes beyond mere communication. It involves the active participation of various stakeholders such as broadcasters, production companies, advertisers, social groups, media lawmakers, scriptwriters, and others. In this collaborative process, power struggles often arise when specific individuals involved in creating television programs exert a more significant influence in determining content than others (Cantor, 1980). Each group operates according to its norms, values, and rules. Thus, all parties involved should understand one another's cultures to foster effective collaboration. Failure to transcend one's cultural perspective during collaborative endeavors poses significant obstacles (Bouman, 1999; Levi-Strauss, 1987, as cited in Bouman, 2002, p. 229). Such challenges are also referred to as "resource dilemmas" (Seo & Bryson, 2022, p. 1182). This dilemma arises from the tension between the requirements and purposes of collaboration, which can lead to hesitancy or resistance among collaborative actors to engage in or sustain the collaboration process.

Therefore, a substantial body of knowledge remains yet to be explored within the realm of E-E interventions and collaboration. The present study aims to investigate the impact of collaboration among various stakeholders involved in the E-E production of the series *Fathers*

Matter on its content. Additionally, it seeks to examine how the diverse collaborative mindsets of the participating parties manifest throughout the E-E process, subsequently influencing the conveyance of E-E messages to audiences and their potential impacts. The findings derived from this research hold the potential to inform the design of future E-E projects, such as those undertaken by Heartlines or other non-governmental organizations, by providing valuable insights and recommendations for enhanced E-E implementation.

Societal relevance

In addition to investigating the collaborative aspects of E-E interventions, this research examines the implementation of fatherhood portrayed within the series. The study aims to provide valuable insights to professionals in the film industry and social change professionals and researchers. By understanding the factors that influence collaboration in E-E programs, practical solutions can be identified to align the perspectives and goals of all stakeholders involved, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of future E-E projects.

Furthermore, this study contributes to raising awareness about the pivotal role of fathers in households, both within South Africa and on a global scale. In line with social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977), it is denoted that mass media, including E-E messages, possesses the potential to exert significant influence over audience behavior by presenting role models and facilitating observational learning. By examining the design and production of an E-E series - Fathers Matter, this research sheds light on how collaboration reshapes an E-E narrative, which challenges audiences' behavioral change. Notably, it suggests a broader perspective considering how media narratives and agendas can shape public opinion and social change.

As societal norms continue to evolve, there is increasing recognition of the significance of fathers' active engagement in the upbringing and development of children. This recognition implies a crucial facilitator for improving fatherhood involvement, ultimately encouraging more practice in E-E collaboration to enhance children's well-being and contribute to society's overall advancement.

Thesis structure

This research primarily identifies the collaboration process associated with creating an impactful E-E series, specifically Fathers Matter. The study offers three main contributions. Firstly, it expands existing knowledge on E-E strategy by enhancing stakeholders' collaboration in creating the series. By exploring collaboration dynamics, this research deepens the understanding of how stakeholders can effectively work together to achieve the goals of E-E interventions. Secondly, the

study sheds light on the "resource dilemma" by revealing the factors influencing collaborative decision-making processes. Understanding these factors is crucial for E-E initiatives' success and for attaining mutual goals. This research provides insights into overcoming challenges and optimizing collaboration by addressing resource dilemmas. Lastly, this research provides a more in-depth look at the collaborative process involved in making Fathers Matter, from which stakeholders can gain valuable insights into effective collaboration strategies and practices that can be applied to their future projects.

This research study comprises five chapters with distinct purposes. Chapter 1 overviews the researcher's interest in the discussed topic and highlights its scientific and societal relevance. Chapter 2 examines the theoretical framework of the E-E strategy, encompassing its essential elements and relevant concepts that shed light on how E-E interventions are utilized to enable social changes. Additionally, this chapter delves into the topic of E-E collaboration, applying the 5-stage Media Mapping Model proposed by Bouman (2021). It then explores the concept of the "resource dilemma" and its potential challenges for collaboration during the E-E filmmaking process. Chapter 3 outlines the research design employed in this study, providing a comprehensive justification for the chosen approach with detailed descriptions of the data collection methods and the subsequent data analysis procedures. In chapter 4, the main findings of the research are presented. This section provides in-depth interpretations and discussions of the discovered insights. The final chapter 5 concludes the research study by addressing answers to the research question and offering a comprehensive reflection on the study's limitations. Moreover, this chapter presents recommendations for future research, highlighting potential directions for further investigation and advancement in E-E interventions and collaboration.

2. Theoretical framework

This chapter covers four sections, each contributing to the research's theoretical framework. The first section provides an overview of the E-E concept and discusses relevant scholarly studies conducted in this field. This section serves as a foundation for understanding the principles and objectives of E-E. Subsequently, the second section examines the key elements of the E-E strategy, including role modeling, parasocial relationships, and storytelling. By delving into these aspects, the section highlights their significance in the E-E approach and the potential impact on audiences. Then, the third section shifts the focus to the main topic, which clarifies the E-E collaboration process. In this section, the E-E media mapping model serves as a framework for understanding and analyzing the collaborative dynamics within E-E initiatives. The section provides insights into the roles of collaborators involved in the process and illustrates how these roles may evolve throughout the collaboration. Finally, the last section delves into the potential challenges that can arise during E-E collaborations, further enhancing our understanding of the complexities involved in implementing successful E-E products.

2.1. The concept of Entertainment-Education

E-E stories originated in the 1900s as a communication tool to challenge social norms (Frank & Falzone, 2021, p.4). Stories make sense of the world in which people live, transferred among people through word-of-mouth communication or audiences' repeated exposure to the media (Lutkenhaus et al., 2019). Initially, this approach revolved around long-running serial dramas primarily aired on radio or television. It has since expanded to encompass diverse media and formats (Frank & Falzone, 2021). E-E's widespread usage and increasing prevalence can be attributed to its dual nature as entertaining and educational. Including dramatic storylines in entertaining dramas captivates and sustains audience engagement over time (Lutkenhaus et al., 2019; Frank & Falzone, 2021). This approach is commonly referred to as the E-E strategy.

As defined by Bouman (1999, p. 25), E-E is "the process of purposively designing and implementing a mediating communication form with the potential of entertaining and educating people to enhance and facilitate different stages of prosocial (behavioral) change." By parallel it with communication strategy, Wang and Singhal (2009, p.272-273) specify its objective to "purposefully embedding educational and social issues in the creation, production, processing, and dissemination process of an entertainment program, in order to achieve desired individual, community, institutional, and societal changes among the intended media user populations." Singhal and Rogers (2012) further argue that E-E contributes to social change by influencing audience awareness,

attitudes, and behavior toward socially desirable goals. In short, E-E utilizes educating and impacting individuals through their consumption of entertainment media, ultimately adopting a social change behavior. This approach involves shaping the external environment of the audience to create conditions conducive to social change at both individual and collective levels (Singhal & Rogers, 2012).

2.2. Elements of Entertainment-Education strategy

2.2.1. Role modeling

E-E is most effective when used to role model positive behaviors and show positive consequences rather than telling the audience what to do (Ryerson & Teffera, 2021). Role models are individuals people look up to or would hope to be like (now or in the future). They often motivate individuals to perform novel behaviors and inspire them to set ambitious goals. Morgenroth et al. (2015, p.3) argue that a role model can be regarded within the three interrelated themes. Role models serve as behavioral models, representations of possibilities, and sources of inspiration, motivating individuals to learn new skills, pursue success, and aspire to more outstanding achievements.

Additionally, the influence of role models on behavioral change, whether positive or negative, can be explained by Bandura's social learning theory (1977), which denotes that most human behavior is learned through observations and modeling. People observe how those around them behave and use that information to guide their actions. By learning from both successes and mistakes of others, they shorten the path to success by avoiding the consequences of mistakes.

Notably, by portraying both positive and negative role models, E-E programs can enact social change. As discussed earlier, E-E interventions promotes prosocial behavior; they aim to provide information and influence awareness, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to the intended message. While watching an E-E program, the audience makes sense of educational content incorporated through role models in the storylines (Frank & Falzone, 2021). While negative characters illustrate the consequences of unfavorable lifestyles positive characters serve as figures of aspiration for the audience, and transitional characters who overcome obstacles become role models for behavior change. Individuals can adopt habits, perspectives, and behaviors to help them achieve their goals (Morgenroth et al., 2015).

2.2.2. Parasocial relationship

The success of an E-E media product depends on compelling stories and imagined relationships between viewers and media characters, i.e., parasocial interactions (Dunn, 2018). Parasocial interaction (Horton & Wohl, 1956, p.215) refers to an illusionary one-way symbolic interaction described as the response of a media user to a media performer, such that the media user perceives the performer (e.g., singer, actor, presenter) as an intimate conversational partner. The more effort the performer pays to adapt their performances in response to the audience's reactions, the more likely that the audience anticipates that performer's responses (Horton & Wohl, 1956, p.215). These interactions develop into parasocial relationships when they extend beyond individual episodes and persist outside of media consumption (Horton & Wohl, 1956). The parasocial relationship enables a connection between viewers and the E-E program (i.e. the performer).

Initially, parasocial interaction was perceived as a one-sided relationship controlled solely by the performer and lacking potential for mutual development (Horton & Wohl, 1956). However, contemporary scholar views parasocial interaction as a mutual experience characterized by mutual awareness, attention, and adjustments (Hartmann & Goldhoorn, 2011, p. 1107). This shift acknowledges that viewers can develop mutual awareness and attention while watching. Recurring characters play a crucial role in fostering parasocial interaction as viewers develop familiarity and make predictions about their storylines (Rubin et al., 1985). These parasocial relationships cultivate a sense of intimacy and can significantly influence viewers' values, perceptions, and enjoyment of the media content (Papa et al., 2000; Hartmann & Goldhoorn, 2011). Papa et al. (2000, p.34) suggest that "a media consumer appreciates the values and motives of the media character and often sees him or her as a counselor, comforter, and role model." Therefore, incorporating parasocial relationships into an E-E strategy can enhance audience engagement and social impact by providing viewers with relatable and influential media characters (Horton & Wohl, 1956).

2.2.3. Story and narrative storytelling

Understanding the concepts of story and narrative is crucial for examining how E-E experts strategically construct storylines in *Fathers Matter* and apply narrative storytelling techniques to drive behavioral change. While the terms are often used interchangeably, they possess distinct meanings and functions. A story refers to the specific content or plot being told, focusing on the sequence of events and the characters involved (Worth, 2008). A narrative refers to the overall structure within which a story is presented, involving the arrangement and organization of events,

characters, and themes. Narratives are broader in scope, encompassing multiple stories and providing a larger context that connects different events and stories.

As Haigh and Hardy (2011) define, storytelling involves intentionally communicating experiences or knowledge using language, visuals, and sounds. A key aspect of storytelling is its capacity to evoke emotions and stimulate cognitive processes in the audience. Storytellers can utilize various elements, including emotional triggers, educational components, interactive elements, and a blend of fictional and non-fictional elements, which can be approached subjectively or objectively (Nielsen, 2017). Moreover, they incorporate themes, symbols, and character arcs to create a storyline that resonates with the audience's experiences and values. Through the narrative structure, a way the story and plot are utilized in films (Lotfy Mahmoud SAAD, 2018), storytellers can highlight the relevance and application of the intended messages, reinforcing their impact on the audience. According to Lugmayr et al. (2017), storytelling is a powerful narrative form that can spark curiosity, emphasize the significance of meaning, and leave a lasting emotional impact and enduring memories within the audience. This emotional resonance associated with the narrative can result in changes in attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, which are core objectives of E-E initiatives.

2.3. Entertainment-Education collaboration process

2.3.1. A definition of EE collaboration

Collaboration has attracted significant attention across diverse fields and contexts due to its potential impact. According to Laal and Ghodsi (2012, p.486), collaboration is constructed as "a philosophy of interaction and personal lifestyle where individuals assume responsibility for their actions, including learning and demonstrating respect for the abilities and contributions of their peers." This definition suggests that collaborative engagement among participants is established through a consensus derived from their cooperative effort, commonly encompassing coordination, cooperation, and communication. Fuks et al. (p. 637, as cited in Eikei et al., 2005) assert that communication involves the message and information exchange among individuals, coordination pertains to the engagement of people, their activities, and resources, while cooperation denotes the production taking place within a shared workspace.

Although research on collaboration within the realm of E-E is relatively limited, Bouman (2002) denotes that E-E collaboration entails a distinctive form of partnership between health professionals and media professionals, who intertwine their respective roles to create impactful E-E interventions. Bouman (2002, p.225) characterizes this collaborative process as a "strange kind of marriage," underscoring the complexity of the relationship between collaborators throughout the

collaborative endeavor. Notably, maintaining a delicate balance between content and form is crucial in E-E collaboration. Furthermore, effective E-E collaboration necessitates a profound understanding and synergy among collaborators with diverse roles to develop effective E-E interventions. This goal results from the ability to navigate and reconcile the differing habitus of each other's field (Bourdieu, 1991) that these collaborators bring to the collaborative partnership (Bouman, 2021).

In summary, E-E collaboration is an ongoing process built over time and involves planned or spontaneous engagements between social work and media professionals. During these engagements, information is exchanged through explicit (e.g., verbal or written communication) and implicit means (e.g., shared understanding of gestures and emotions) (Eikei et al., 2005). Furthermore, these collaborations often involve various roles (e.g., researchers, directors, producers, scriptwriters), aiming at the final E-E product where they implement strategic E-E interventions (Bouman, 2002; Ruesch et al., 2012).

2.3.2. Understanding an E-E Media Mapping Model

The E-E Media Mapping Model, as introduced by Bouman (2021), offers a transparent framework for collaboration partners to navigate the design stages of an E-E project. Bouman (2002) introduced a 4-stage E-E collaboration process, which later evolved into a 5-stage E-E media mapping model (2021) based on practical experience. Despite being defined as a static and linear framework, these stages often overlap and exhibit dynamic characteristics in practice. The five stages include orientation, crystallization, production, implementation, and dissemination (Figure 1, Bouman, 2021).

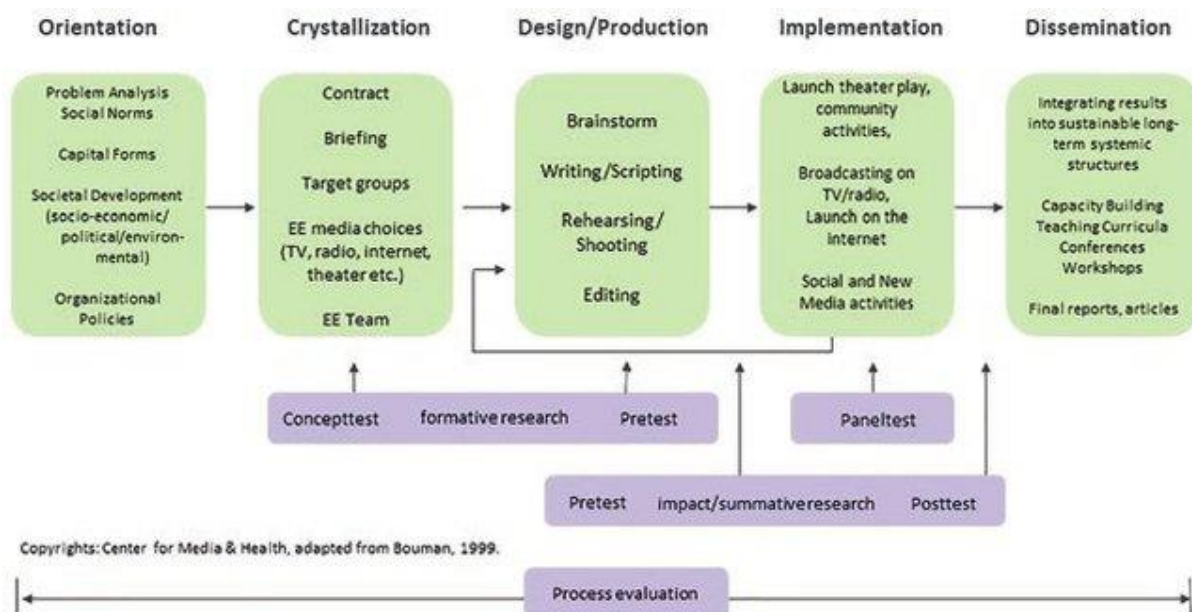


Figure 1: E-E Media Mapping Model (Bouman, 2021, p.69)

During the collaboration process, the power practiced by collaborators is dynamic depending on the types of established partnerships: E-E lobbying, E-E inscript participation, E-E coproduction, and E-E production (Bouman, 2002). For instance, health organizations typically have the most substantial influence over the content in E-E production and the weakest in E-E lobbying.

