# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

STI              Sexually Transmitted Infections

HIV/AIDS       Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

UNVAC          United Nations Global Study on Violence against Children

CAPTA          Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment

UNESCO        United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNCRC         United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM AND ITS CONTEXT

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant problems children face today is the threat of sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse is a global phenomenon that is regarded as one of the greatest social problems of the 21st century. It is recognised as a serious violation of human well-being and children's rights. According to Collin-Vezina, Daigneault, and Herbert (2013) child sexual abuse is not a new phenomenon, nor is it peculiar to any particular country or culture. It is an international problem of great magnitude that can affect children of all ages, sexes, races, ethnicities, and socioeconomic classes. The only reason why sexual abuse of children seems to be a new phenomenon is that people traditionally never discussed it. Child sexual abuse in the school context with teachers as abusers is an even more silent issue still today. Teachers who comprise the main adult population sexually abuse learners in the school situation despite having the mandate to protect children (Ruto, 2009:181). Teachers hold positions of trust and when they engage in sexual relationships with learners, they violate this trust. The relationship between the teacher and learner is very much like the parent and child relationship. The betrayal of trust in both relationships is very damaging to the children. Schools should be safe places for the overall development of learners hence this study focuses on an understanding of child sexual abuse by teachers with the aim of preventing or curbing such abuse.

This chapter is an introduction to the problem and its context. Background information and the motivation for the study are presented. A preview of the related literature is given. The problem is stated with general and specific aims, as well as sub research questions.

The chapter also gives an explanation of the theoretical framework guiding the study. The research design, methods and approach are described. Concepts which are prominent are explained. Finally a summary for the chapters is given.

## 1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Child sexual abuse is one of the oldest forms of child abuse in the history of mankind. It is a societal problem whose origins date back to the times of ancient Greeks and Romans. Historical accounts have been found of child molestation, including incest, among ancient Greeks and Romans, in accounts of life in the Renaissance, and during the Victorian era (Richter and Higson Smith, 2004:23). For decades the global community has been aware that violence against children, including sexual abuse was a significant but under-acknowledged scourge on humanity. Despite the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child by many countries (140) globally as a manifestation of this concern, all indications are that violence of a sexual nature against children is on the rise (UNICEF, 2012:10).

Child sexual abuse received attention during the last two decades in the popular media and research literature. Since the 1980s, the mass media have focused nearly unprecedented attention on the topic. Numerous celebrated legal cases involving allegations of child sexual abuse have been reported in the international news. A few popular television stars in the United States of America like Oprah Winfrey and Roseanne have openly confessed in the media that they have been victims of sexual abuse as children.

More than any contemporary crime or public health issue, the sexual abuse of children has attracted the interest of many researchers.

According to Pryor (1996:3) prior to the mid-1970s, there was little scientific literature that focused on child sexual abuse. The turning point was the publication of an article in 1975 by Suzanne Sgroi "The Sexual Molestation of Children: The Last Frontier in Child Abuse". The author, a medical doctor, issued a declaration of war to stop the secrecy and silence surrounding the inappropriate behaviour. Since that time, scientific studies on the topic have proliferated.

Child sexual abuse has a devastating lifelong effect on the victims, because sexual abuse generates great anguish and destruction in the lives of these children. It is a violation of the child's physical and psychological integrity and a transgression of the moral norms of the child and society (Save Children, 2005:9). In the same vein Kibaru-Mbae (2011) asserts that child sexual abuse is a human rights issue with serious negative public health consequences including physical, psychological, emotional and social effects. It violates the rights of children to freedom and security, privacy and integrity, health and in some cases, even the right to life. The stigma and shame surrounding child sexual abuse leaves the child to face the harm in solitude creating fear in the boy or girl, who may be harmed emotionally, physically, psychologically, and intellectually for life. Rights are violated when children are sexually abused and when the necessary steps to punish and rehabilitate offenders, reintegrate child victims into society and prevent child sexual abuse from taking place in the first instance are not taken.

The issue of child sexual abuse deserves to be taken seriously by the world community. It is a violation of the international human rights laws. Sexual abuse of children is a human rights violation affecting all age groups within childhood globally (Heiberg, 2005:9). Human rights exist as embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the entire body of International Human Rights Law. Protection of children from sexual abuse is increasingly recognised as integral to the protection of human rights in general and it is considered an

element of international law. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) legally obliges states to protect children's rights (Kibaru-Mbae, 2011). Articles 34 and 35 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) require states to protect children against all forms of sexual abuse. However, it seems that children are not adequately protected. Human rights are recognized at least in principle by most nations and form the heart of many national constitutions, yet the actual situation in the world is distant from the ideals envisioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. To some nations, the full realisation of human rights is a remote and unattainable goal evidenced by the stark reality of cases of abuse perpetrated daily (UNICEF, 2012:10).

A study in ten countries by Finkelhor in 1994 clearly established child sexual abuse to be an international problem (Goldman, 2005:79). The World Health Organization estimates that in 2002 about 223 million children (150 million girls and 73 million boys) have experienced forced sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual violence globally (Adusei, 2009:11). Child sexual abuse has plagued both developed and developing countries for centuries. It is found in all levels of the society from the wealthiest to the poorest. Heiberg (2005:14) asserts that child sexual abuse crosses national boarders and is a concern of the global community, because children are not safe anywhere in the world. Most children are at risk of being sexually abused. Child sexual abuse often occurs in places normally considered safe. It occurs in families, communities, camps, and schools. It often occurs at the hands of perpetrators who are known and trusted by the children or who have authority over the children.

In the United States of America (USA) for instance, one in six boys and one in four girls will most probably be sexually abused before reaching adulthood (Mitchell, 2010:10). According to statistics from Canada, 61% of children are victims of sexual abuse. In Brazil it is estimated that 100 000 – 500 000 children are connected to sexual abuse (Heiberg, 2005:38).

Lampe 2002 cited by Lalor and McElvaney (2014) reviewed 24 European studies conducted in Germany, Switzerland, Great Britain, France, Sweden, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and Spain and found the overall prevalence rates of 6% to 36% in girls and 1% to 15% in boys under the age of 16.

This study investigates child sexual abuse in schools by teachers. The school is one example of a social institution outside the family with which nearly all children have consistent, on-going contact. Child sexual abuse is a problem that can no longer be disputed or denied in schools. The dynamics and indicators exist in all countries. Learning institutions have gained notoriety as venues of sexual assault (Richter and Higson Smith, 2004:23). Inappropriate sexual relations between staff members and learners are a growing worldwide concern in the education system and tarnish the reputation of schools. Magwa and Ngara (2015:1521) assert that abuse of learners by teachers in schools is rampant in Zimbabwe and globally.

Teachers are in a position of power in relation to their students and hence can easily sexually abuse them. To children, teachers are authority figures who have a significant degree of influence on their lives. Teachers play multifaceted roles within schools including acting in *loco-parentis* as well as being counsellors, and advisors. Parents send their children off to school trusting that the educators have the best interest of their children at heart. As such, the society entrusts authority, power and respect to teachers and learners are supposed to look up to teachers for their guidance and assistance in dealing with problems. It is expected that teachers have a mutual working relationship with learners. Tragically, however, there are some educators who violate this trust and sexually abuse learners. Sexual abuse has been a constant feature of schools and society in general (Jaffe Straatman, Harris, Georges, Vink and Reif, 2013:35; de Wet, 2010:15). Many schools experience varying degrees of violence and abuse. Sexual abuse thus makes schools unsafe places for learners, suffocating many of their

dreams, reducing the school experience for the children to a battle for survival rather than academic achievement and hope for the future.

A nation-wide survey in the United States of America (USA) of students in grades 8 to 11 regarding unwanted sexual attention at school revealed that approximately 3,5 million students reported having had physical sexual contact from an adult including unwanted touching of breasts, buttocks, or the genital region, forced kissing, anal and vaginal intercourse. The proportion increase to 4.5 million was noted when the abuse included sharing pornography, making inappropriate sexual comments, sexual exhibition or masturbation (Jaffe, et al., 2013:22) According to Jaffe et al. (2013) in their study for the period 2007-2012 in Ontario, 110 teachers had participated in a disciplinary hearing for teacher sexual misconduct. The perpetrator was most often the victim's class teacher (82%), some perpetrators taught in their victims' schools but were not their class teachers (13%), while other perpetrators were not teaching staff (5%).

Evidence of child sexual abuse by teachers has been gathered in many countries. There are many examples of specific cases world-wide of teachers in schools who have been implicated in sexual abuse of learners. Some of them are mentioned below:

**Nigel Leat-** A teacher at Hillside First School in Worle, Somerset, United Kingdom admitted to 36 sexual offences including sexual touching, kissing, attempted rape, and voyeurism with his pupils. The review said that 20 pupils were abused. The charges included one count of rape, 22 of sexually assaulting a child under 13 and 9 of sexual assault by penetration. Police also found more than 30 000 indecent photographs on memory sticks. He was jailed indefinitely in 2011 (http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2012/jan/26/nigel-leat-school-sexual-abuse-review).

**Neil Bantleman-** In 2014, a Canadian teacher was jailed for 10 years for sexually abusing boy children at an elite Jakarta International school. At the same school in the same year an Indonesian teaching assistant, **Ferdinard Tjiong** was also found guilty of sexually abusing learners and jailed for 10 years. Some members of the cleaning staff have been jailed for child rape and the school admitted previously employing a suspected serial paedophile as a teacher (2http://www.news.com.au/world/asia/canadian-teacher-jailed-in-indonesia-for-sexually-abusing-students/story-fnh81fz8-1227289914342).

**Jessica Acker**, in Alabama in the United States the 23-year old teacher resigned from her teaching role in Tuscaloosa after officials learned of her alleged sexual relationship with an 18–year old male student. She was charged with engaging in sex with a student under 19. At the same school, **Alicia Gray,** 28- year old Math teacher recorded and released a video apology after pleading guilty to charges that she had sex with a 14 year old student and was sentenced to 6 months in jail and 5 years' probation (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/15/alabama-highest-rate-teacher-sex_n_6479822).

Data from different countries in Africa suggest a high prevalence of all forms of child sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse is still rife five years after the United Nations Secretary General's Study on violence against children. Recent media reports implicating an HIV-positive teacher in western Kenya in the sexual abuse of five girls aged between 7 and 13 years have left parents in the country questioning just how safe their children are in school (http://article.wn.com/view/2011/05/30/Analysis_Sex_abuse_in_Kenyan_schools).

In South Africa, Child Line an organisation that provides services to child victims and their families has noted a 400% increase in the number of reported cases over the past 10 years (Heiberg, 2005:38). Mpumalanga's Education Department in South Africa dismissed 60 teachers for sexually abusing pupils in the past five years (http://mg.co.za/article/2010-10-15-

sexual-abuse-rampant-at-rural-schools). The 1998 Medical Research Council Study on rape of girls in South Africa, published in the Lancet Report, claims that teachers commit a shocking 33% of incidents of rape against learners (South African Government of Information, 2002). Gaye (2012) reports that in Cape Town, South Africa, 38 teachers have been struck off the roll for sexually abusing and impregnating learners since 2010. In 2012, three teachers at Phahama secondary school in Randfontein, Gauteng, South Africa were suspended for allegedly committing sexual misconduct against learners, following complaints by 8 learners. They were among 10 teachers being investigated for sexual abuse against learners since the beginning of that year. At least 126 cases of sexual misconduct which include rape were reported in 2012 – up from 78 the previous year in Randfontein, Gauteng, South Africa (3http://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/teachers-suspended-over-sexual-misconduct-1.1486269#.VS07KpNjLIU).

According to a 2013 report by the Gender, Labour and Social Development Ministry it is estimated that in Uganda 77.7% of primary school children and 82% of secondary children had experienced sexual abuse in schools. In two thirds of the cases, the perpetrators were teachers (http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/181718/child-defilement-troubles-uganda.html). Interviews conducted in Niger in 2008 with 50 teachers and 174 students showed that 47.7% of students had observed teachers express feelings of love for a fellow student, while 88% of teachers responded that there were sexual incidences of varying natures, between students and their teachers (Plan West Africa, 2008:11).