In addition, in each type of partnership, the roles of collaborators and their power are also evolving across the five stages of collaboration. As Bouman (2002) clarifies, during the initial stages (e.g., orientation and crystallization), the health organization leads the collaboration's direction. When the collaboration moves into the production stage, the media organization takes center stage, taking greater responsibility and control over the creative process. In the subsequent dissemination stage, the health organization regains prominence, actively participating in distributing final media products. This role change reflects the evolving nature of collaborations and the shifting balance of power between the collaborating entities.

2.3.3. Significance of E-E collaboration in E-E strategy

Collaboration plays a crucial role in the success of the E-E strategy within the television domain (Bouman, 2011). In the context of public and nonprofit organizations, collaboration is a common approach to complement capabilities and achieve shared goals (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Huxham & Vangen, 2013; as cited in Seo et al., 2023). Collaborative efforts enable the pooling of resources, capabilities, and activities from different stakeholders, leading to mutually beneficial outcomes that cannot be achieved by a single organization or sector (Emerson et al., 2012; Gazley & Guo, 2020; Sowa, 2009).

First, collaborations foster the exchange of resources along the collaborators' working domains (Karlsudd, 2008, p. 688). They facilitate sharing sensibilities and collective perspectives, encompassing information, social expectations, activity goals, and meaning (Weir et al., 2011). These collaborations promote interdisciplinary cooperation by bringing together professionals from diverse fields, such as media, health, education, and social work. This variety creates opportunities for more perspectives, creativity, and innovation, denoted as collaborative learning (Laal & Ghodsi, 2012); hence, fostering comprehensive E-E interventions.

Second, E-E collaboration is crucial in challenging societal norms and addressing complex issues through narrative storytelling, changing the narrative around public interest issues (Rosenthal & Folb, 2021, p.258). As suggested in Chattoo's study of participatory culture (2021), grassroots social justice organizations have worked together with Hollywood producers and writers to craft and distribute narratives that include lived experiences and shed light on social challenges that are often

invisible or overlooked in mainstream TV and film, which they regarded as their new creative power through their collaborative efforts. E-E initiatives constantly seek to leverage the entertainment elements in E-E products to effectively communicate the desired message to the audience (Chattoo, 2021, p.41). By incorporating diverse perspectives and narratives, educational initiatives foster empathy and understanding, creating positive societal transformations.

In addition, expanding collaborative networks in E-E initiatives enables the integration of E-E products into a more diverse range of distribution channels, exploiting the utilization of various media formats (e.g., television, films, digital platforms, and social media). This shift indicates the departure of E-E content from the conventional containment of storytelling within solely television episodes (Sabido, 2004) as transmedia storytelling emerges as a promising and innovative format in the field of E-E (Bouman & Singhal, 2016, 2018). Transmedia storytelling refers to the strategic dissemination of story elements across multiple platforms, offering audiences various entry points to engage with the narrative (Jenkins, 2006). Consequently, this multi-platform strategy significantly enhances the reach and accessibility of E-E content, effectively catering to the preferences and consumption patterns of diverse target audiences.

Lastly, funding or financial resources are arguably referred to as crucial aspects of collaboration. While tensions may arise regarding allocating and distributing funds within a collaborative effort, many scholars recognize funding as a significant motivating factor for collaboration. Stakeholders prioritize establishing collaboration or partnership before considering the availability of financial resources (Ansell & Gash, 2007; Bryson et al., 2006; as cited in Seo & Bryson, 2022). In other words, these stakeholders can effectively persuade others and, consequently, potential funders to join and support the collaboration only when there is a clear understanding of the problem to be addressed and why collaboration is the viable solution for that problem. As Seo and Bryson (2022) explained, funding is significant during the set-up of collaboration, initiating shared visions and plans to achieve successful collaboration. It incentivizes participants to engage actively, fosters collaborations and propels collaboration progress.

2.3.4. Managing the complexities of E-E collaboration: challenges and solutions

The collaborative nature of E-E interventions brings together multiple stakeholders, each with distinct norms, values, and rules of engagement, which Bouman (2021) suggests a unique work culture, professional standards, personal traits, and preferences. These differences result in challenges and conflicts during the collaboration process. Collaboration is very challenging if involved stakeholders only reason and act from their own cultural perspective (Levi-Strauss, 1987;

Pinxten, 1994, as cited in Bouman, 2002). Therefore, effectively managing these complexities becomes crucial to foster successful E-E collaboration.

One significant source of conflicts and challenges in E-E collaboration arises from the varying power and authority exerted throughout the process (Bourdieu, 1991). Bourdieu categorizes this power into three primary forms: cultural, social, and economic. Cultural power encompasses competencies, talents, expertise, and mental and intellectual growth. Social power relates to navigating social situations, establishing meaningful relationships, accessing influential networks, occupying a societal position, and possessing goodwill. Economic power is associated with material wealth, financial resources, or economic assets. These power dynamics can significantly influence collaboration, creating disparities and potential conflicts among participants.

Significantly, the power dynamics evolve across different stages of the collaboration process, as found in the E-E collaboration between health professionals and television professionals (Bouman, 2002). As such, during the early stages of the collaboration, which encompassed the orientation and crystallization phases, health communication professionals perceived themselves as practicing greater power and a better ability to manage the collaboration process compared to the later stages, the production and implementation phases. A pivotal moment of power transformation was identified as the contractual agreement formed during the crystallization stage (see Figure 1). Bouman (2002) further elucidates three key factors contributing to power distribution among individuals: unique expertise, a central position within the organization, and the capacity to mitigate risks associated with the final product.

Moreover, the complexity of E-E collaboration is evident in the negotiated agreement among collaborators, which requires effective management of individual roles and responsibilities when they go beyond their specific areas of expertise. This dynamic can be described as transcending the boundaries of one's "field of practice". A field is denoted as a structured space comprising various positions whose interrelationships are shaped by the distribution of diverse resources or capital (Bourdieu, 1991, p.14). Entering a particular field requires optimally leveraging one's knowledge and skills for advantageous outcomes. In other words, Bourdieu (1993) argues that one needs a habitus - a "feel for the game" (Bourdieu, 1991, p.12) that aligns with that particular field.

Furthermore, successful collaboration requires embracing the "give and take" principle highlighted by Bouman (2002, p.233), which emphasizes the willingness to cross boundaries and create mutually beneficial situations. However, boundary-crossing practices may inadvertently cause imbalances within the collaboration. Hence, professionals must navigate the appropriate degree of

interference that yields the most effective outcomes (Bouman, 2002). This process often involves trial and error to determine the optimal approach.

Aligned with Bouman's "give and take" principle in the collaboration, Seo and Bryson (2022) propose the concept of resource dilemma. Resource dilemmas arise due to the constant tension experienced by collaboration participants as they navigate between their needs to acquire resources from the collaboration and their parallel needs to invest resources in the collaboration (Seo & Bryson, 2022, p. 26). In other words, collaborators struggle to balance their own resource acquisition with the necessary resources they contribute to the collaborative effort. This delicate balance poses a significant challenge throughout the collaboration process, as individuals must determine how best to allocate their limited resources to participate in and benefit from the collaboration effectively. In the context of E-E film-making collaborations, various aspects of the collaborative process and the dynamics among collaborators can give rise to resource dilemmas. These dilemmas may manifest in decisions regarding resource allocation, creative control, time management, and conflicting interests, among other factors. As such, Seo and Bryson (2022) suggest an iterative process in which collaborators continuously develop and utilize resources to manage and overcome the resource dilemma.

In summary, the process of E-E collaboration requires a comprehension of different professional domains. Successful collaboration relies on a thorough understanding and familiarity with each other's fields, encompassing unique work cultures and professional standards. This understanding, often referred to as having a "feel for the game" and being aware of habitus, is vital for effective collaboration. However, achieving this understanding can be challenging, as professionals from diverse domains must invest effort in learning about each other's expertise and establishing a shared framework. When embarking on new E-E projects, collaborators must engage from the beginning, acquainting themselves with new expertise and accounting for the participants' varied professional backgrounds, role sets, standards, norms, values, and ethics. As the collaboration progresses, the iterative process of developing and utilizing resources becomes crucial in overcoming resource dilemmas in the dynamic landscape of E-E initiatives.

3. Methodology

This chapter justifies the methods adopted to investigate the collaboration process behind the creation of the series *Fathers Matter*. The main research question, accompanied by two sub-questions, guides the study and is presented as follows:

How does the collaboration process between the film production professionals and social change professionals shape the development and content of the film series *Fathers Matter*, which is designed to reshape societal norms surrounding fatherhood in South Africa?

SQ1: What are the key factors that drive the decision-making process of professionals involved in the collaboration of making the film series *Fathers Matter*?

SQ2: How does the collaboration process shape the narratives portrayed in the film series *Fathers Matter*?

In particular, the first section (3.1) initiates with a discussion and justification of the chosen qualitative research design. The subsequent section reflects the utilization of Qualitative Content Analysis (3.1.1.) as the analytical approach to the six short films of *Fathers Matter*. Furthermore, in-depth interviews are conducted to gather insights from stakeholders involved in the collaboration process of *Fathers Matter* (3.1.2.). Following this, the sampling method is presented, including a detailed explanation of the sample selection criteria (3.2). Then, the following section (3.3) outlines how the theoretical concepts were operationalized. Afterwards, the data collection (3.4) and data analysis with a detailed coding process (3.5) are described. Finally, the last section demonstrates critical reflections on the research's reliability, validity, and ethics (3.6).

3.1. Qualitative research

The researcher employed a qualitative research method due to its explorative, comprehensive, descriptive, and interpretive nature to understand how E-E collaboration was shaped during the production of the *Fathers Matter* film series (Babbie, 2015; Brennen, 2017). With an inductive approach, a qualitative design helps to follow the variations of a particular phenomenon based on the specific theoretical direction (Boeije, 2010). For this research, qualitative is better suited than quantitative since the research focuses on studying phenomena - collaboration process and the meanings constructed by individuals. This meaning-making process (Babbie, 2015) is explicitly about "using language to understand concepts based on people's experiences" (Brennen, 2017, p. 4), in addition to interpreting meaningful relationships (Kvale, 1996, p. 11). Moreover, a qualitative approach is beneficial when the researcher deals with rich data (e.g., six 25-minute films and interview transcripts) (Silverman, 2011). Qualitative analysis allows for data segmentation,

categorization, and reassembling to achieve a theoretical understanding of the examined social phenomenon (Boeije, 2012).

The following sections describe the specific qualitative design, including the essence and rationales of the qualitative content analysis and in-depth expert interview.

3.1.1. Qualitative content analysis (QCA)

Content analysis, defined as "the study of recorded human communication," is concerned with existing data that is accessible and unobtrusive (Babbie, 2015, p.341). In this study, the entire Fathers Matter series of Heartlines is publicly available on the organization's official website (<https://www.heartlines.org.za/fathers-matter/films>).

The use of QCA was justified, given the non-standardized and interpretive nature of the data (Scheier, 2012). The researcher actively constructed meaning from the scenes in Fathers Matter and the conversational interviews with experts, avoiding predetermined interpretations. QCA facilitated the management of the extensive and complex nature of "rich data" by breaking it down into smaller fragments through coding (Scheier, 2012, p.3; Neuman, 2011). Specific scenes from the Fathers Matter series were thoroughly selected to meaning-making the E-E collaboration process and its implications. The meaning was not given explicitly in the texts. It was supposed to draw the answer through the researcher's interpretations. For instance, how the father's role was portrayed in the series; how the narrative was intentionally designed to promote social change.

Another advantage of QCA lies in its systematic approach and flexibility (Schreier, 2012). By employing a systematic analysis, all the data were examined following a predetermined order. This approach helped the researcher avoid missing important patterns and minimize the influence of subjective assumptions or expectations. The systematic nature of QCA ensures consistency throughout the data analysis process while still acknowledging the iterative nature of qualitative research (Boeije, 2010).

3.1.2. In-depth interviews

Interviews is an appropriate approach to address the research question due to their inherent objective of generating comprehensive descriptions and insightful perspectives on a specific subject. This method is particularly beneficial for fostering comprehension and gaining profound insights. (Babbie, 2015; Johnson, 2011).

Besides underscoring the relationship between what people "say they do" and "what they do" (Boellstorff et al., 2012, p.252), in-depth interviews help understand respondents' narratives and

representations of their social world (e.g., cultural conventions, beliefs, ideologies, and motivations). Through private conversations and interpersonal interactions during the interviews, intimacy and mutual self-disclosure are created (John, 2011), which later help reveal individuals' perceptions and opinions (Kvale, 2008). These beliefs and opinions are difficult to convey in public media (Boellstorff et al., 2012; Babbie, 2015).

Regarding that the present study on Fathers Matter focuses on professionals in the media industry and social change organizations, in-depth interviews were expected to gain more insightful patterns than other approaches (e.g., surveys or focus groups) (John, 2011). Given the research question, an in-depth interview was an optimal method. Through in-depth interviews, the researcher could flexibly adjust the interview questions and incorporate emergent ideas if required during the interviews based on sensitizing concepts (Babbie, 2015), which were critically derived from the theoretical framework.

In total, the researcher conducted six interviews, each lasting for 45 to 60 minutes. Due to geographic distance - the researcher works in the Netherlands while the professionals interviewed are based in South Africa - all interviews were conducted online via ZOOM and in English. Before the interviews were conducted, a list of 6 visual probes was prepared (see section 3.4.1.). An interview guide with a list of studied topics, guiding questions, and backup questions was created to ensure the interview went smoothly (John, 2011). Test interviews were conducted for the best results of the interviews with professionals.

3.2. Sampling

Since the study's purpose is to understand how the collaboration process between TV production professionals and social change professionals is reflected in the production of Fathers Matter, the focus is on the unique insights of these professionals and the content design of the series. The units of analysis were, therefore, first, the Fathers Matter series, including the six 25-minute films uploaded by Heartlines, and second, the six in-depth interviews with involved professionals. The sample selection was based on the purposive sampling method, in which the researcher applies selective criteria (Boeije, 2010).

The entire Fathers Matter series, with all six short films, was selected for the content analysis. The whole series is accessible on either Heartlines' website or its official YouTube channel.