This silent plague of child sexual abuse is also striking at the fabric of Zimbabwean schools. Zimbabwean school children under 18 years continue to bear the brunt of sexual abuse from educators in the schools. Child sexual abuse is on the rise in Zimbabwe with law enforcement authorities reporting that more than 100 girls are sexually abused every day, more than at any other time in the history of the country (Nyamanhindi, 2015). In 2009 the Zimbabwean

government closed down Macheke primary boarding school in the east of the country where 53 girls were sexually abused by a handful of adults including a teacher and caretaker (http://allafrica.com/stories/200507270296.html). Statistics reveal that the incidence of child sexual abuse has soared over the last 10 years and it is traumatizing many children. A music teacher (**Tinotenda Mawoyo**) at Wise Owl primary school in Marondera in June 2015 was found guilty of fondling breasts, buttocks and waists of females aged between 11 and 12 on the pretext that he was teaching them how to play the instruments. He was sentenced to 18 months behind bars (http://www.herald.co.zw/teacher-sexually-abuses-9-pupils). **Tawanda Zinyemba,** A teacher at Makwau secondary school in Zaka, Masvingo, Zimbabwe in 2015 allegedly have had sexual intercourse with one of his Form 2 learners, a 14 year old girl by continuously giving her money as a means to lure her (Mazhinye, 2015:8). Magwa (2014:12) cites two cases of teachers who were involved in sexual activities with students; **Godfrey Sithole, 65,** was involved in rape and indecent assault of nine primary school pupils at Chiredzi's Tshovani primary school, since January 2014. In a related case, a Chamanhanzva high school headmaster **Elijah Chitsika** was dismissed from work for impregnating a Form four pupil and allegedly sexually abusing others resulting in a number of them falling pregnant as he reportedly used a stocking as a condom. In another incident two Kwekwe high school teachers in Zimbabwe **Munorwei Mahlengwe and Paul Rugede** raped a Form four girl (17 year old) resulting in her getting pregnant on separate occasions in the laboratory May 2012. Both the teachers faced the same charge and were also held responsible for the pregnancy. They both on separate occasions, namely 8 May and 18 May invited the girl to the laboratory and then raped her (https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=206709676120482&id=200011236797046). Gwirayi (2011:36) carried out a study on child sexual abuse in Gweru district schools of the Midlands province of Zimbabwe. Out of 268 respondents, 151 reported having been

sexually abused giving an overall prevalence rate of 56, 3%. A study in Zimbabwe identified 212 cases of sexual abuse by teachers that took place between 1990 and 1997. Approximately two in three perpetrators engaged in sexual intercourse with learners, one in four wrote love letters and one in nine engaged in fondling, kissing or hugging. Rape and attempted rape and sharing pornographic material with students took place (Jaffe et al., 2013:22).

The above statistics are just a few examples of sexual misconduct - a widespread problem in schools the world over - by the very teachers who are supposed to be nurturing the children. Child sexual abuse between educators and learners is probably more common than statistics indicate. The mentioned reports are only the tip of an iceberg. The statistics represent a great under-estimation given the gross under-reporting and ever-changing nature of child sexual abuse. The available statistics should, however, give an indication as to how serious the problem is. As in the past, child sexual abuse in schools is on-going all over the world and continues to impact on the lives of young victims.

The evidence from the varied sources mentioned above indicates the wide extent of the problem and the gravity of this kind of abuse. Table 1.1 summarises the global statistics presented in section 1.2.

**Table 1.1 Summary table of global statistics derived from background to study (Section 1.2)**

| Country | Year | Percentage/ number of children sexually abused |
|---|---|---|
| Brazil | 2005 | 500 000 children |
| Canada | 2010 | 61% of the children |
| Germany, Switzerland, Britain, France, Sweden, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands & Spain (24 European studies) | 2002 | 6% to 36% in girls and 1%to 15%in boys under age of 16 |
| Uganda | 2013 | 77.7% of primary school children  82% of secondary school children. |
| Zimbabwe | 2015 | More than 100 girls everyday |
| Globally | 2002 | 223 million with 150 girls and 73 million boys. |

The researcher decided on the topic of child sexual abuse in schools, because sexual abuse in educational institutions is on the increase and it has profound effects on learners. There has been limited research conducted on teacher sexual abuse in schools, especially in Zimbabwe, hence this research is very important, because it intends to shed more light on sexual abuse in schools with the ultimate aim of employing various strategies for prevention.

## 1.3 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Sexual abuse by teachers is abuse by trusted professionals in community institutions like schools that serve children. For a long time, it was believed that sexual abuse occurs almost exclusively within the family context. However, the expanding research in the field pointed to a number of trusted adults who could also be perpetrators such as teachers in schools (Jaffe et al., 2013:21).The parental authority over children exhibited at home is extended to schools and some teachers are misusing this authority to sexually abuse learners under their care. This background inspired this study with the aim of getting a deeper understanding of perceptions of the stakeholders in the schools about child sexual abuse since sexual abuse in childhood has been shown to be very traumatic and life altering in its impact. The sheer number of child victims in schools is one reason for this research, but according to the researcher the study on perceptions of stakeholders in the school about child sexual abuse is imperative, because acknowledging the full scope of child sexual abuse leads to better interventions, especially preventative measures to curb child sexual abuse. It is anticipated that the empirical evidence gathered will increase awareness on the subject with the intention to make schools stronger, healthier, and better able to protect children.

While there is evidently a proliferation of research spanning more than four decades on the phenomenon, gaps still exist in people's knowledge and understanding of child sexual abuse. Few studies on sexual abuse in schools exist. This is because such studies are difficult to undertake since not all cases of abuse are reported by school leaders. The researcher acknowledges that some interesting and valuable research has already been undertaken on child sexual abuse in schools, but feels that limited research is available on teachers', learners' and educational psychologists' perceptions of the nature, contributing factors,

effects, and strategies to curb sexual abuse on learners by teachers. Child sexual abuse in schools is an issue that some teachers and learners may have been vaguely aware of through the media. Few studies have examined the problem of child sexual abuse as it relates to stakeholder perceptions. Perceptions are a basis for action. Until perceptions about child sexual abuse in schools are gathered and communicated from the side of teachers, learners and educational psychologists, the abuse will remain an unspoken taboo in society and in schools in particular. It is important to elicit teachers', learners' and educational psychologists' views so that their perspectives are better understood and intervention programmes with their viewpoints in mind can be designed. Awareness of perceptions gives more information to make effective decisions in prevention of the abuse. Documenting the problem is one step on the road to helping school professionals act in the best interest of children. It will also hopefully help curriculum specialists to develop workshops for teachers and parents; develop guidance activities and intervention strategies for learners. Curriculum specialists must work with counsellors/psychologists/life orientation teachers/researchers to set up guidelines for all stakeholders and to develop material.