For the interviews, besides the purposive sampling method, the snowball method was also used to recruit the most relevant respondents. Snowball sampling is used when research goes from one respondent to another based on the first respondent's suggestions (Flick, 2007). In the initial

stages, contact was established with Heartlines, who owes Fathers Matter campaign. The CEO and an associate researcher from Heartlines were the primary contacts, who subsequently facilitated the researcher's connection with other relevant professionals in the field of study. Ultimately, the researcher recruited six professionals who actively participated in various stages of the filmmaking process. The interviews were arranged over three months, from late March to May 2023. All interviewees agreed to have their names revealed in the research analysis (see Table 1).

No	Interview name	Title	Interview date
1	Olefile Masangane	Head of the Church Mobilization team	April 14
2	Garth Japhet	Heartlines Founder & CEO	May 3
3	Livhuwani Maphorogo	Research Lead	May 4
4	Candice Harrison-Train	Research Consultant	May 5
5	Nevelia Moloji	Head of Communication	May 8
6	Harriet Perlman	Associated Producer, Executive Producer of Fathers Matter	May 23

Table 1: List of interviewees

3.3. Operationalization

After watching the six 25-minute films, the researcher selected the most relevant scenes portraying fatherhood and used them as probes during the interviews. To keep track of important scenes from the series, relevant information such as specific times, durations, and plot summaries (e.g., characters spotted and storylines) were documented. Screenshots and self-cut videos from the films were saved additionally (see section 3.6.1.).

Sensitizing concepts for the topic list were derived from critical assessments of relevant literature such as fields of practice (Bourdieu, 1993), capital forms, different ways of thinking (Bouman, 1999) due to cultural differences (McFadyen et al., 1998), and personal traits (see section 2.3.). These concepts and the 5-stage media mapping model (Bouman, 2021) guided the interview questions to identify the hindering and facilitating factors in Fathers Matter's E-E collaboration process (see Appendix 2).

The interviews aimed to enable conversational discussions on collaboration partners' personal experiences with 'give and take' interactions, negotiations, and decision-making during the different stages. How they engaged in these dilemmas had an impact on the production as well as

the narrative development of Fathers Matter. In addition, E-E collaboration practices were operationalized by changing roles over stages of the design and production of an EE program. For example, who had more control over each stage of the collaboration.

All interviews were recorded and verbally transcribed using the software Descript.com. In the next stage, the researcher watched and rewatched the records iteratively to clear up the software-generated transcriptions. All the stop words and repeated or wrongly translated texts were removed during this stage. Final transcriptions were safely stored in two repositories - Dropbox and Google Drive. Furthermore, field notes taken during interviews were saved in a separate folder on the same drives. Fieldnotes kept track of the researcher's observations, interpretations, and emergent thoughts during the interviews

3.4. Data collection

3.4.1. Visual probes

Probes have been recognized as valuable tools in enhancing interview efficiency (Braun & Clark, 2006). They motivate respondents, facilitate a smooth flow of the interview, and elicit valuable information (Leon & Cohen, 2005). Probes can take various forms beyond traditional questions.

In this study, visual probes were employed to support the interview process. Each visual probe was carefully tailored to correspond to different types of questions. Short self-cut videos were used as part of the implementation, and screenshots from these clips were prepared as quick probes during the interviews. The inclusion of screenshots served as a contingency in case there were any issues with the smooth loading of the video content due to connectivity limitations. These probes played a crucial role in triggering interviewees' memory, prompting them to recall specific scenes from different films and ensuring that their responses aligned with the topics addressed in the interview questions (De Leon & Cohen, 2005). Additionally, probes facilitated interviewees' engagement with the research material, ensuring a comprehensive approach to capturing their insights. Ultimately, this strategic use of probes enhanced the reliability and overall validity of the study.

To note, visual probes were intentionally presented to the interviewees either before or during the interviews. Due to time constraints, not all probes were shown in the interviews; rather, a selective few were chosen based on the questions asked and the progression of the conversation with the interview participants.

In the selected probe from *Everything a Boy Could Want*, the scene depicts Martin (the father) and Lester (the son) spending time together after their car breaks down on a poorly maintained road. The probe includes a scene where they sleep in the car, showcasing their contrasting reactions. Lester finds the situation enjoyable, describing it as "nice and cozy like camping," while Martin feels uncomfortable and dismisses it. The subsequent scenes further develop the characters' stories through their conversation. Martin's character is portrayed as someone who longed for a father who could have financially supported his family. This story is evident in Martin's scripted response, where he expresses his commitment to support Lester by stating, "I swore then that my own family would want for nothing." The researcher utilized this probe to gain insights into the narrative's development and the key message's communication.



Figure 2: Visual probe 1- In Time (Meas, 2022)

In *Family Portrait*, selected scene depicts the father, Ayize, who is taking his daughter to the hospital when her mother, Nomvula, is unexpectedly called in for work. In the hospital setting, Ayize plays the role of a caregiver, attracting the attention from all other mothers (see figure 3). Another probe from this film features Ayize's character as a struggling painter. In the scene, Ayize is portrayed sitting on the floor, displaying signs of exhaustion, sadness, and disappointment. The room setting is intentionally depicted in a dark mode (see figure 4). These probes were employed to delve into the construction of fatherhood norms and stereotypes within the series, prompting for

insights into how these themes were portrayed and represented.



Figure 3: Visual probe 2a - Family Portrait (Matiwana, 2022)



Figure 4: Visual probe 2b - Family Portrait (Matiwana, 2022)

In *In Time*, the chosen probe was a scene featuring Lerumo, the father, while he is in prison (figure 5). Despite facing numerous challenges, Lerumo makes every effort to attend his daughter Bokamoso's running competition. Just as he is about to reach the event, he is wrongfully accused of drug trafficking. The subsequent scene depicts Lerumo's unwavering determination to be dismissed from prison and support Bokamoso. Meanwhile, Bokamoso, although worried, draws strength from the belief that her father is with her in spirit. Ultimately, she triumphs in the race by keeping her father's presence in her thoughts. Utilizing this probe, the researcher's goal is to examine how the creative use of dramatic elements effectively enhances the delivery of the key message.

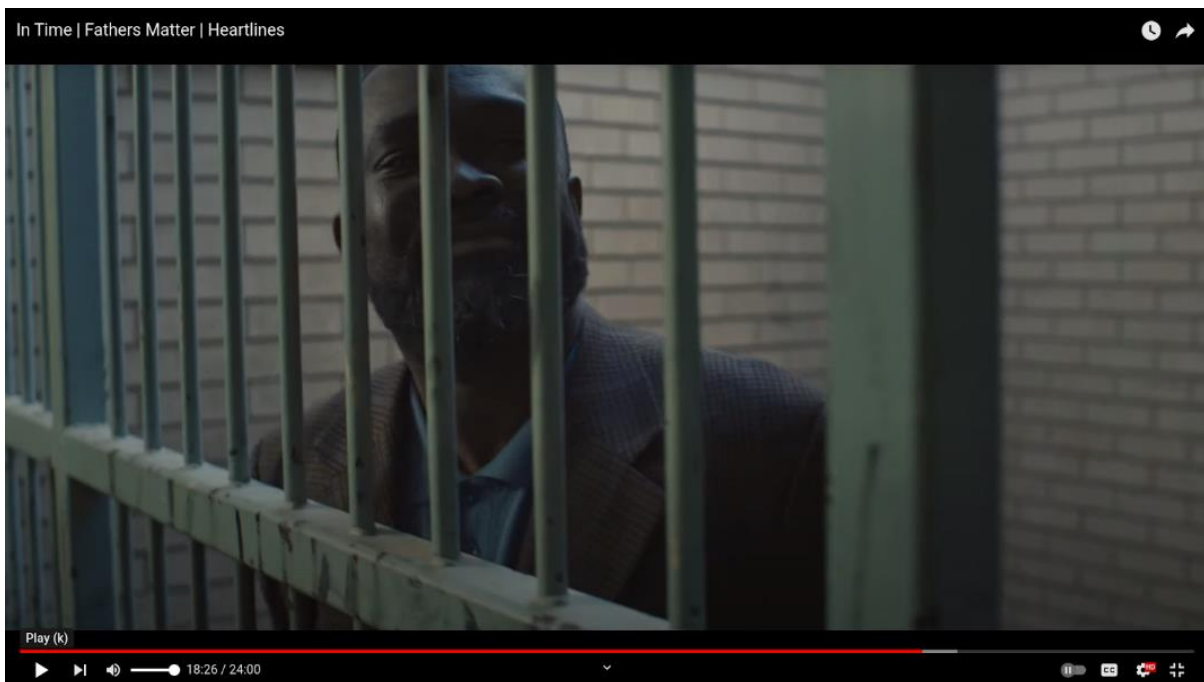


Figure 5: Visual probe 3 - In Time (Rangaka, 2022)

For *Melodi*, researchers picked the wedding scene as a probe to explore the incorporation of wedding culture in the film and how it helps portray fathers' roles. The leading actress, Melodi, has always been curious about her absent father, which impacts her life. Through Melodi's story in the series, the film raises the question of how a child's life is affected by the absence of a father. Melodi expresses this sentiment in the selected probe, stating, "I guess it would have been nice to have my father at this point in my life." Melodi initially experiences great happiness as a new bride in this scene. However, she abruptly becomes worried, as if she fears her groom would behave similarly to her father. Her mother comforts her, encouraging her to relax and enjoy the wedding (see figure 6, figure 7). Through this scene, the researcher aimed to gain deeper insights into the use of cultural

elements and how they contribute to conveying key messages about fatherhood within the film.

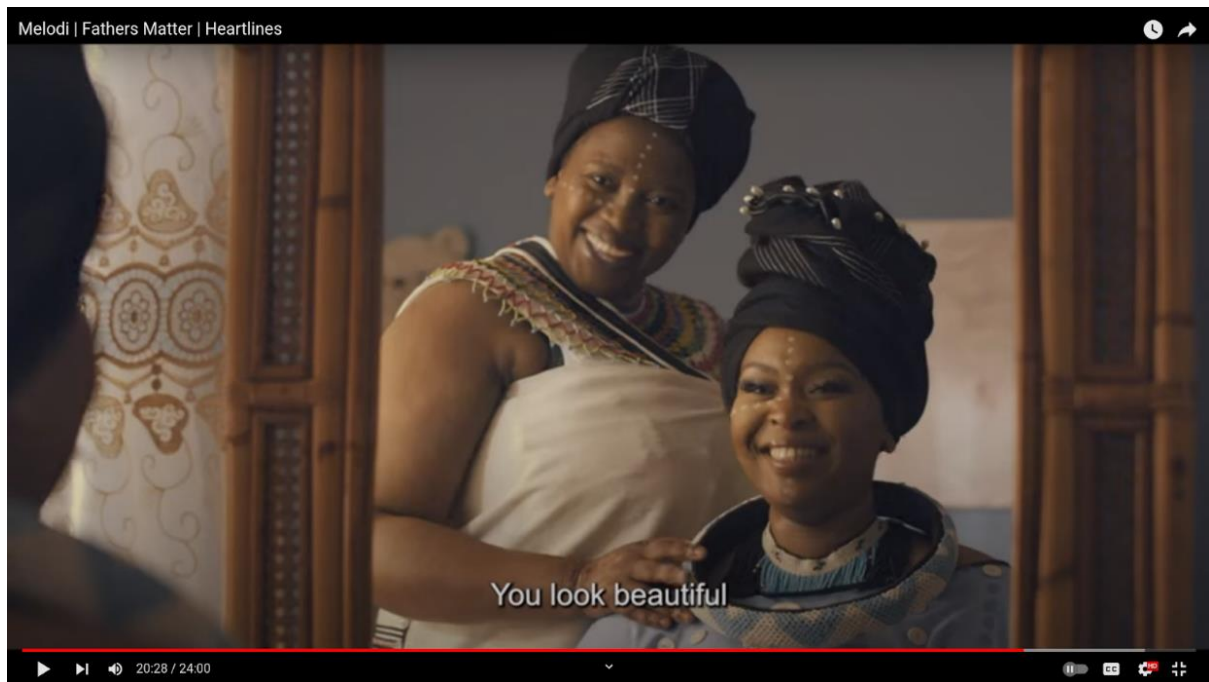


Figure 6: Visual probe 4a – Melodi (Mkhwanazi, 2022)



Figure 7: Visual probe 4b – Melodi (Mkhwanazi, 2022)

In *Airwalker*, researchers selected a scene that captures the transition of Zoë's facial expressions to explore her experiences within the context of her parents' ongoing conflict. Zoë's face is initially filled with excitement as she sees her father's truck heading home (see figure 8). Then, she eagerly skates back home with a joyful smile, maintaining her enthusiasm throughout the journey. However, upon reaching home, her expression suddenly changes to disappointment upon hearing her parents quarreling inside. This scene prompts interviewees to discuss key messages of Fathers Matter, analyzing the impact of parents' ongoing conflict on a child's life.



Figure 8: Visual probe 5 – *Airwalker* (Greene, 2022)

In *Manskap*, researchers chose two specific cuts as probes to delve into the dynamics and relationships portrayed in the movie. The first selected cut is from the opening scene, where Kyle and Andrew embark on a mission assigned by Rooi, his friend (see figure 10). In this scene, Kyle is depicted as a young boy deeply attached to Andrew, his cousin. Despite his immaturity and limited understanding of the task, Kyle eagerly accepts the job as long as Andrew is involved. Andrew, acting as a father figure or role model to Kyle, expresses concern and hesitation about the assigned job, while Kyle remains innocently excited to be part of it. The second selected scene for probing occurs towards the film's end when Kyle is with Bra, a church mobilizer, following his denouncement of Rooi to the police (see figure 10). In contrast to the previous probe, Bra becomes Kyle's new role model and assumes the role of a father figure. Bra guides Kyle back onto the path of moral values

and good conduct, expressing pride in Kyle's actions by stating, "I'm proud of you." This statement motivates Kyle. The scene ends with the two characters walking closely together under the bright sky and along the wide road. By analyzing these two cuts, researchers aim to gain valuable insights into the evolving dynamics between the characters and highlight the transformation of Kyle's relationships and role models throughout the film. These probes prompt interviewees on the complex father-child relationships depicted, which contributes to exploring the film's themes and messages.

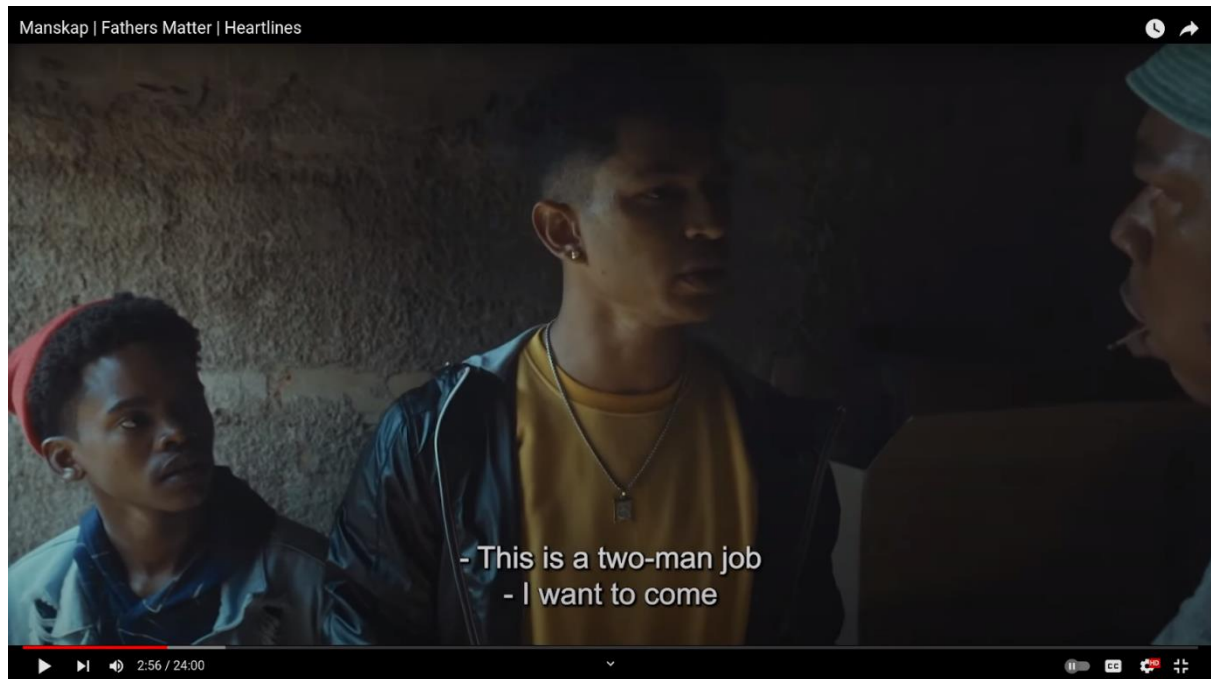


Figure 9: Visual probe 6a – Manskap (Mogale, 2022)



Figure 10: Visual probe 6b – Manskap (Mogale, 2022)

3.4.2. In-depth interviews

The process of contacting potential interviewees began in March and all interviews were conducted between March and May. As it was mentioned in the previous section, interviews lasted for approximately between 45 and 60 minutes.

The interview structure and planning followed the interview guide with a topic list (see appendix 2) (Johnson, 2011). These guidelines provided a framework for conducting the interviews effectively and systematically, obtaining valuable insights. Additionally, given that the study included expert interviews, the researcher ensured pre-interview preparation to familiarize herself with the interviewees' backgrounds, cultures, and surroundings (Mikecz, 2012). This preparatory work allowed the researcher to gain inside knowledge before the interview and facilitated the establishment of rapport with the interviewees. It also enabled the researcher to respond and follow up on the insights and perceptions discussed during the interviews more effectively. By incorporating these strategies, the researcher ensured that the interviews were well-structured, insightful, and conducive to obtaining rich data for the study.

Before conducting the actual interviews, two test interviews were conducted to assess the questions' practicality and effectiveness in eliciting relevant information for the intended purpose. The test interviews also helped in anticipating unexpected scenarios that could arise during the

interviews. Notes were taken during the test interviews, and necessary changes were implemented to prepare for the interviews.

Since this research relied on interviewing social work and media professionals joining the Fathers Matter series production, ethical considerations were carefully communicated to these participants. Informed consent forms were provided, outlining the nature of the research and informing participants of the potential risks and benefits of their participation (see appendix 1). Written and oral consent were obtained from all participants before the interviews started. Participants were assured that their insights would be used solely for academic purposes and that their personal information would remain confidential. All interviews were conducted in English and transcribed verbatim. Participants agreed to have their identities revealed in the final analysis. After the interviews, the researcher securely stored the data, including voice recordings from a personal phone, video records from Zoom, and transcriptions on Dropbox and Google Drive.

The interview included two parts. The first part included questions regarding the collaboration process while making the series Fathers Matter and the professionals' perception of the E-E strategy and collaboration process. In the second part, the interviewer asked questions regarding challenging factors that emerged in this collaboration process and how they solved them. Sensitizing concepts, e.g., culture, language, the reputation of collaborators, personal relationships, expertise, and different ways of thinking, were explored during the conversations. Furthermore, to identify the role of the collaboration partners during their collaboration, the topic list addressed questions concerning their self-portrayal and the portrayal of the specific leading roles in the process. Moreover, the interviewees were asked how the roles evolved during the E-E collaboration. Examples were often asked to clarify shared insights and ensure that there were clear understandings between the researcher and the interviewees.

Finally, closing questions were used to finish the interview on a positive note. Overall, the researcher used open-ended questions to avoid having a fixed range of responses and explore the subject from multiple viewpoints (Ayres, 2008).

3.5. Data analysis

All the transcripts proceeded to data analysis. Thematic analysis was adopted to identify, analyze, and report patterns derived from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.79). This method facilitated an inductive approach to identifying and describing themes and key patterns in the respondents' answers. Additionally, thematic analysis can be used to explore feelings and motivations by examining critical patterns in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Braun and

Clarke (2006), themes should capture the necessary data to address the research question, and it is up to the researcher to determine if a recurring account should be considered a theme based on its relevance to the research question rather than its frequency of occurrence. The method is flexible and can reduce complex data into comprehensible themes, making it suitable for explaining meaning (Boeije, 2010).

In the content analysis of the series *Fathers Matter*, the first step involved analyzing the storylines to gain valuable insights into the production process. This analysis aimed to examine relevant elements of E-E interventions (e.g., storyline, role models). The researcher studied each of the six films in detail, including their original scripts, settings, plots, and characters. These elements were then coded using a coding tree to facilitate analysis.

Interview transcripts were thematically approached to investigate the concept of E-E collaboration in *Fathers Matter*. Transcriptions were explicitly skimmed following the six-phase thematic analysis process proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The first phase of the analysis familiarized the researcher with the data through interviews, transcriptions, and repetitive reading. The second phase involved an open coding procedure in reducing and classifying the data set by coding data segments, thus generating initial codes. In this phase, the relevant parts of the transcripts were methodologically organized to address the research question. The third phase entailed creating potential broader themes and subsequently reviewing them to define their essence and assigned labels. The fourth phase involved exploring the relationship between themes and sub-themes to refine the specifics of each theme. Boeije (2012) referred to this as the selective codes, which were used as the main themes leading to the results. Conducting a thematic analysis was advantageous for this study, providing new emerging themes and patterns from the data that helped address the research question (Boeije, 2012, Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher used Atlas.ti to facilitate and organize the coding process. Finally, the results are reported in the following chapter.

Coding tree can be found in Appendix 3. Five main themes were concluded as the main findings: 1) *Fathers Matter*: E-E strategy and storytelling, 2) E-E collaboration in *Fathers Matter*: new perspectives, 3) motivations for E-E collaboration, 4) challenges of collaboration, 5) changes of roles in collaboration.

3.6. Research validity, reliability and ethics

Research credibility is a crucial aspect that encompasses validity and reliability. Validity ensures that the chosen research method effectively addresses the research question and accurately

represents the phenomena under study. On the other hand, reliability suggests that consistent results would be obtained if the study were replicated (Bengtsson, 2016; Silverman, 2011).

Qualitative research, due to its interpretive nature, may appear subjective since interpretations are influenced by personal and social meanings, which can potentially affect the credibility of the research (Bryman, 2012). Additionally, the flexibility inherent in conducting interviews can challenge standardizing the interview process, potentially compromising the reliability and validity of the measurements (Bryman, 2012). To ensure the credibility of qualitative research, the researcher was mindful of employing appropriate practices that adhere to rigorous methodologies (Schreier, 2012).

Validity

Referring to validity, first, the researcher continuously reflected on her perspectives throughout the study and provided step-by-step clarifications of the research design, implementation, and analysis (Noble & Smith, 2015). The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions with a repeated structure for all interviewees, securing an open dialogue that enhances credibility (Silverman, 2011). While the sequence of questions varied based on the flow of individual interviews to maintain a conversational nature, the researcher remained neutral in formulating the questions to avoid any subjective judgments. Furthermore, sensitizing concepts derived from a solid theoretical framework guided the analysis process and helped minimize the potential invalidity of the findings.

Besides, data triangulation was applied to improve validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The triangulation involved comparing multiple theories and examining how well the research topic aligned with each theory. Another type of triangulation was implemented through data collection using a mixed method with content analysis and in-depth interviews. While Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest the inclusion of peer debriefing and feedback requests from interviewees to ensure the congruence of findings with their perspectives and experiences, these practices were not feasible within the time constraints of this study. Alternatively, the researcher did two rounds of the coding process with a two-week interval in between to ensure the thoroughness and accuracy of the analysis.

Reliability

Regarding reliability, it is challenging to determine due to its qualitative design's interpretive nature and flexibility. Therefore, the researcher was aware of their own perspectives and

backgrounds, as these factors can influence both the qualitative content analysis and the interview process (Shufutinsky, 2020). To ensure transparency and the consistency throughout the study, the researcher provided a detailed explanation of each step in the research process (Noble & Smith, 2015). The methodology chapter 3 served as a "decision trail" (Noble & Smith, 2015, p.34) to justify the researcher's choices.

To further enhance reliability, recording and transcribing process allowed the researcher to iteratively examine and ensure both data immersion and accurate recall of the interviews (Shufutinsky, 2020). Besides, the inclusion of the interview guide (i.e., topic lists, sensitizing concepts) and the coding tree provided a clear framework for later replication and research scalability (Noble & Smith, 2015). This practice allows other researchers to follow the same criteria, leading to a highly similar coding framework and improving the study's reliability.

Ethics

As described in previous sections, the consent form comprehensively described the research's objectives, potential risks, benefits, time involved, participant rights, and contact information (see appendix 1). By additionally requesting the interviewees' approval before analyzing the transcripts, the researcher ensured that participants were well-informed and understood their voluntary participation in the study.

Moreover, maintaining confidentiality was vital throughout the interview and subsequent write-up stages (Corbin & Strauss, 2012). In this study, all participants consented to disclose their information, including their name, age, gender, and job title, in the findings.

Lastly, reflexivity guarantees integrity (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). The researcher acknowledged the potential influence of her knowledge, experiences, emotional immersion, and potential fatigue while interpreting data gathered from the film series and the participants' responses. Therefore, reflexivity was consistently considered at each research stage, particularly during data collection and analysis, to contribute to the research's overall integrity and transparency.

4. Results

This chapter delves into the research findings, focusing on the impact of the E-E collaboration process in producing the Fathers Matter series. As the primary objective is to comprehend how collaboration between film production professionals and social change professionals has influenced the creation of the series, which deliberately challenges societal norms surrounding fathers, fatherhood, and fathering in South Africa, the central research question guiding this analysis is:

How does the collaboration process between the film production professionals and social change professionals shape the development and content of the film series Fathers Matter, which is designed to reshape the societal norms surrounding fatherhood in South Africa?

To analyze the outcomes of this research, the researcher starts this chapter by exploring the storylines depicted in the Fathers Matter series. Subsequently, the following sections will discuss the five main themes that have emerged from the in-depth interviews conducted with experts involved in the E-E collaboration. These interviews have provided valuable insights into the collaborative processes and their influence on the Fathers Matter's content development. By examining both the narrative elements of the series and the perspectives of involved professionals, this analysis seeks to shed light on the transformative potential of the E-E collaboration process in redefining societal perceptions of fatherhood in South Africa

4.1. Fathers Matter: How the stories were told?

By employing content analysis, the researcher delved into the narrative structure of Fathers Matter, analyzing various essential elements of drama such as messages, plots, characters, dramatic tension, settings, and more (see chapter 2.2.3). These elements serve as crucial facilitators in fostering narrative storytelling.

4.1.1. Fixed elements across the six short films

The six short films featured in Fathers Matter exhibit specific elements that contribute to their overall coherence. These elements encompass a designated length, self-contained plots, thematic focus on the absence or inadequate engagement of the father figure, and specific location settings. By incorporating these shared elements, the films enhance the viewers' experience and establish a consistent narrative framework.

A prominent aspect of these films is their adherence to a designated length of approximately 24 minutes. This standardized duration establishes a cohesive viewing experience by providing a consistent time frame and format for each film. Livhuwani Maphorogo, Research Lead at Heartlines,

clarified that the films were shot in South Africa, specifically in Gauteng, Humalanga, Eastern Cape, and KZN. This deliberate choice of location aims to create relevance for the target audience, enabling them to connect with the cultural context and local nuances depicted in the films. By showcasing South African settings, customs, and societal dynamics, the films seek to deepen the viewers' engagement and foster a stronger connection with the content.

Moreover, the narrative structure of these films revolves around a recurring theme focused on household dynamics, particularly exploring situations where the presence of the father figure is absent or inadequate. Regardless of whether the father is biologically related, their engagement with their child is portrayed as lacking. This thematic motif serves as a unifying thread across the films, underscoring the significance of the father's role within the household. By consistently highlighting this aspect, the films convey key messages concerning fatherhood and the importance of active paternal involvement.

Though revolving around a recurring theme, the series utilizes self-contained plots within each film. Each film presents an independent story with its narrative arc, devoid of any explicit connections or overlaps with the storylines of the other five films. This approach allows for diverse narratives to unfold while maintaining a distinct separation between them. Consequently, viewers can engage with each film as a discrete entity while appreciating the thematic coherence underlying the entire series.

4.1.2. Messages

Each short film depicts a compelling drama that explores the complexities of fatherhood and the relationships people have with their fathers in South Africa. Within a context where a significant number of children grow up in households without their biological fathers, each film presents a distinct narrative, yet all share a common objective: to emphasize the crucial importance of the father's active presence in their child's life.

The key messages conveyed in the series have been carefully examined through Heartlines' formative research (see Appendix 4), ensuring their authenticity and alignment with the audience's reality. This approach, centered around the audience, was strongly emphasized by social change experts during an interview with the researcher. The experts expressed confidence in the messages, believing that they possess the potential to effect meaningful change and increase awareness regarding the issues surrounding the father's absence.

Um, like I'm saying because we did feel that the messages we came up with were good enough to make changes, or to increase awareness and increase people's knowledge of farther absence issues. (Livhuwani)

However, it is essential to note that the shaping of these messages was a collaborative effort involving individuals who participated in a message workshop. These participants were experts in the field of fatherhood and played a vital role in the process of prioritizing and refining the final key messages. Drawing from a broad range of outputs from formative research, these experts contributed their expertise to distill the most significant and impactful messages.

All we did was consult the people who attended the message brief workshop. So these are people who are experts in the field. These are people who are working within the fatherhood space. So those are people that we spoke to, and we said these are the eight messages that we are proposing. (Livhuwani)

4.1.3. Characters stereotypes

Through the analysis of the six short films, it becomes evident that father figures are often portrayed in alignment with prevalent stereotypes that assign them specific roles of authority and leadership within the family structure. These stereotypes position fathers by their responsibility as protectors, primary financial providers, disciplinarians, and instructors or guides. Each stereotype encompasses a unique set of associated characteristics that define the societal expectations placed upon fathers. These characteristics and their corresponding stereotypes are detailed in Table 2.

However, it is important to recognize that the fathers depicted in these films may not strictly adhere to a singular stereotype. Instead, they often embody a combination of several roles and characteristics, reflecting the complexity and diversity of fatherhood. By portraying fathers who exhibit traits from various stereotypes, the films challenge the notion of a monolithic representation and present a more nuanced and multifaceted perspective on fatherhood. For instance, in the film "Melodi," the character Mojalefa is portrayed as an absent dad, yet the stereotypes associated with fatherhood are assigned to him based on the expectations of other characters. This highlights how societal expectations and perceptions can shape the perception of fatherhood, even in the absence of a physical presence.

Besides, the films delve into stereotypes surrounding fathers and their societal expectations, emphasizing how these expectations influence their identities and roles within the family. By portraying fathers embodying a combination of roles, the films offer a more authentic depiction of fatherhood that acknowledges its complexities and individuality. By showcasing a range of father

figures, the films challenge the notion of a uniform representation of fathers and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the diverse realities of fatherhood. This approach challenges stereotypes and provides viewers with a variety of role models to relate to and learn from, promoting a more nuanced perspective on fatherhood.