In today's society, a large number of learners are left vulnerable due to circumstances beyond their control. The researcher believes that children represent the core of society and determine the future of the welfare of communities. As a result, the researcher deems continuous research on sexual abuse of learners in schools necessary for facilitating necessary changes to bring about a school environment free from sexual abuse of learners.

Literature supports the fact that sexual abuse leads to both negative long and short term consequences (Cathers, Fagin and Mulryan, 2004: 94). As these symptoms have implications for individuals and society at large, this study on perceptions of child sexual abuse on learners is imperative. It is hoped that schools will create safe and disciplined learning environments that celebrate innocence and value human dignity. Schools and courts should

find ways to keep molesting teachers out of classrooms. Hopefully, this study will shed light so that learners better understand the phenomenon, and feel protected in an environment in which they can act against the perpetrators of their abuse. Learners can be provided with information on child sexual abuse so that they will be able to protect themselves from this form of abuse.

More systematic studies are needed in this area in order to provide a rationale for policy making and training teachers in issues directly to do with child sexual abuse. This study hopes to contribute in a significant measure to the knowledge base of this area.

## 1.4 A PREVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this section the researcher will do a preliminary review of some views of scholars on the concept child sexual abuse, contributing factors, its effects on child victims, assisting victims and ways of combating the abuse.

### 1.4.1 Conceptualising child sexual abuse

In numerous attempts to define child sexual abuse, it seems researchers concentrate on a particular aspect of the phenomenon for example, age of the victim and perpetrator, contact or non–contact sexual acts, or the type of relationship between abuser and victim. Ritcher and Higson Smith (2004:24) explain that child sexual abuse varies by nature of the event, the experience of the child, the circumstances under which the abuse takes place and effects of the abuse on the child and the family. Child sexual abuse involves any sexual activity, from sexual touching to full intercourse by an adult or adolescent with a child who developmentally is unable to understand fully or give consent to the activity. Louw, Duncan, Richter and Louw (2007:363) define child sexual abuse as any illegal sexual act, which is committed against a child. It includes rape, fondling of genitals or breasts, sodomy,

exhibitionism, exposing the child to indecent acts and using a child in the production of pornography.

From the above, it can be noted that definitions of child sexual abuse generally include the sexual exploitation of a child by an adult, the abuse aimed at the sexual gratification of the adult, a child as a minor who is unable to give legal consent to the sexual activities that the adult involves him/her in and that the perpetrator disregards the psychological level of development of the child.

This study therefore, defines child sexual abuse as the involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children in sexual activities they do not understand and are not able to give informed consent for. The abuse may range from voyeurism to oral, vaginal or anal penetration. It may be perpetrated by single or multiple perpetrators on one or more occasions.

Bezuidenhout (2008(b):198) and Heiberg (2005:462) assert that sexual abuse can be categorised into non-contact and contact sexual abuse. Non-contact sexual abuse can include sexual comments directed at the child, revealing sex organs to the child, and sexual gestures. Contact sexual abuse can include acts such as caressing, fondling, or tickling genitals, breasts, thighs, necks and hands, penetrative sexual activities, oral sexual activities for example, sucking of breasts or tongue kissing. The division does not necessarily imply that the consequences of certain acts of sexual abuse are more or less severe for the child, the negative outcome remains the same. There are many reasons why perpetrators would abuse a child, some of which will be discussed in the next section.

**1.4.2 Factors contributing to child sexual abuse**

Researchers have identified various factors that may contribute to sexual victimisation of children. Some of the contributing factors of child sexual abuse are poverty (Louw, et al.,

2007:366), culture (de-la Vega and Dahlstrom, 2007: 11; Kirton, 2011: 190; Cheal 2008:79), and peer pressure (Phillips and Straussner, 2006:224.

Household poverty often forces parents to shirk their responsibility of providing for the needs of their children. A parent can ask of a girl child to look for a capable person to take care of her basic needs. Out of confusion, the child will give in to the proposition and end up engaging in sexual activities in return for money. Townsend and Dawes (2007:71-73) contend that many children who are faced with a home life lacking in basic necessities are vulnerable to being sexually abused.

A further explanation of child sexual abuse is the male dominated nature of society. A common theme is the so-called 'uncontrollability' of male sexual urges and the role of physical force in sexual relations (Lalor, 2004:439). Sexual abuse of children, especially girls may be facilitated by a wide spread belief in the urgency for male sexual relief and a certain expectancy of the use of physical coercion in sexual relations. In the same vein, Javangwe (2008:8) points out that most of the school based sexual abuse is perpetrated by males on girls. Thus, male dominance in society, men's professed inability to control their sexual desire and cultural norms, which require that women submit to men's authority, influence sexual abuse of girls.

Peer pressure is another factor that can lead to sexual abuse, especially in the adolescent phase. Leach, Frisciam, Kadzamira, Lemani and Machakanja (2003:77-78) point out that provocation and peer pressure can lead to sexual abuse. Teenagers try to understand themselves by looking at their friends to see how they are resolving some issues. No influence in a teenager's life is as powerful as peer pressure.

The above mentioned influences seem to be out of the control of the child, but that same child suffers from the consequences of sexual abuse by adults without anticipating the devastation.

### 1.4.3 Effects of child sexual abuse on learners

Child sexual abuse is a social problem with devastating effects on victims. The consequences of child sexual abuse on victims as a result of their experiences and their memories of these experiences are diverse and numerous (Spies, 2006:62). Generally, all survivors of child sexual abuse will experience various difficulties and problems. The nature and severity of such difficulties and problems will vary from person to person and will be influenced by the developmental phase, as well as the context of upbringing. Being sexually abused, however, impacts upon the life world of a child on educational, psychological and physical health levels.

### 1.4.3.1 Educational impact

Woolfolk (2010:77) asserts that within many classrooms, there are one or more learners who are sexually abused and the effects thereof could hamper their adequate academic progress. In the same vein, global research indicates that poor academic performance is common amongst learners who are sexually abused (Bromberg and Johnson, 2001:346). When a learner is being sexually abused, his/her education is disrupted; and it has a profound impact on the ability of the child to concentrate at school. Sexually abused learners find it difficult to pay attention during lessons. Their attention span is low as a result of thinking about the sexual encounter they experienced. They also have problems in comprehending what they read, and improving their vocabulary. However, Hall and Lloyd (1993:92) also state that some sexually abused learners can excel well since they will focus more on their schoolwork as a way of avoiding thinking of the bad experience they would have experienced.