	Fathers as caregivers	Fathers as financial providers	Fathers as instructors/guiders	Fathers as encouragers
Priority	emphasizing emotional support and empathy	placing a strong emphasis on financial responsibility	prioritizing valuable life lessons and skills	uplifting and motivating their children
Practices	participating in their children’s daily routines (e.g., cooking meals, helping with homework)	instilling in his children the importance of hard work and ambition	teaching his children valuable life lessons and skills.	empowering children to pursue their dreams and overcome obstacles.
Example characters in Fathers Matter	Aziye (Family Portray) Mojalefa (Melodi)	Aziye (Family Portray) Martin (Everything a Boy Could Want) Lerumo (In Time) Roi (Manskap) Mojalefa (Melodi)	Mike (Airwalker) Lerumo (In Time) Bra (Manskap) Roi (Manskap) Mojalefa (Melodi)	Mike (Airwalker) Mojalefa (Melodi)

Table 2: Father stereotypes in Fathers Matter

4.1.4. Settings

Fathers Matter films' setting is pivotal in providing the contextual backdrop for the intricately constructed stories and narratives. This encompasses crucial elements such as time, space, and environmental factors. Each constituent of the setting fulfills the function of shaping the prevailing mood, propelling the plot, and fostering the dynamic development of the characters. This immersive experience allows the audience to become intimately acquainted with the characters and their surroundings, evoking emotional responses and eliciting active engagement, as clarified in chapter 2.

In *Family Portray*, Ayize's visual portrayal of exhaustion and self-disappointment resonates profoundly with viewers. The deliberate manipulation of lighting, employing varying shades and enveloping corners in darkness, symbolizes his internal struggle. As Ayize reads a text message from Nomvula expressing longing and affection, his disappointment in his inability to provide financial security for his loved ones weighs heavily on his mind (see Figure 4). The film effectively captures Ayize's inner conflict and his immense burden, establishing a deep sense of empathy and emotional connection between the audience and the character.

Similarly, in *In Time*, a powerful scene unfolds with the protagonist positioned behind prison bars, symbolizing his overwhelming desire to be reunited with his daughter. The physical barrier of the prison serves as a metaphor for the emotional separation he experiences, highlighting the profound longing and yearning he feels for his loved one (see Figure 5). This poignant visual representation of the character's emotional journey elicits a strong sense of empathy and understanding from the audience.

Furthermore, the strategic utilization of sound effects and music throughout each film plays a pivotal role in establishing connections with specific screen moments and effectively conveying intended meanings to the audience. For instance, in the final scene of *Airwalker*, as Zoe courageously attempts her first skate since her accident, supported by her parents, a simultaneous burst of uplifting music fills the air. This harmonious blend of visuals, sound effects, and music heightens the impact of Zoe's performance, amplifying the joy and happiness radiating from her beaming smile (see Figure 8). Additionally, sound effects such as clapping, background noises, and cheers from spectators contribute to the emotional impact of this ending scene. The synchronized audio elements collectively create a powerful and memorable moment for the character and the audience.

In summary, the six short films strategically utilize role modeling and various cinematic techniques, including visual elements like lighting and sound effects like music, to elicit emotional responses, establish audience connections, and enhance the cinematic experience. These creative choices effectively engage the audience with the characters and their stories, allowing for a deeper understanding of the complexities of their experiences and evoking empathy resulting from the established parasocial relationship (see section 2.2.2.).

4.1.5. Tensions

The six short films employ tension and suspense to drive their narratives and captivate the audience by leveraging fundamental cognitive and affective mechanisms. These elements elicit both negative and positive emotions, effectively engaging the viewers.

Tension arises when conflicting elements, such as characters, actions, ideas, attitudes, values, emotions, and desires, create a problem that necessitates dramatic resolution. Each short film utilizes unique forms of tension and suspense to sustain audience interest. In *In Time*, tension is intensified through a dramatic scene where the father is falsely accused and unable to keep the promise to his daughter, leaving viewers anxious about his ability to make it. *Air Walker* heightens tension with Zoe's dramatic accident, significantly altering the storyline. Similarly, in *Manskap*, Roi's fatal accident is a turning point, generating suspense and shaping the characters' journey. In *Melodi*, the absence of a father becomes a constraint influencing the protagonist's wedding plans.

Everything a Boy Could Want explores a lighter tension related to the contrast between the financial provided by the father and the mental support desired from the son. In *Family Portray*, hints of comedic elements from the strict yet humorous mother-in-law introduce such tension.

The narratives showcased in these six short films effectively demonstrate the significance of tension and suspense in establishing emotional connections and engaging the audience. Storytelling has been widely acknowledged as a potent method for knowledge exchange, trust-building, tacit knowledge transfer, unlearning, and generating emotional connections.

The development of the stories within these films involved a comprehensive approach, incorporating Heartlines' formative research and the creative contributions of media professionals. In summary, the content analysis of *Fathers Matter* explores the development of storylines in the films, uncovering shared elements and distinct differences. These films maintain coherence while effectively conveying a central message about the active presence of fathers in children's lives.

Incorporating shared elements enhances the viewer experience and establishes a consistent narrative framework. Furthermore, including diverse elements challenges the notion of a uniform representation of fatherhood, contributing to a broader understanding of its multifaceted realities.

The narratives strategically employ tension and suspense to engage the audience and foster emotional connections. Storytelling is widely recognized as a powerful tool for knowledge exchange, trust-building, and emotional engagement. Through analyzing these narratives, the researcher investigated whether a collaborative approach was employed, integrating formative research, scholarly evidence, creative input, and audience testing from social change professionals and media professionals to ensure the narratives' relevance and effectiveness.

4.2. Entertainment-Education collaboration: “Messaging drives the media”

4.2.1. New perspectives of collaboration in E-E series

In assessing the initial outcomes, the primary objective is to address how collaboration has been perceived by the collaborators involved in producing the series *Fathers Matter*. When inquired about the origin of this collaborative effort, various explanations emerged regarding initiating collaboration within E-E. A prevailing viewpoint suggests that partnership started when the respective production and social change professionals were brought together and commenced their joint efforts to contribute towards the ultimate product - the *Fathers Matter* series. In the case of *Fathers Matter*, this occurred upon establishing partnerships accompanied by contractual agreements, as articulated by Garth Japhet, the CEO of Heartline. His role was pivotal in identifying and convening the involved parties to discuss terms, conditions, and related matters.

Another viewpoint from Candice Harrison-Train, Research Consultant at Heartlines, emphasized the indispensable contribution of a dedicated leader in instigating and propelling the collaborative endeavor. In particular, Candice underscored the significant influence of Garth as the visionary driving force behind the project. Candice's quote explains Garth's approach and highlights his pivotal role in initiating and shaping the collaborative efforts:

Garth might say, we do this program, and then research will feed into it, and communications will feed into it. And, it becomes a collaborative process, but it's up to my knowledge and often starts with thoughts, ideas about what he wants to change, and how he wants to change it.

This perspective uncovers Garth's leadership in setting the course for the collaborative journey, initiating discussions on desired changes, and outlining strategies for incorporating research and communications into the filmmaking process.

On the other hand, Livhuwani Maphorogo, Research Lead of *Fathers Matter* campaign, perceived collaboration as starting when Heartlines began imparting the eight key messages developed by Heartlines to the production team, particularly the scriptwriters responsible for formulating a cohesive storyline. The researcher's role entailed aligning the narrative with the research findings, thus ensuring a coherent integration of evidence-based insights within the series.

The collaboration starts when the scripts are being written. Yeah. That's when we then join with the production team of the different films and then they will then move forward with the production... (Livhuwani)

Another exciting way to define collaboration was from Nevelia Moloji, Head of Communication at Heartlines. She presented an intriguing perspective on collaboration within the context of the E-E series. According to Nevelia, an E-E collaboration represents a collective endeavor to advance a specific agenda, whether promoting a brand or selling fashion. However, she emphasized a distinction between "edutainment" and education. Nevelia believed that edutainment harnesses the influential power of media to positively transform people's lives, not only daily but also in critical life situations. In her viewpoint, the collaborative efforts within the E-E series were driven by the collective objective, from both the social change professionals and the media experts, of utilizing media in a way that can profoundly impact individuals, potentially even influencing matters of life and death. Nevelia's perspective reveals the significance of collaboration in leveraging the potential of media to entertain and educate and effect meaningful change in people's lives, highlighting the transformative nature of the E-E series and its overarching purpose. In other words, she defined collaboration in the perception of its dual power: entertaining vs. educating people.

They were all about driving a specific agenda, you know, it's the brand's agenda or a fashion magazine selling fashion... Not all of it is necessarily positive and beneficial and helps to build communities. So that's what edutainment is for me. (Nevelia)

To summarize, the consensus among the interviewees was that the E-E collaboration process centered on the collective work of Heartlines and their partners, particularly the production teams, in effectively conveying the key messages. These messages, which thorough research conducted by Heartlines drove, served as the foundation for the collaborative endeavor. Importantly, this approach aimed to ensure that the joint efforts surpassed superficial motivations, such as winning awards, and instead focused on delivering a product that resonates with the audience and reflects real-life experiences. By anchoring the collaboration effort in the filmmaking process, the teams strived for a mutual goal: to produce a product that is insightful, impactful, and capable of making a genuine difference.

So they wanted to be evidence-based. They don't want to make assumptions about the target audience and what they want to say, in the films. (Candice)

...And the messaging speaks to people's lived realities and people's expressed needs. So, we're never going to put a film out there just because we want to... We're putting a film out there that speaks to what people are really needing and struggling with right now... We make films because we want to change people's lived realities for the better social good. (Nevelia)

4.2.2. Balancing messages and creatives

Besides the fact that the message is driven by evidence-based research, as shared by all experts, in this collaboration, the message plays a crucial role in driving the filmmaking process, including the decisions during production or the creative aspects. Although the entertaining elements are an integral part of the collaborative process and play a role in validating the educational messages, the utmost importance lies in maintaining the balance between the two. In E-E collaboration, the educational messages take precedence and guide the selection of entertaining elements, as Nevelia emphasized:

The messaging at no point gets altered and touched. So that stays clear. We will change. We will change locations, we will change cast members, we will change language, we will change, uh, scenes...

It is evident that, among the collaborators, certain elements such as scene set-ups, locations, props, and more may be subject to compromise. However, ensuring that the fundamental integrity and essence of the messages remain unchanged is crucial. Ultimately, entertainment serves as a critical vehicle to enhance the delivery and impact of educational messages without overshadowing or diluting their significance. By striking the right balance, the collaborative effort can effectively utilize entertainment to amplify the educational messages, ensuring that they are engaging, impactful, and resonate with the audience.

It probably is challenging to sort of balance. Um, what area is educating and what area is entertainment because you can't just have, um, a film that is just education... There has to be some entertainment and that's how people get hooked into watching. Also, the entertainment part is how they can see themselves reflected in the film. So that's how they can relate to the film. (Livhuwani)

4.3. Motivations for E-E collaboration

4.3.1. Outsourcing expertise

Heartlines, a faith-based NGO, is dedicated to transforming social norms and working for the greater good. Its establishment was inspired by the success of Soul City, an NGO founded by Garth, a medical doctor, which effectively used media to address significant health issues. Heartlines, on the other hand, focuses on broader social issues.

Meanwhile, as Nevelia pointed out, it is uncommon for a nonprofit organization in South Africa to take on the client role for a series of feature films. Typically, such projects are undertaken

by national broadcasters, corporate clients, or well-established brands. But, Heartlines, being aware of their expertise in research and finalizing key messages, took that unique approach. Instead of venturing into production themselves, Heartlines sought the assistance of Quizzical Pictures, their preferred production partner:

When we have our messaging brief workshop, ... we invite the production team to that first meeting.

... They're in the room and they're meeting with key stakeholders, so they're hearing what, say for example, other leading father's organizations in South Africa would be saying, and we do have some breakout rooms where people can have Q&A, so they are involved from that moment on. (Nevelia)

Therefore, outsourcing production from an external party was wise: "It always makes sense to go to an expert in the field." (Candice). According to Candice, a research consultant at Heartlines, the organization has recently focused on strengthening its internal research capacity. This practice includes working with sophisticated data, conducting literature reviews, and analyzing complex information.

While ensuring a balance between entertainment and education, Heartlines maintains its unwavering commitment to conducting research and delivering impactful messages to a broad audience through the Fathers Matter series. Collaborating with skilled professionals in the entertainment industry allows Heartlines to harness its expertise while remaining focused on researching and refining the key messages they seek to convey. This collaboration not only enhances Heartlines' research capabilities but also provides an opportunity to share its resources with more extensive industry networks, thereby amplifying its impact, reaching a broader audience, and driving positive social change on a larger scale (see section 2.3.3.), as stated:

But they are also trying to increase their own internal research capacity... Heartlines also wants to focus on sharing that knowledge more broadly with other organizations and academically even. So they're trying to build that knowledge so that they can share that more broadly. And hopefully influence others who are doing similar work. (Candice)

Similarly, this sentiment was echoed by Olefile Masangane, Head of Church Mobilization Team at Heartlines, who familiarized the collaborative process of a "financial audit", a procedure that involves an audit team being responsible for conducting organizational audits and ensuring the accuracy and reliability of financial information. He highlighted the value of collaborating with involved parties who would bring a retrospective perspective, reflective thinking, and objective

mindsets to the work of Fathers Matter. Olefile posited the “opportunities” that were gained over the “audit”, stating:

You can't go research the content on your own and develop the content, and then go and do a retrospective study on you. You need, almost like in the finance sector, where you need to be audited by people who don't have vested interests in a particular process... It afforded us the opportunity to get better at what we have. (Olefile)

Such collaborations offer significant opportunities, providing access to a larger talent pool and diverse expertise, which increase the likelihood of finding innovative solutions, identifying potential risks, and avoiding pitfalls (see section 2.3.3).

Lastly, one of the most compelling reasons stated by Heartlines' experts, critically mentioned by Nevelia and Harriet, Executive Producer of Fathers Matter, is the ability to infuse dramas or compelling narratives into educational content, meaning a need to integrate creatives into messages. These entertainment elements are powerful for delivering educational messages, making complex concepts more accessible and memorable. They establish an emotional connection with the audience, evoking empathy and interest and enhancing the learning experience (see section 2.2.). Significantly, it raises numbers, a practical reason that keeps the series live longer and watched by many more:

When you're used to producing for an international broadcaster, all they care about is audience ratings... Don't boss with the details. Just get those numbers. And so what makes for... what brings those numbers in? The more, um, daring, dramatic, risky, whatever. Give me a stance. Give me drama. Give me someone coming back to life from the dead, even though they died four times. Give me someone who's married to his son's ex-wife... Um, those kinds of, you know, would keep the numbers coming in. (Nevelia)

4.3.2. A wide spectrum of perspective

Collaboration in the Fathers Matter project yields benefits in the final output, delivers messages and provides valuable learning opportunities for all participants involved. The diverse backgrounds and perspectives of individuals from the social change community and the media and entertainment industry contribute to a rich learning experience, a mutually beneficial situation (see section 2.3.4):

Absolutely. Everyone learns from everybody now. ... Every time you do a new project, you learn from your producers, and your directors. Your actors teach you something, and the

learning goes both ways... There's learning all the time. A fresh and new one from both sides. (Harriet)

Explicitly, Harriet gave another insightful comparison highlighting the parallel between the learning journey through collaboration and one's experience in life. By working with others, individuals can gain knowledge from their counterparts, contributing to their personal growth and development. In the context of production, this collaborative learning process allows Heartlines and its partners to become more experienced in each other's specialized fields and adept at anticipating and mitigating risks. By actively engaging in collaborative efforts, they continuously enhance their skills, knowledge, and problem-solving abilities, ultimately leading to more successful outcomes in Fathers Matter:

Uhm, the learning, I think it's really like life, you know? The more experience you have, the more you are able to anticipate what might go wrong, and the more you are able to understand how to make it work... I think my experience over the years, hopefully, brings insights into it. (Harriet)

In line with this, Olefile referred to the experience as the "surprise element," enabling more rational anticipation of unforeseen situations. He perceived it as a learning experience:

The most rewarding is we're learning together in the collaboration process. The surprise elements. You read the script and you're like, Okay, fine. You can just go shoot, but then sometimes the scene doesn't work the way they're or the area in which they're shooting is not working.

Furthermore, Candice shared a broader perspective of collaboration between Heartlines and their partners which nurtured a constructive environment for meaningful conversations and exchanges. Open dialogues were crucial in sharing insights, diverse perspectives, and specialized expertise, creating a rich and immersive learning experience for everyone involved (see section 2.3.3.). Each participant brought their unique knowledge and made valuable contributions to the collective growth and development of the team. Echoing this perspective, Candice expressed her viewpoint by stating:

I think all of the perspectives are really taken into account. And are, in some ways dealt within one way or another. So, it's a strong voice that saying, Look, you need to be looking at things from this lens, otherwise, you're not going to be taken seriously; then, ultimately, the team will design the messaging in such a way, it's always about maximizing opportunities for changes. (Candice)

To summarize, this section emphasizes that the collaboration between Heartlines and Quizzical Pictures is driven by the need to combine expertise in media and entertainment with the

research capabilities of Heartlines. The goal is to create educational and entertaining films that resonate with audiences and have a lasting impact on their knowledge and behavior. This collaborative approach recognizes the importance of leveraging different fields of work, as outlined by Bourdieu's theory of habitus (see section 2.3.4.). Moreover, there is a constant focus on leveraging pooled resources, collective skills, and knowledge constructively to maximize their benefits. Heartlines, as a social change NGO, and Quizzical Pictures, as media and entertainment professionals, bring their unique perspectives and knowledge to collectively design the E-E series *Fathers Matter* with educational messages and entertaining elements to promote prosocial behavior change effectively. This collaboration aligns with previous research on the partnership between healthcare professionals and television professionals, highlighting the importance of combining specialized expertise to achieve mutually desired outcomes (see section 2.3.4.).

4.4. Challenges of collaboration

4.4.1. A clash of different expertise

Throughout the six interviews conducted with experts from Heartlines regarding the creation of *Fathers Matter*, the importance of expertise consistently emerged as a critical factor in the decision-making process. When discussing their challenges, the interviewees emphasized the need for expertise from their collaborators, including scriptwriters, directors, producers, and actors. They strived to select the best individuals in the industry, each bringing their unique knowledge and competence to contribute to the overall success of the E-E program. The interviewees highlighted that expertise fosters trust and respect among team members and ensures the high quality of the program's outputs. Experts' depth of domain-specific knowledge plays a vital role in building a repository of collective resources used in the development of *Fathers Matter*.

And so, that was an example where that wouldn't have been our decision, but we trusted their wisdom there because they said, we trust this director of photography, we want to work with him, he understands your brand and your messaging, and we think he will be the best person to tell the story. (Nevelia)

Or, how Heartlines chose scriptwriters was clarified:

We selected scriptwriters we were confident about. Scriptwriters who were very good in the industry in their own right, because you do want that. You want people who are good at drama. You want people who write good stories. (Nevelia)

Besides, it is essential to recognize that expertise is often confined to specific domains. When one goes beyond one's expertise or field of knowledge (see section 2.3.4.), there leads to differing

perspectives and, at times, discussions or heated debates within the team. However, at Heartlines, these moments are seen as constructive acts. Candice explained the value of these exchanges, which was “maximizing opportunities of changes,” as stated:

... We have the debates, and then, at the end of the day, it has to work out... I think at the end of the day, the data is constructive rather than destructive. It's a learning organization. And I do think that there's space for I can't see how severe differences of opinion could impact on things in a negative way. And an impasse could be formed. But that generally doesn't happen in Heartlines.

Another captivating on-set experience, shared by Harriet highlighted the contrasting perspectives between her practical concerns and the director's creative yet sometimes impractical approach. While Harriet focused on ensuring smooth operations and logistical considerations, the director focused on unleashing their creative vision. These divergent viewpoints represent the interplay between practicality and artistic freedom that often arises in collaborative production environments.

So, you know, it's very funny, once you are in production, you are absolutely thinking about practical things. You have a day, you've got to give it a shot... We had to rush the scene. So in a way, once you're in production, the practical concerns very quickly take over. But you are also not the boss of the production at that point. It is your director. (Harriet)

Additionally, the dilemma faced by individuals who possess two expertise in both the media industry and the social change community added intrigue to the situation. Harriet, for example, found herself in this unique position, describing herself as someone who straddles both spaces and how she dealt with them: "I respect the story, but I also hear what Heartlines has."

So when I'm showing cuts to Heartlines, they'll often say, where's this message? And maybe we didn't shoot it, maybe the quality of the shot was terrible, so we left it out, and we have to negotiate there... So, I remember in the script of Family Portrait, the daughter had a bit of dialogue where she talked about the first thousand days being especially important. There was a whole little thing in the script. It was so badly done... That day we were rushed. I said it must go. Heartlines said no, it's a message, we must keep it in... We agreed in the end. (Harriet)

It is demonstrated that, regardless of the circumstances, the differences among diverse areas of expertise were effectively addressed through thoughtful consideration, respectful discussions, and negotiations among the team members. Ultimately, the focus was placed on prioritizing the collective result.

Notably, individual's expertise is shaped by their experiences, education, and specialized training within their respective domains. Thus, experts often approach problems and decision-making from unique standpoints, leading to diverse viewpoints within a collaborative setting. These different ways of thinking can be attributed to each team member's specific expertise and background. For example, a scriptwriter may prioritize storytelling techniques and character development, while a director may focus on visual aesthetics and narrative structure. This diversity of expertise and thinking styles enriches the collaborative process by bringing together various insights and ideas. However, according to Nevelia, these differences in thinking can be perceived as a challenge, as she shared about the challenges of scriptwriters:

Sometimes it could be difficult for a scriptwriter who is used to producing with those metrics in place... I need to remember that I'm producing for someone who wants the numbers, but that's not the ultimate goal... they want this messaging. So maybe sometimes they would feel, some of our characters are not as dramatic or controversial as they are used to writing for, but our characters are real-life people.

4.4.2. Funding

Film funding emerged as a significant hurdle during the E-E collaboration, assuming a critical role not only as a financial resource but also as a facilitator throughout the filmmaking process, encompassing research, design, production, distribution, and marketing. Nevelia, who had firsthand experience on the set and witnessed the impact of funding constraints, revealed that Heartlines bore the responsibility of securing funds for the entire six-film series. While they could secure initial funding, unexpected circumstances and unforeseen events often imposed budgetary limitations. It is essential to acknowledge that funding dynamics can fluctuate at any project stage, with particular challenges arising during the design and production phases, given the ambitious nature of the film production endeavor.

Yeah. We know beforehand what the budget is or we have a hopeful budget when we start. Um, cause you've got to project in order to get things moving... But I think there was one funder along the way that fell through. And so because of that, that's quite a big deal. Um, And so that was early on in production. (Nevelia)

We've done the research part, but that's always going to be a much smaller part and funders are more likely to say, yes, we'll pay for this little piece of research. That's fine... But they're less likely to say, all right, we commit ourselves to six films. (Candice)

As Candice elaborated, for instance, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated financial challenges, causing delays and disruptions in the project timeline. Harriet pointed out the impact of the budgetary limitations, explaining that the project faced considerable setbacks as the anticipated budget for the actual film did not go as expected.

You know, the change, once you go into production budget, has a very important role. Directors come on board and they want to make a Hollywood movie, you know, and that costs, they want drones and lots of days and budget is very much around days... A number of days you have to shoot something because every day costs. So we made many changes. We lost time. We had to go back, uh, to do things. Um, trying to think specifically where, you know, concrete changes were made. (Harriet)

Crucially, a financial constraint may directly impact the freedom of creatives. The team had to carefully consider their choices and make trade-offs regarding the resources allocated to sets, cast members, and the overall production quality. The desire for luxurious sets, high-end cast members, and renowned directors of photography had to be balanced with the available budget. Nevelia acknowledged that there were specific creative aspirations and ambitions, such as winning prestigious awards, that had to be adjusted due to the financial realities of the project:

I think the other challenge is largely around funding and timing... As a scriptwriter and you're in the creative world, you want to tell the most amazing story, you want the most luxurious sets, you want the high-end cast member You want the leading renowned director of photography in the sector, you know, you want bells, whistles, you want to win that award. Right?

Similarly, budgetary concerns necessitated complex decision-making processes where various challenges, such as expertise, experiences, ways of thinking, and different perspectives, came into play. To validate a decision, the team had to prioritize and make compromises to allocate resources effectively. Each team member's expertise and experience played a crucial role in informing these decisions, ensuring that the project stayed on track while maintaining the desired level of quality.

So we overbudget on that house, which means we have to find that budget somewhere else or someone else is going to lose...So, I mean, maybe something like a wardrobe. Yeah, that would be a classic example. A wardrobe budget, a wardrobe costume... we had to choose between lovely location and the clothing that they're wearing, we're going to have to compromise somewhere and we're going to compromise on the clothing rather than the location. (Nevelia)

4.4.3. Cultural differences

Although cultural differences were not explicitly highlighted as a significant hurdle in the E-E collaboration, they did play a role in the negotiated decision-making process. The discussions and choices made were influenced by the specific cultural contexts and situations involved. While not a direct challenge, cultural differences, for instance, subtly shaped the dynamics in narratives, how the messages were told and perceived as much relatable as possible towards Heartlines' target audiences:

Um, there weren't any specific cultural issues. I mean, when we tested Family Portrait, the issue of the mother-in-law and how nasty she would become quite a lot, and sometimes Heartlines felt she should be softer in her performance. The actress, I mean, the writer felt very strongly she was perfect because she kept saying she was like her mother-in-law. And then the actress herself brought her own experience into it. She was much nastier and more direct, and some people felt she should be a bit softer, but, we needed that for the comedy. So there was discussion around that, culturally, how direct people would be with each other. (Harriet)

In contrast, Nevelia, with her background in communication and branding, shed light on how culture can present obstacles in an E-E collaboration. She emphasized the significance of considering cultural norms at every stage of the filmmaking process, including research, scripting, and portrayal of scenes. This awareness ensures that the project respects and reflects the cultural contexts involved, allowing for authentic storytelling and avoiding unintended misrepresentations.

We have many different cultural norms in South Africa, we have so many different cultures! So even in writing a story about how, for example, an isiZulu father would relate to a child vs say a Sotho or an English-speaking father, brings with it certain nuances, based on cultural norms. Very important for everyone to understand these as we research, script, and then portray characters in a way that is both honoring to culture and that calls everyone up to possibly higher social norms that can benefit and strengthen father-child relationships. (Nevelia)

4.4.4. Other challenges of collaboration

In addition to the previously mentioned challenges, the E-E collaboration encountered several others, as highlighted by the interviewees, including timeline constraints, cast and crew availability, and weather conditions.

Throughout the discussions, time emerged as a recurring concern, with interviewees expressing phrases such as, "We ran out of time," "We did not have time," "The main challenge is time," and "a short space of time." These statements underscored the significant impact of limited time on the project. The time constraints placed considerable pressure on the team, requiring efficient decision-making, prioritization, and adaptability to plan changes.

For example, that the garage scene, where they drive into the garage and he's arrested... He was supposed to be in a little town. We didn't have time to shoot that ... It's not far... But we cheated. Shooting it very tightly. But we had to quickly fit that in because we'd lost time somewhere else. (Harriet)

Moreover, cast and crew availability posed another significant challenge during the E-E collaboration. As highlighted by the interviewees, there were instances where the desired cast members or crew with specific expertise were not available at the requested time. In the creative world, scriptwriters and filmmakers aspire to create extraordinary stories and productions, seeking luxurious sets, high-end cast members, and renowned directors of photography. However, the reality of scheduling conflicts and individual commitments often meant that the ideal choices were sometimes not available when needed, which presented a dilemma for the team as they had to navigate the complexities of finding suitable alternatives or adjusting their plans to accommodate the availability of the cast and crew:

Suddenly they tell you the day before that they can't make it the next day and you've got a whole day scheduled... The lead actor suddenly told us that he had a call for another show he was working on. So we had to juggle everything and, change. (Nevelia)

Therefore, the scheduling and coordination of diverse individuals with varying commitments and availability proved to be a complex task that required meticulous management and flexibility. Besides aiming for the best possible choices, anticipating multiple options and negotiating schedules is vitally crucial. This obstacle highlighted the significance of being adaptable and creative in working with the available talent pool, maximizing the team's capabilities and potential in collaboration.

Lastly, the collaboration also faced challenges related to weather conditions and filming locations. Weather-related issues can significantly impact film production, often leading to delays and disruptions. Unfavorable weather conditions can hinder outdoor shoots, affecting the overall timeline and budget of the project. It requires careful planning and flexibility to navigate these challenges and make necessary adjustments to the production schedule. Nevelia gave an example from the film *In Time*, where the leading actress had to run under the winter weather instead of summer as planned:

So one of the films was supposed to be summer and it was the middle of winter in Johannesburg and it was minus two degrees... And that happened to be one of the coldest nights of that month.

... I can show you behind the scene pictures of those poor young ladies with thick robes and blankets wrapped around them and shivering on the sidelines waiting to run this 400-meter race barefoot.

The collaboration faced unforeseen situations that required immediate decision-making and adapting to unplanned scenes while also relying on the willingness of the collaborators, including the actresses, to accept and embrace these choices. This practice is kind of a “give and take” decision or “resource dilemma” (see section 2.3.4.) when then this actress needs to consider the balance between her contribution to the resource (e.g., her compromise on health) and her acquisition from the resources (e.g., credit on a quality shoot).

Moreover, location challenges repeatedly emerged as a significant obstacle during production. The selection of suitable filming locations plays a pivotal role in capturing the film's desired creative settings and atmosphere. Securing filming permits well in advance is crucial to mitigate any potential scheduling conflicts or complications. Additionally, having alternative locations identified allows the film crew to adapt to unforeseen changes, such as the unavailability or unsuitability of the originally intended location. However, despite meticulous planning and anticipation, unexpected and “funny” scenarios still managed to surprise the team along the way:

It's very funny, once you're in production, you are absolutely thinking about practical things. You have a day; you've got to give it a shot. You are concerned about the weather. Are the actors there? It's so practical. So that prison scene, we arrived at the prison and they wouldn't let us in... They had prisoners who were on trial waiting. So we had to wait for them. So we were then delayed two hours there while we waited. (Harriet)

In such instances, the decision-making process was shaped by the directors' expertise and ability to think creatively, given their authority. When confronted with limitations imposed by production, compromises became necessary, extending beyond practical considerations. Nevelia provided an illustrative example of how they tackled such scenarios using creative thinking:

Of course, I think for creatives, it's hugely challenging... We needed a prison scene. There's a scene in a prison. And, um, the art director really wanted that prison scene. And we weren't able to get permission to shoot in a prison within the time frame that we needed to shoot. And so, we had to shoot in a holding cell.