### 1.4.3.2 Psychological impact

Spies (2006:62) and Lotter (2006:96) give some psychological impacts of sexual abuse on children that include low self-esteem, where the abused children tend to feel unworthy and

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guilty. Sexually abused children find issues of trust problematic from the onset of the abuse, right into adulthood. Children experience the shocking truth that the very people who should protect them from harm, are people who betray their trust by violating and robbing them of their innocence. These sexually abused children grieve over the loss of normal childhood, and of trust in others. It could lead to problems such as suicidal tendencies, poor eating patterns, and disturbed sleeping patterns.

### 1.4.3.3 Physical impact

The following are some of the physical symptoms of sexual abuse according to Mpofu, Chiremba and Kent (2003:115): nausea disrupted eating habits, urinary tract infections, genital warts, contracting sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS, girls getting pregnant, and feelings of pain in the genital parts.

Child sexual abuse as can be noted from the above description has a negative impact on victims. These victims need to be assisted in order to help them heal. But it would be even better if preventative measures could be in place to prevent teachers from sexually abuse learners in their care.

### 1.4.4 Prevention of child sexual abuse in schools

Child sexual abuse exploits and degrades children and can lead to feelings of hopelessness, depression and culminate in anti-social behaviour. Sexual abuse of children is an issue of veritable concern worldwide associated with deleterious consequences in learners' lives, hence the need for prevention. Due to potential harmful consequences of sexual abuse, numerous intervention strategies have been proposed, for instance offering school based educational programmes to teach children the skills to identify dangerous situations and how to avoid these (Finkelhor, 2009:169). The programmes should also aim at promoting disclosure, and reducing self-blame. Participating in research based prevention programmes,

and contacting organisations already working with children to offer support and end sexual abuse, are some ways of preventing child sexual abuse. Finkelhor (2009:169) suggests that prevention strategies should encompass efforts to minimise harm as well as to reduce occurrence.

One way to prevent sexual abuse in schools is to minimise the opportunity for it to occur. Mitchel (2010:103) says that more than 80% of sexual abuse cases occur in situations with one adult and one child in a closed/secluded environment. This means that sexual abuse occurs mainly between two people, the abuser and the abused. An abuser usually abuses one victim at a time in order to keep the abuse behind closed doors. Although most people believe that one-on-one relationships between teachers and learners can be educationally and socially advantageous; the risk involved in this practice might outweigh the benefits. The child can benefit academically but the teacher can take advantage of the situation and sexually abuse the learner.

Tassoni and Beith (2002:572) assert that everyone working with children has a responsibility to keep children from being abused. When tackling sexual violence in schools, it is important to involve a wide range of stakeholders like curriculum specialists, parents, educational psychologists, and learners. The school policy and practice should not reiterate the gender politics evident in society. All of the above strategies can help in the fight against child sexual abuse by teachers within schools. Focusing on perceptions is therefore, an appropriate advocacy tool for effecting the necessary changes to address the scourge of sexual abuse of learners in schools.

## 1.5 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Hild sexual abuse by teachers in schools is on the rise. Many learners are being exposed to sexual abuse and this has devastating consequences for their health and well being now andin the future.Awareness of perceptions gives more information to make effective decisions against child sexual abuse.

## 1.6 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

The main research question asked in this study was: 'What are the perceptions of learners, teachers and educational psychologists on child sexual abuse by teachers in schools?'

## 1.6.1 SUB RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In striving to achieve the purpose of this study the following sub research questions were formulated:

i) What is the nature of child sexual abuse as perceived by learners, teachers and educational psychologists?

ii) Which are the contributing factors of child sexual abuse as perceived by learners, teachers and educational psychologists in schools?

iii) What are the effects of child sexual abuse on learners as perceived by learners, teachers and educational psychologists in schools?

iv)What are the perceptions of teachers, learners and educational psychologists on the prevention of child sexual abuse in schools?

## 1.7 GENERAL AND SPECIFIC AIMS OF THE STUDY

The study was guided by the following general aim and specific aims:

### 1.7.1 General aim

The general aim of this study was to assess the perceptions of teachers, learners and educational psychologists on child sexual abuse by teachers in schools thereby eradicating misconceptions about child sexual abuse and coming up with preventive measures.

### 1.7.2 Specific aims

The study was guided by the following specific aims for the literature study and the empirical study:

i) To examine perceptions of teachers, learners and educational psychologists on the nature of child sexual abuse.

ii) To identify the contributing factors of child sexual abuse perceived by learners, teachers and educational psychologists in schools.

iii) To establish the effects of child sexual abuse on learners as perceived by learners, teachers and educational psychologists in schools.

iv) To establish the perceptions of teachers, learners and educational psychologists on prevention of child sexual abuse in schools.

## 1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study on perceptions of learners, teachers and educational psychologists of sexual abuse of learners by teachers has been guided by the systems theory. One of the most prominent educational problems in schools is the sexual abuse of learners, but the premise is that these

learners come from a specific environment, have friends and participate in community and school activities, as well as having certain personalities which can all play a role in their susceptibility to being abused. If these systems and subsystems have such an influence on the child must all play a role in the curbing of the problem.

Lunenburg and Ornstein (2011:20) define a system as an interrelated set of elements functioning as an operating unit. A key belief of the systems theory is that parts which make up the whole both affect and are affected by each other. It is the dependence of each part on the other that allows the whole to function in the way it does. The systems' components work together to achieve a common goal. The parts are organised, that is, connected to each other around a common purpose. The goal provides the glue that holds the system together. The systems' perspective looks at its educational system as a whole, integrated entity and helps conceptualise the whole system and understand how the small pieces fit together into a working unit (Ballantine and Spade, 2008: xiii). Simply put, a system is an organised collection of parts or subsystems that are highly integrated to achieve the overall goal. The systems theory is relevant in that it can assist in placing the issue of sexual abuse of learners in a clearer perspective within the educational system. It is relevant in the search for genuine and long lasting solutions to sexual abuse of learners in schools.

### 1.8.1 Sub-systems in an educational system

According to Kovalchic and Dawson (2004:239) there are four sub-systems in any educational system. These include the learning experience subsystem, the instructional subsystem, the administrative subsystem and the governance subsystem.

i) The learning experience subsystem in where the learner processes information from his/her environment to produce new or modified cognitive structures.

ii) The instructional subsystem is when teachers use information about learning needs to produce an environment for learners to learn.

iii) The administrative subsystem is when administrators use information about instructional needs to make decisions about resource allocation.

iv) The governance subsystem is when 'owners' use their goals and values to produce policies and provide direction and resources for the education enterprise in order to meet needs of learners, teachers and administrators.

The above description reflects only the subsystems in an educational system, but the influence on child sexual abuse comes from a much wider context. The family of origin for the child and the abuser, as well as the environment of upbringing, the community and the personality of the person play a role in becoming either an abuser or a victim as will be described in Chapter 2. All these systems and subsystems should the also be included in preventative measures to curb sexual abuse of children as will be described in Chapter 3.

All systems reflect a nested structure, that is, a given system has other systems embedded within its boundaries. The central idea in nested systems is that subsystems exist at various levels and are embedded within the larger system environment (Wulczyn, Daro, Fluke, Feldman, Goldek and Lifanda, 2010: 11). Educational institutions, for example, are structured in such a way that the classroom is nested within individual schools, which are nested in a larger educational system. It is also a subsystem to a larger educational system which in turn comprises its own subsystems like the Ministry of Education, school boards and others. The educational system is itself a subset of a nation's global social, political, cultural, religious and economic system (Lunenberg and Ornstein, 2011:20).

### 1.8.2 Elements of a System

A system such as a school consists of five basic elements namely; inputs, a transformation process, outputs, feedback and the environment (Lunenberg and Ornstein, 2011:21) as depicted in Figure 1.1.
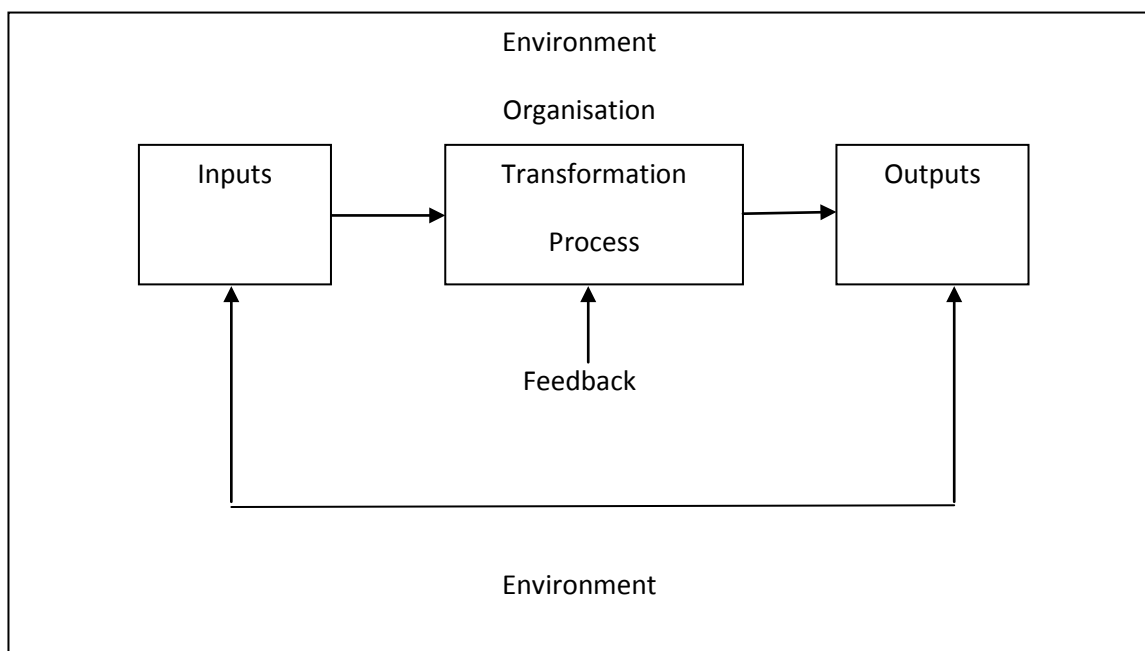


**Figure 1.1 A Systems model**

*Source: Lunenberg and Ornstein (2011:21)*

### 1.8.2.1 Inputs

According to Ballantine and Spade (2008: xv) organisations receive inputs such as information, raw materials, personnel, and finances from the environment. In the same vein, Lunenberg and Ornstein (2011:21) indicate that human resources such as learners, teachers, administrators, and bus drivers are examples of inputs. Financial resources such as money are inputs used to finance on-going or long term operations. Physical or material resources such

as equipment, desks, and books are other inputs that can be utilised. Information such as policies in prevention of a social problem in the school like abuse of learners is also an aspect of inputs received by schools.

Thus, according to Lunenberg and Ornstein (2011:21) a school which lacks the necessary inputs that are required for the healthy execution of its activities faces a high probability of encountering inadequacies in fulfilling the expected outcomes. In the case of sexual abuse of learners, if a school lacks appropriate information on the issue, for example, possible causes and how to avoid sexual abuse, it would not meet its goal of learning for all. Resources such as books and programmes on the prevention of sexual abuse are crucial in schools. Money is also needed, for example, to hold workshops to raise the awareness of all stakeholders in the school on sexual abuse.

### 1.8.2.2 Transformation process

The school administrator's job involves combining and coordinating the various resources to attain the goals of the school which should be learning for all (Lunenberg and Ornstein, 2011:20). Some components of the system of operational management include technical competence of school administrators and other personnel, their plans of operation and their ability to change. Based on these ideas the goal of learning however, is not fully met when for example, learners are sexually abused. Interaction among various stakeholders like educators, social workers, doctors, lawyers, and the police in issues pertaining to child sexual abuse in schools is part of the transformation process which can lead to better ways of combating sexual abuse in schools.

**1.8.2.3 Outputs**

Outputs are the attainment of goals of the school and are represented by the products, outcomes or accomplishments of the system. The outputs of the educational system are for instance, learners in the form of educated people, better equipped to serve themselves and society. An inefficient school system where sexual abuse is experienced by learners damages not only the educational milieu, but also the learners' social and emotional adjustment which affect their integration into the larger society (http://www.africanchildinfo.net/documents/child-sexual-abuse-highschool.pdf).