Lastly, besides the need for quick adaptation and resourcefulness in exploring unconventional approaches, the challenge had a ripple effect on the overall timeline, including marketing and PR activities, as noted by Nevelia. The unforeseen circumstances affected multiple aspects of the project, necessitating adjustments, and meticulous coordination to ensure seamless execution without further delays.

I couldn't do any of the behind-the-scenes interviews there because it was a holding cell.

And we literally have like a three-by-four space in which people are getting changed and set changes. So you have to roll with the punches... you thought you were going to get four cast interviews and you get zipped, uh, because the location just didn't allow for it. (Nevelia)

4.5. Changes in roles across E-E collaboration process

4.5.1. Roles in collaboration: clarity and distinction

Collaboration is consistently emphasized as crucial in fostering successful collaboration, enabling professional work teams to function effectively. Each member of the Fathers Matter team has been assigned a specific role based on their job title. In the case of Livhuwani, she delineated a clear distinction in her role during the project. She was primarily involved in conducting formative research and played a pivotal role in finalizing the key messages for Fathers Matter. With her specialization in this stage, she possesses a clear understanding of her responsibilities and knows what needs to be done to ensure a successful outcome.

I think the good thing was that also because we, so within the research team we are very, like I think everybody had their tasks and responsibilities, so everybody knew what they needed to do. (Livhuwani)

Corresponding to this, Harriet actively participated on set with the crew and provided insights into the specific roles of team members, stating:

There are often three story-makers in any kind of television thing. Three story makers.

There's the scriptwriter who owns the story. Then the director comes in and they have their own vision. And they bring new ideas. It's often very exciting. They have their own thoughts about how they want to do it. And then there's the editor at the end who's got to cut it into half an hour...

These well-defined team roles serve as the foundation that binds the team together and enables effective collaboration. When everyone understands their role, it simplifies matters and establishes clear expectations, behavior, and objectives. Moreover, when individuals recognize the significance of their contributions to the group's overall success, it can provide an additional motivational boost,

fostering a positive and productive work environment. Furthermore, it is essential to highlight that each stage of the production process is vital for the smooth progression to the next stage. As Harriet implied, this seamless transition allows for the natural integration of different roles on set, ensuring a continuous workflow. Consequently, people can cooperate more effectively, and communication is improved.

Additionally, the interviews revealed that leadership style plays a crucial role in collaboration success. How teams are led can determine whether a set runs smoothly or encounters difficulties. Effective leadership fosters a harmonious working environment and enhances the overall collaborative experience.

... it is true to say that Gath is as the Head of the organization, ... because you'd call it energy and enthusiasm for the work that he does... plays a big role in making things happen... I think it's probably important in these kinds of processes, for there to be a kind of thought leader or a sort of visionary person, who is the initial change-maker or the person who is committed to a constant process of engaging society in a quest for change. (Candice)

His visionary leadership encompasses the ability to see the big picture to understand the broader purpose and impact of the work. In this regard, Garth reminds the team of the underlying reasons for their involvement in Fathers Matter. He reckons the importance of understanding the message and how it will contribute to the community's behavioral changes. Garth's commitment to effecting social change and his extensive 30-year career in using media to communicate health and broader social issues demonstrates his dedication to building a positive community:

So, this is the second organization that I started; the one I started in 1992, was called Soul City. Um, and also the use of media. I'm a doctor, medical doctor. And I was looking for ways to communicate big health issues through media.

I've been involved in the use of entertainment for almost 30 years now through different things... So whereas Soul City was more health, this Heartlines deals with broader social issues.

Leaders like Garth possess ambitious goals, which are essential for effectively guiding the collaboration process, given his founder and CEO roles. Garth practices his capability to identify and effectively communicate a compelling vision to team members. His role includes delivering clear communication regarding goals, expectations, individual support, and motivation to the groups involved.

Additionally emphasizing the significance of leadership, Harriet highlighted the pivotal role of the director on set. The director, as the leading authority, holds the creative reins and plays a

crucial role in decision-making during the production phase. Working closely with the actors, the director guides the team and shapes the overall process. Harriet acknowledged the profound impact of the director's influence on the working environment.

The director is making decisions with the actors. [...] Um, yeah, so, but during that phase (production phase), creatively, the director is very much the driver, is very much leading the ship.

Corresponding to Harriet, Nevelia recognizes the significant impact the director's influence can have on the working environment. While working with a team of experienced professionals brings advantages, establishing rapport and creating an at-ease atmosphere may take time when collaborating with new team members. In this case, the director's leadership qualities and approach ultimately determine the success of the collaborative atmosphere.

I mean, creatives, there's always going to be somebody crying or dramatic or disgruntled on any given day of the week, but, um, I think that's where our directors play a huge role, so the director can make or break the environment. (Nevelia)

To summarize, the achievement of collaborative outcomes within professional work teams hinges on the clear identification of individual roles and the presence of strong leadership. These factors ensure a seamless progression between stages and facilitate effective communication. Collectively, they contribute to fostering a positive and productive collaborative process.

4.5.2. Changes in roles over the collaboration process

Agreed by all the interviewees, there were interconnectedness and collaboration across different stages, despite their distinct roles. They shared tasks and went beyond their assigned responsibilities. Livhuwani, for instance, clarified her role as a researcher. Though she did not directly participate in the production phase, she contributed by assisting in developing a brief for scriptwriters and evaluating the appropriateness of content to be included in the script. Her involvement extended beyond research, continuing even after finalizing the key messages:

... To ask these questions specifically around the production is Harriet, because I wasn't involved in the production. So my responsibilities were around doing the formative research and the sort of helping to design the messages. (Livhuwani)

Meanwhile, Harriet provided valuable insights into the strong connection between the production and initial stages, including the overlap of responsibilities. Harriet explained the dynamic nature of her tasks, which varied throughout the entire process:

I didn't do the research. I then came in when there was the message brief and part of analyzing that research and looking at what are the key messages.

And then I oversaw the script-writing process... testing of the scripts from there. And then I was the producer of the films, producing the films.

The collaboration process is continuous, characterized by intersections where the involved parties share responsibilities and overlapping roles. It is important to note that it is not a matter of one role ending and another starting at specific times. Instead, a dynamic and fluid exchange of tasks and responsibilities occurs throughout the collaboration, fostering a cohesive and integrated team effort.

Further clarified, the leading roles of the interviewees were well-defined in each stage of the process. These roles underwent constant evolution. Livhuwani highlighted that the researchers took the lead during the initial stages but transitioned to a consulting role during the message brief, concluding their involvement. Conversely, Nevelia explained that media professionals assumed the leading role during the production phase. This explanation demonstrates the dynamic nature of authority and how it shifted among team members throughout the collaborative process:

So, that would be the only thing where they know that upfront, they are key parts of the process ... but then once their work is done, their work is done. But ours continues.

These changes in leading roles were influenced by the diverse expertise of the collaborators in each stage (see section 2.3.4.). Livhuwani highlighted that the messages were derived from the formative research stage, primarily conducted and owned by social work agents. The message brief served as a guide to ensure that the scriptwriters had creative freedom while still aligning with the overarching message:

We're giving someone creative freedom to interpret what we want to, to be on the outcome, but I think the good thing is that we're still hands-on. There's always someone from Heartlines...(Livhuwani)

Shifting our focus to the production phase, aligning to the fact that expertise finalizes the role and decision authority, Harriet clarified that scriptwriters excelled in their skill of scriptwriting, with their primary role concluding once the script was finalized. In contrast, the film director took on the leading role during production, while their involvement in the editing process may not have been as extensive. These insights highlight the dynamic nature of roles in collaboration, shaped by the power resources of the collaborators at each stage of the collaborative process. This power predominantly stems from their expertise and the responsibilities they hold within the collaboration.

Although roles are evolving, Heartlines remains actively involved and maintains a hands-on approach in their collaborative efforts. They emphasize the value of freedom and autonomy while

working together. This means that they encourage individual initiative and independent decision-making within the team.

I think our role does change in the sense that we're giving someone creative freedom to interpret what we want to... but I think the good thing is that we're still hands-on, even though they are the person who's creatively taking on the process of, maybe writing a script or producing a film (Livhuwani)

4.6. Building a healthy collaboration: Beyond trust!

Regarding maximizing advantages for collaboration, as Garth and other interviewees from Heartlines emphasized, building relationships with the other collaborators – the production team was critical. Agreed upon this, the term "healthy collaboration" emerged to describe Heartlines' recent collaboration with the Quizzical production team:

So, the collaboration is very healthy. When it comes to us working with different role players, whether units like external research, organizations, saying easy, where can this if it's coming from, so we work very well. (Olefile)

The "healthy collaboration" concept encompasses sustained and collaborative practices that bring about beneficial outcomes. This notion emphasizes the significance of carefully selecting collaborators based on specific criteria that are believed to contribute to the overall success of the collective endeavor. As explicitly clarified by most interviewees, the first and foremost condition is that "they've got to be some of the best people working in your field locally" (Garth). Interviewees collectively agreed that being an expert was a prerequisite for earning respect from other collaborators and establishing trust in the decisions made. Trust and respect also created an environment that encouraged open feedback and discussions among collaborators.

You know, it makes such a difference that you've built a relationship of trust.... You've built a relationship of understanding over the years. Harriet Gafshin, who is the director at Quizzical, has a very deep understanding of entertainment education... So I think that makes a big difference, that you trust each other. And that you're also able to argue and debate about what could work and not work. (Harriet)

The respondents emphasized that understanding Heartlines' values and finding collaborators who align with those values were essential for successful collaboration. Significantly, Garth emphasized the importance of working with good people who share similar values and can effectively contribute to collaborative efforts. This sentiment reflects the notion that collaboration goes beyond just the technical aspects of being expertise in production; it also involves working with

individuals who genuinely care about the mission and goals of the project. Nevelia's opinion was coined as:

We need a production partner to understand our values and our key objectives with our messaging and to understand that the audiences we serve may not look like a lot of other audiences that they serve.

Expanding this idea, Garth emphasizes the need to go beyond surface-level discussions about technical abilities and instead delve into the motivations and values potential collaborators nurture. By engaging in dialogue, he suggests they assess whether collaborators are genuinely interested in leveraging their skills to create meaningful content that serves a larger social purpose.

Let's speak to them, and then you would see whether they're also interested in using their skills to do more than, to use entertainment for, for social good, as well as just for ratings.
(Garth)

Garth's perspective, which aligns with Bouman's study (2002), draws an interesting parallel between the relationship of collaborators and a marriage. As such, sustained two-way communication is the cornerstone of effective collaboration, enabling the building and nurturing of relationships among collaborators. Through continuous dialogue, involved parties develop a deeper understanding of each other's perspectives, strengths, and working styles, fostering trust, respect, and empathy. This understanding enhances collaboration by promoting smoother interactions and leveraging the diverse skills and expertise of the team.

Things go wrong, you've got to talk... when there's a problem, you've got to deal with it and, and, sort it out. Um, it's a relationship. (Garth)

To conclude, Heartlines has fostered a "healthy" relationship with media professionals through sustained communication and open conversations. The interviewees stressed the significance of investing in partnerships with collaborators who possess essential qualities, including market expertise, a deep understanding of Heartlines' social change objectives, and a commitment to ethical standards. By prioritizing these practices and aligning with like-minded collaborators, Heartlines can maximize mutual understanding, leverage collective strengths, and pool resources and expertise, leading to successful outcomes in their collaborative endeavors. This approach reflects Heartlines' commitment to effective collaboration and dedication to creating meaningful and impactful work to pursue positive social change.

5. Conclusion

In this final chapter, the research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the E-E collaboration process observed during the creation of the edutainment series *Fathers Matter*. Specifically, the study examines this research question: *How does the collaboration between film production professionals and social change professionals shape the development and content of the film series Fathers Matter, which aims to challenge and reshape societal norms surrounding fatherhood in South Africa?*

A qualitative methodology was employed to address this research objective, utilizing a mixed method of content analysis design and in-depth expert interviews. The findings derived from these methods are presented in the subsequent sections, offering insights into the dynamics of the collaboration. Furthermore, the chapter delves into the practical and theoretical implications of the findings, exploring their potential impacts on both professional practice and academic discourse. Finally, the chapter concludes with recommendations for future research, identifying possible limitations and suggesting areas for further investigation within E-E collaboration and related topics.

5.1. Main findings

This thesis contributes insights into the decision-making processes with evolving authority within E-E collaborations, explicitly focusing on the partnerships between social work and media professionals. Cultural factors, including expertise, knowledge exchange, organizational position, and social factors, such as networking and societal positions, emerge as significant factors in the collaborative process. Meanwhile, financial resources are considered crucial constraints over ongoing collaboration. Other than that, time, space, and weather – external factors also challenge decision-making in the collaborative process. These findings resonate with Bouman's (2002) observations regarding the diverse sources of capital derived from power dynamics within collaborative contexts.

By emphasizing the dynamic nature of power throughout the collaboration process, the study highlights the importance of habitus and negotiated agreements among collaborators in navigating power differentials and achieving successful outcomes. This necessitates compromises regarding resource contributions and acquisition from pooled resources while simultaneously ensuring the effective utilization and development of these resources for the benefit of the collaboration (Seo & Bryson, 2022). Significantly, the distribution of power evolves across different stages of the collaboration. Social change agents, who are engaged from the project's inception, initially assume leading roles, similar to Bouman's (2002, 2021) findings on the role of health

communication in E-E collaborations. Media professionals take the lead during the production phase, while social work experts from Hearlines assume more observational and advisory roles. Effective communication strategies between these parties are built on trust, respect, and mutual benefits, allowing freedom in creative decision-making. Media experts' involvement ends as the final product is distributed, marking social work professionals' return. The social work professionals' role shifts towards disseminating and fostering the impact of social change through discussions centered around the Fathers Matter series.

Significantly, the influential role of particular collaborators in driving successful collaborations emerges as a significant finding. The leadership roles are identified as critical factors in facilitating effective partnerships concerning envisioning collaborative directions and fostering a collaborative environment. Additionally, the value of simultaneous use and development of resources is crucial for long-term collaborations, as Seo and Bryson (2022) highlighted, fostering mutually beneficial outcomes. Despite acknowledging challenges and conflicts within collaborations, it is emphasized that these conflicts are constructive rather than destructive, which contributes to the learning process of all collaborating parties. The observed harmonious collaborations are attributed to sustained relationships founded on trust, respect, and a shared understanding of mutual goals.

The thesis also delves into the impact of collaboration on narratives of Fathers Matter. It underscores the central role of storytelling, which necessitates collaborative efforts between media professionals and social change agents to create compelling dramas. While educational messages remain essential, entertaining content becomes necessary to effectively engage and captivate the audience.

The findings highlight the significance of investing in research and partnership development to facilitate successful E-E collaborations. Comprehending power dynamics, resource allocation, and sustainable relationships are critical to fostering effective and impactful collaborations. Further research in this area can deepen our understanding of the complexities involved in E-E collaborations, thereby contributing to developing more effective strategies and frameworks for future collaborative endeavors.

5.2. Theoretical and societal implications

The theoretical and societal implications of this research are significant. The findings validate and build upon previous studies on E-E strategy and E-E collaboration in Health Communication and Media, reinforcing the understanding that successful E-E programs result from negotiated

agreements and collaborative efforts among stakeholders (Bouman, 2021). This paper additionally highlights the importance of researching potential partners before establishing partnerships, as it serves as an investment in enhancing future collaboration.