**1.8.2.4 Feedback**

A key aspect of a systems model is the process of feedback (Ballantine and Spade, 2008: xv). This process implies that an organisation's leaders are constantly learning about and adapting to changes and demands in the environment as a result of information it receives. To be effective and efficient a system needs feedback that can ascertain whether the outputs of the system are what they should be. Through feedback, possible discrepancies between intended outputs and actual outputs can be compared. If it is evaluated that some learners do not reach their full potential on academic performance, social and emotional development due to sexual abuse, then appropriate modifications need to be effected. The outputs thus, provide feedback data to the system (Lunenberg and Ornstein, 2011:21).

**1.8.2.5 Environment**

Zimbabwe's learning institutions, like other countries' institutions, are open systems in that they are influenced by their environment. A school as a system does not exist in isolation - it is strongly influenced by its environment. Educational systems are inextricably linked to the social, economic, cultural and other contexts in which the system is located. The environment also provides key resources that sustain the organisation and lead to change (Lunenberg and

Ornstein, 2011:21). The goal of the school is to combine and coordinate various resources to attain learning for all. This goal, however, is not fully met due to a number of problems schools face, for example sexual abuse of learners. Sexual abuse is a violation of children's rights and has to be prevented in schools. To achieve this, system components have to interact with each other, with the effects of these interactions reverberating throughout the system as a whole. These stakeholders involved in school systems include the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (in Zimbabwe), district educational officers, the community, family, school administration and staff, learners and other interested parties. Deliberate, coordinated efforts on the part of the involved stakeholders at various levels, make it possible to protect learners from child sexual abuse by teachers in schools. Acts of cooperation, coordination and collaboration are vital despite the fact that stakeholders within the system see this problem of sexual abuse from different perspectives, have different experiences, and occupy different positions.

Wulczyn et al. (2010: 18) argue that a lack of coordination between and within education systems results in resistance to change. A change should be for instance from protecting the more powerful part and acting in the best interest of the victim (Fancy and Fraser, 2014:14). Referring sexual abuse of learners by teachers to customary practices where cases are solved through agreements such as marrying the victim to abuser would mean that the problem of sexual abuse in schools would continue. The systems theory can be used in schools to guide decision making in the prevention of sexual abuse of learners by teachers. The systems theory is a management tool that allows individuals to examine all aspects of the organisation, to inter-relate the effects of one set of decisions to another and to optimally use all the resources at hand to solve the problem. Based on the above explanation of the systems approach, the application of systems theory in prevention of child sexual abuse by teachers in schools was relevant for this study and its outcomes.

## 1.9 DEMARCATION

It was beyond the scope of this study to focus on all forms of child abuse such as emotional, verbal, physical and sexual abuse. The current study therefore focused on child sexual abuse only. Children from all socio–economic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds are subjected to sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse occurs in the streets, at churches, day care centres, and colleges. This study was limited to studying sexual abuse within schools. In the schools there are a number of perpetrators of child sexual abuse but this study focused on abuse by trusted professionals that is, teachers who serve the learners. The study was primarily concerned with perceptions of teachers, learners and educational psychologists on child sexual abuse by teachers with the aim of formulating intervention strategies to prevent this abuse.

Zimbabwe has ten provinces. This study focused on only one province, namely Masvingo province. In Masvingo province the study was demarcated to the Masvingo district. Figure 2 locates the Masvingo district and Province on the map of Zimbabwe. In this district, four schools were purposefully selected and 8 learners, 8 teachers and 3 psychologists were sampled for the study. It was thus, an in-depth study on the phenomenon that cannot be generalised to all contexts.
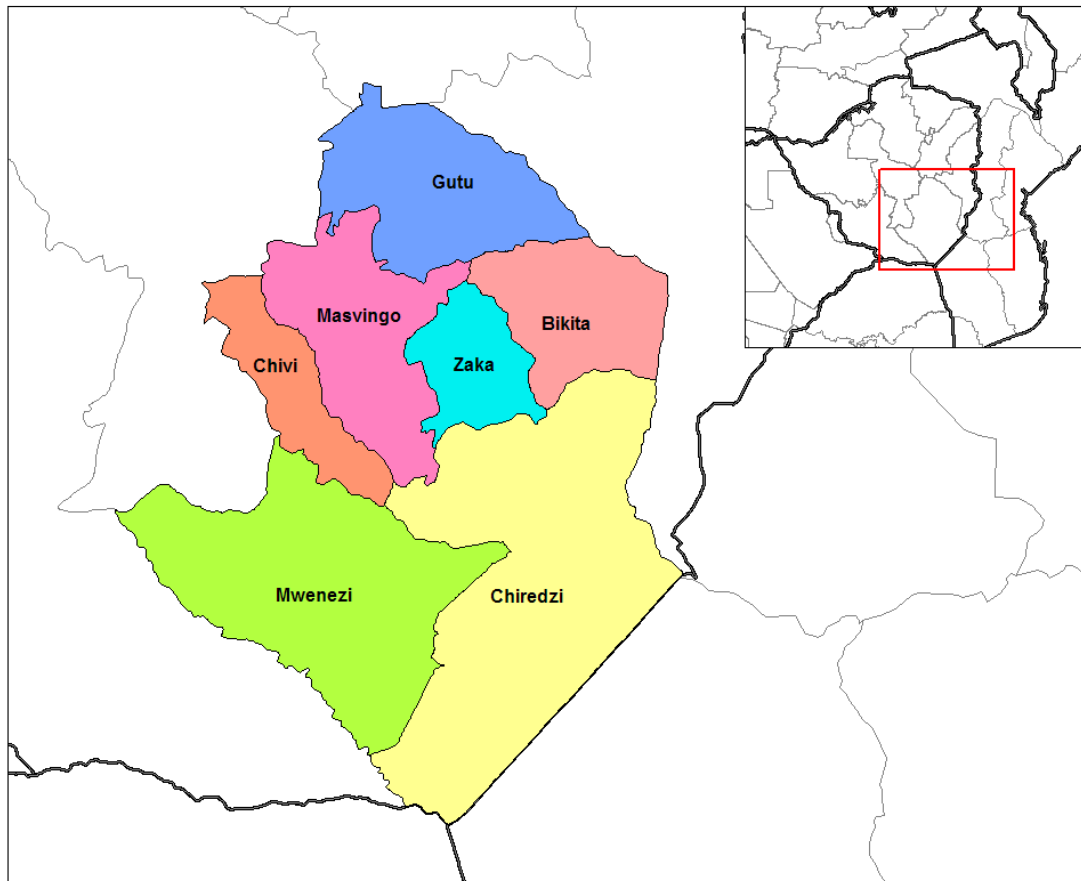
**Figure 1.2: Location of Masvingo district in Masvingo province, Zimbabwe**

*Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/*

## 1.10    RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The researcher used the qualitative approach and phenomenological paradigm for the current study, because different groups of people are studied in their natural setting. The researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis aimed to explore and discover issues about child sexual abuse in educational settings.