Furthermore, the research highlights the intricacy of balancing entertainment and education within the E-E strategy, aligning with Bouman's findings (2021). It emphasizes the crucial role of carefully evaluating and testing processes with audiences to preserve this delicate balance. Despite the inherent incongruence between social change professionals and media production professionals stemming from their differing interpretations of the required habitus (Bouman, 2002), the consensus is ultimately reached through hands-on practices and ongoing constructive conversations. The collaborative efforts among professionals who have fostered long-term relationships provide valuable insights into attaining the desired balance.

Additionally, the study contributes to ongoing discussions regarding the evolving roles of collaborators in E-E collaboration. By exploring the impact of clearly defined and distinct roles within the collaboration process, the research sheds light on the importance of role clarity and understanding for effective collaboration. It additionally emphasizes the significance of solid leadership involvement in facilitating successful E-E initiatives: to lead and to envision a clear path forward.

Lastly, the paper extends the application of E-E strategy and collaboration to broader areas, demonstrating the potential for diverse perspectives to address broader social issues and drive norm changes. This expansion opens up new directions for leveraging E-E approaches in various contexts, contributing to advancing societal goals.

5.3. Limitations and recommendation for future research

The analysis section of this thesis examines the substantial contributions of the study in understanding E-E filmmaking and the collaborative processes involved in producing *Fathers Matter*. However, it is crucial to acknowledge and account for the limitations of the research design, which should be considered when interpreting the findings.

One notable limitation pertains to the narrow scope of the study due to the limited availability of experts and time constraints during the research process. Consequently, the study involved a relatively small sample size of only six experts. The modest sample size presents a potential challenge to the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. To enhance the reliability and validity of the results, conducting further research with a more extensive and diverse sample is recommended.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the selection of experts was based on their ability to provide comprehensive insights into all phases of the filmmaking process. In this study, the recruited interviewees were mainly experts in social work organizations. Therefore, to strengthen the study, it is necessary to include additional perspectives, particularly from more professionals in the media and entertainment industry. Interviewing individuals in various roles, such as scriptwriters, directors, and technicians, would engender a more comprehensive understanding of collaborative dynamics and yield more well-rounded findings.

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that most interviews were conducted with experts primarily based and operating in South Africa. Therefore, future research could explore the applicability of the proposed findings in other countries, considering diverse cultural institutions and organizations.

Additionally, a recommendation for future research is to conduct an ethnographic research design, which aims at closely observing the daily work life of a group of professionals during the collaboration process while executing E-E strategies. This approach would provide an in-depth perspective on the various processes and potentially confirm or challenge the findings of this study.

In conclusion, addressing these limitations through further research will enhance the validity and applicability of the study's findings. By expanding the sample size, incorporating diverse perspectives, exploring different cultural contexts, and employing ethnographic methodology, future research can advance the comprehension of E-E collaborations and their implications for E-E projects like Fathers Matter.

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Appendix 1: Consent form

CONSENT REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW PARTICIPATION

Title of the study:

Beyond the Screen of Fathers Matter Series: How Entertainment-Education Collaboration Transforms Fatherhood Norms

Researcher: Hoa Nguyen

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Supervisor: Prof. dr. Martine Bouman

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Introduction

You are invited to participate in research about the Entertainment-Education collaboration conducted by Hoa Nguyen as part of the requirements for a Master's thesis.

The primary objective of this research is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the Entertainment-Education collaboration process behind the creation of the film series "Fathers Matter." The study will examine the interplay among various stakeholders involved in the Education-Entertainment collaboration, analyzing their roles and contributions in shaping the messaging of the series. The research seeks to identify how this collaborative process has impacted the series' content, which then changes social norms related to fatherhood and paternity.

Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in an interview lasting approximately 45-60 minutes. The interview will be conducted online via Zoom at a mutually convenient time. You will be asked open-ended questions related to the series during the interview.

Benefits

The potential benefits of participating in this study include the opportunity to reflect on your experience and contribution to the making of the series, as well as the satisfaction of contributing to the advancement of knowledge in the field of Entertainment-Education.

Risks

There are no risks associated with participating in this research.

Confidentiality

Your responses will be kept confidential and will only be accessible to the researcher and the supervisor. Your name will only be used in the thesis if you are comfortable with it. All data will be stored securely, accessible only to the researcher.

Voluntary participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decline to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you may contact the researcher at the email provided above.

Consent

I have read and understand the information provided above. I agree to participate in this study, and I authorize the researcher to use my interview data. **I also authorize the researcher to use my name for the purpose of this research project.**

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

OR

I have read and understand the information provided above. I agree to participate in this study, and I authorize the researcher to use my interview data for the purpose of this research project. I do not authorize the researcher to use my name for the purpose of this research project.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2: Interview guide

Before conducting the interviews, the researcher will express gratitude to the participants for their participation in the research and seek their permission to record the interview. The researcher will then provide a brief overview of the research topic to ensure clarity. Additionally, the interviewees will be informed about their right to remain anonymous if they choose to do so.

The interview guide begins with introductory questions aimed at establishing a comfortable atmosphere for the interviewee. After the initial questions, the interview will delve into four primary themes aligned with the theoretical framework.

Introductory Questions

1. Could you please introduce yourself?
2. Tell me about your career?
3. How is your connection with Heartlines?

Storytelling – Messages – Creatives

1. How were the key messages identified and developed?
2. How do you envision the storytelling approach?
3. The balance between messages and creatives?

Collaboration in Fathers Matter

1. Could you describe the whole process of making Fathers Matter from start to finish?
2. How do you define “collaboration” in your own words?
3. Why did you need collaboration for making the series Fathers Matter
4. At which stage that the collaboration happens?

Roles of individuals in the collaboration process

1. What is your role?
2. How has your role changed over the film making process

Challenges during the collaboration process

1. capital/power forms: economic, cultural, and social
2. fields of practice

3. knowledge/experience exchange
4. different ways of thinking
5. personal trait
6. culture

Wrap-up

1. The most rewarding aspects of being collaborative
2. The most challenging and frustrating aspects
3. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix 3: Coding Tree

Examples	First observations Open codes	Sub-themes Axial codes	Main themes Selective codes
But they would say, even though they didn't write the story, they'd say, this is my story. This is our story.	An affinity with the story	Personal stories were integrated in the making	Fathers Matter storytelling
It brought both authenticity and vulnerability to the role that really benefited the portrayal of the role.			
The story must not end the way we expected it to end. It must leave them hanging	Everyone can be involved		
so by the time we put a film that's, a film out there, it resonates with the people that we are trying to reach because we are telling their stories.	Open and related stories		
The man can be upset in the house but their presence is felt.	Positive father presence	Key messages with social good meanings	
A father can do more than provide, then we ensure that the script is in such a way that it portrays that a father can do more than provide.	Father responsibility is more than just a financial support		
You're not just seeing her run on a beautiful outside shot. So that's what the creatives bring. They bring magic to the medium itself	Not just the visual but the implied meanings	Creatives make stories more engaging/attractive/compelling	
So the movie makers try to show us you can't now make him arrive on time to exactly prove the			

point that presence is not about physical presence			
But it's not what people will talk about at the end of in time. they're not going to be talking about the drug scene, they will be talking about how that father did everything to be there for his child...			
our message is not lost in the collaborative process, the DNA of the organization is not lost as long as they get the organization, they get us	Freedom given to creatives		
The messaging at no point gets altered and touched. So that stays clear. We will change. We will change locations, we will change cast members, we will change language, we will change, uh, scenes...	Message is key, unchanged, owned by Hearlines	Balancing creatives and social messages	EE collaboration definition
we don't make films to win awards. We make films because we want to change people's lived realities for the better social good.	DNA of social organization		
The collaboration starts when the scripts are being written. That's when we then join with the production team of the different films	Collaboration starts when two team starts working together	Perspectives of EE collaboration	

Garth's visionary and commitment to drive the organization	Leading role initiation		
They were all about driving a specific agenda	Mutual goal: driving agendas		
It always makes sense to go to an expert in the field.	Collaborate with one have a desired expertise	External expertise	Motivation for collaboration
You can't go research the content on your own and develop the content, and then go and do a retrospective study on you.			
to get better at what we have.	Learning journey for both		
we're learning together in the collaboration process. The surprise elements.			
the team will design the messaging in such a way, it's always about maximizing opportunities for changes	More perspectives for dealing with problems	Opportunities	
Your actors teach you something, and the learning goes both ways			
once you are in production, you are absolutely thinking about practical things. But you are also not the boss of the production at that point. It is your director.	Difference in expertise leads to conflicts	Expertise	Challenges of collaboration
That day we were rushed. I said it must go. Heartlines said no, it's a message, we must keep it in.			
I'm producing for someone who is, who wants the numbers, but that's not the ultimate goal they want this messaging	Challenges for scriptwriters working in productions	Different ways of thinking and working style	

<p>We've done the research part, but that's always going to be a much smaller part. Um, and funders are more likely to say, yes, we'll pay for this little piece of research. That's fine. Yeah. Um, but they're less likely to say, all right, we commit ourselves to six films</p>	<p>Finance limits choices of creatives/productions</p>	<p>Funding/finance</p>	
<p>we over budget on that house, which means we have to find that budget somewhere else or someone else is going to lose</p>			
<p>She was much nastier and more direct, and some people felt she should be a bit softer, but, we needed that for the comedy. So there was discussion around that, is culturally, how direct people would be with each other.</p>	<p>Cultural difference in character behaviors</p>	<p>Cultures</p>	
<p>We didn't have time to shoot that on one other day.... Shooting it very tightly. But we had to quickly fit that in because we'd lost time somewhere else.</p>	<p>Time constraints</p>	<p>Other challenging elements</p>	
<p>films was supposed to be summer...that happened to be one of the coldest nights of that month. [...] Those are the kinds of decisions that need to get taken.</p>	<p>Weather-related issues</p>		
<p>the lead actor suddenly told us that he had a call for another show he was working on.</p>	<p>Cast availability</p>		

So we had to juggle everything and, change.			
I think the good thing was that also because we, so within the research team. Everybody had their tasks and responsibilities, so everybody knew what they needed to do.	Everyone knows their tasks and responsibilities	Roles are clearly defined	Roles in collaboration
There are often three story-makers in any kind of television thing. Three story makers. There's the scriptwriter who owns the story. Then the director comes in and they have their own vision. And they bring new ideas. It's often very exciting. They have their own thoughts about how they want to do it. And then there's the editor at the end who's got to cut it into half an hour			
Gath is as the Head of the organization, ... because you'd call it energy and enthusiasm for the work that he does... plays a big role in making things happen.			
The director is making decisions. The director is very much the driver leading the ship.	Important role of strong leadership		
we're giving someone creative freedom to interpret what we want to, to be on the outcome, but I think the good thing is that we're still hands-on. There's always someone from Heartlines	Roles are changing but Heartlines still being hands-on	Roles are changing	

<p>Heartlines is there from the beginning</p> <p>once the film is shot, then once the scripts are written, the scriptwriters are no longer in the process. Once the films are shut, the director, the, um, the crew is no longer involved, the directors and the editors are involved in the final editing stage</p>			
<p>The entry point, the beginning point, is that they've got to be some of the best people working in your field locally.</p>	<p>Best experts in the industry</p>	<p>collaborator selection criteria</p>	<p>A healthy collaboration</p>
<p>some of the best producers of drama... that this has got to work as entertainment</p>			
<p>they're also interested in using their skills to use entertainment for social good, as well as just for ratings.</p>	<p>Being socially good Interest in their work, and in the issues "Fathers and fatherhood"</p>		
<p>So we have to work hard at finding each other between us and the production house</p>	<p>Understanding Heartlines' values (objectives, ways of working)</p>		
<p>We need a production partner to understand our values and our key objectives with our messaging and to understand that the audiences we serve may not look like a lot of other audiences that they serv</p>			

<p>there's always sort of like a back-and-forth communication about like how do we want it to feel, are we happy with where it is and all of that stuff</p>	<p>Constant feedback</p>	<p>Communication strategy</p>	
<p>I will never interfere, in the director's relationship with the actors, but I will have a relationship with the director to guide, ask questions, um, give comments or express concerns if I feel something is not being done in a way that I think the message is highlighted</p>	<p>Trust & respect decisions</p>		
<p>It is the personal behavior of the manager. Though, this has not been mentioned by HL team, Garth has played well he leading role that people all admire and respect his decision:</p>	<p>Stress and conflict management</p>		

Appendix 4: Information of 6 short films from Fathers Matter Series

Film	Director	Released	Plot
Family Portrait	Twiggy Matiwana	17 September 2022	Ayize, a struggling artist, becomes a father to a baby girl named Zenzile with his girlfriend Nomvula. Despite his financial limitations, Ayize is dedicated to both Nomvula and their child. However, he must earn the approval of his intimidating and strict mother-in-law, Cecilia, to prove that he can be a responsible and loving father.
In Time	Rea Rangaka	24 September 2022	Lerumo, a dedicated gold miner, is separated from his wife Amanda and daughter Bokamoso due to work commitments. Despite the distance, Lerumo is a loving father who goes to great lengths to support his child. When Bokamoso is presented with a chance to showcase her athletic talent in front of university recruiters, Lerumo becomes determined to be there and cheer her on from the sidelines. However, numerous obstacles arise, posing a challenge to his plans. Will Lerumo overcome these hurdles and make it in time to support his daughter?
Everything a Boy Could Want	Zane Meas	1 October 2022	Martin, a wealthy businessman, fulfills his family's financial needs but lacks emotional warmth and availability for his son, Lester. Despite having material wealth, Lester yearns for his father's love and approval. When Martin insists on sending Lester to boarding school to pursue rugby, they embark on a challenging road trip that puts their relationship at risk of permanent damage.
Melodi	Zamo Mkhwanazi	8 October 2022	Melodi, a successful banker, has been raised by her loving single mother, Sesi. As she prepares to marry Liyanda, the wedding preparations and lobola

			<p>negotiations stir up unresolved emotions of abandonment. Melodi's father, Mojalefa, left her as a baby, and she is determined to confront her painful past before making a lifelong commitment. In search of the father she never knew, Melodi embarks on a journey that holds the potential for healing and closure.</p>
Airwalker	Tim Greene	15 October 2022	<p>Zoë, a talented young skateboarder, secures a spot in a promo for her beloved skate park. However, her parents, Bridget and Mike, are going through a separation, and their constant fighting takes a toll on Zoë. Trapped in the middle of their conflicts and deceit, Zoë's frustration reaches a breaking point, leading her into a dangerous situation.</p>
Manskap	Eric Mogale	22 October 2022	<p>Kyle, a troubled young man raised by a single mother, finds himself without direction and caught up in the influence of a local gang leader, Rooi. However, when a new father figure named Bra Warren enters his life, Kyle is faced with a choice.</p>

(Hearlines, 2022)

Appendix 5: Fathers Matter Campaign – 8 key messages

	Key messages	Positive presence	Responsibility	Empathy/Healing
1	A father’s responsibility is more than just providing money	x	x	
2	Women should encourage fathers to play a positive role in their children’s lives	x	x	
3	A father’s involvement can act as a protective factor and promote wellbeing for children	x		x
4	Shared decision -making and good communication between parents is essential for the wellbeing of their children.		X	
5	Caring and carework for children can be learned by both men and women. Skills in parenting build confidence.	X	x	
6	There are improved health and wellbeing outcomes when there is shared attachment in the first 1000 days but also throughout the child’s life.	X	x	
7	Social fathers can make a positive difference in the raising of children.	X	x	x
8	Supportive social networks such as the church can promote healing.			X

(Hearlines, 2020, p.66)