**1.10.1 Qualitative research approach**

Since the research aimed to gain an in depth understanding of child sexual abuse by teachers in schools, the approach was qualitative. Qualitative research is a systematic, interactive and subjective approach used to describe life experiences and give them meaning (Chiromo, 2006:8). It involves a holistic inquiry and is usually carried out in a natural setting. This involves the researcher going out to the setting or field of study, gaining access and gathering material. The very nature of in depth detailed descriptions of events and interviews is what makes qualitative research so powerful.

In this study the researcher had direct contact with teachers, learners, and educational psychologists to get their views on child sexual abuse by teachers in schools. Qualitative research enabled the researcher to explore data without prior hypothesis, but with a specific problem statement in mind. This openness to find whatever there is to find is unique to qualitative research. Qualitative researchers generally seek to amass information from their studies on, for example, a particular institution, geographical location, or issue with a view to discern patterns and trends (Grix, 2010:121). Gwimbi and Dirwai (2003:56) point out that qualitative research investigates situations where little is known about what there is or what is going on. Concerning child sexual abuse by teachers in schools very little is known about perceptions of various stakeholders in the schools and this was investigated in this study.

**1.10.2 Phenomenological paradigm**

Within the qualitative research approach, this researcher adopted the phenomenological paradigm. The purpose of a phenomenological study according to Leedy and Ormrod (2001:157) is to understand an experience from the participant's point of view. The purpose of the phenomenological paradigm is to identify phenomena by how they are perceived by stakeholders in a specific situation. The focus is on participants' perceptions of the event or

situation. In the human sphere, this normally translates into gathering 'deep' information and perceptions through qualitative methods such as interviews, discussion and participant observation. The aim of the phenomenological perspective is to allow the phenomenon to present itself rather than to impose preconceived ideas on it. The researcher investigated the participants' perceptions of child sexual abuse by teachers in this research.

### 1.10.3 Sampling

According to Gall, Gall and Borg (2007:178) a small sample is used in qualitative studies because the purpose is to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Purposive sampling ensures that only those participants who could contribute meaningfully to the research are included. Oliver (2010:110) says purposive sampling is a sampling method in which the researcher identifies certain participants as being potentially able to provide significant data on the research study. In this study, the researcher used purposive sampling to select both schools and participants. The researcher purposively selected the following schools: one (I) urban secondary day school, one (1) urban secondary boarding school, one (1) rural secondary day school and one (1) rural secondary boarding school. Social and economic experiences in rural schools are not similar to those found in urban schools. From each school two (2) learners and two (2) teachers were selected making a total of 16 participants from the schools. The criteria targeted the teachers in the above mentioned schools who are mainly involved with guidance and counselling and those who have been trained in that area since they have continuous contact and knowledge of children who may be at risk. Learners who are school head girls and head boys were selected because they often interact with other learners and school staff and act as mediators in certain cases between staff and learners. To help triangulate and authenticate findings, three (3) educational psychologists from the district were selected. In the selection the researcher considered gender balance so that views were made from both males and females.

## 1.10.4 Research instruments- Qualitative interviews

Qualitative semi-structured interviews were the primary data gathering tools used in this study. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009:318) an interview is a purposeful discussion between two or more people. Semi-structured interviews provide the researcher with the opportunity to probe for answers. Semi-structured interviews are most advantageous where the questions are open-ended encouraging interviewees to reply as they wish, thereby providing rich detailed descriptions of events or issues. The researcher also adopted the technique because interviewing is a flexible technique that allows the researcher to explore greater depth of meaning that cannot be obtained with other techniques. Semi-structured interviews can also allow for the discovery of information on issues that the researcher may not have considered (Moriarty, 2011:8).

Qualitative semi-structured, face to face interviews with eight learners, eight teachers and three educational psychologists on a one-to-one basis were used. An interview guide was used with probes to elicit specific information. All interviews were tape-recorded with permission of participants, and varied in length from one hour to one and a half hours. Interviews began with general questions to establish rapport and were kept friendly so as to reduce the power imbalance between the researcher and the researched.

## 1.10.5 Data analysis and presentation

Qualitative data may be presented as pictures, texts and verbal reports. Data need to be analysed in order to understand and gain insight from the collected data (Collins, du Plooy, Grobbelaar, Puttergill, Blanche, van Eeden, van Rensburg and Wigston, 2000:122). In this study, the researcher used Tesch's data analysis method (Figure 4.2) to transcribe data, identify themes and relationships among codes and to arrive at conclusions on perceptions on child sexual abuse by teachers in schools.

**1.10.6 Ethical considerations**

Ethical issues are important and should be considered at every step of the research process. This is not just about obtaining 'ethical approval' for a study but also about ensuring that the rights of participants are not violated (Collins, et al., 2000:109). At all the stages of research, ethical considerations guided this study. Before conducting this research, the researcher applied for ethical clearance in the College of Education at the University of South Africa (UNISA), sought written permission to go into the schools from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and the Provincial District officer. Written consent was sought from the teachers and educational psychologists as well as from parents/guardians of learners. Learners completed assent forms.

When reporting qualitative research, participants' anonymity and confidentiality need to be maintained. The researcher separated any identifying information from participants' responses. Audio recordings were treated with great care, so that no one had access to them. Information provided remained completely anonymous. After the study was completed the researcher provided the schools, educational psychologists and the educational officers with copies of the findings.

**1.11 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

To provide a better understanding of the study working definitions of key terms are going to be given in this section**.**

**School**

A school is any kind of institution providing academic education to children below the age of 18 years (Plan West Africa, 2008:8). It is a place where learners learn under the direction of

teachers (sometimes the word 'educator' and at other times 'teacher' are used interchangeably within the school context).

**Teacher/educator**

A teacher is a person who is capable of imparting knowledge that will help learners to build, identify and to acquire skills that will be used to face the challenges in life (Senge, 2000:26).A teacher/educator facilitates the learning process. He/she imparts knowledge, skills and values into learners for their overall development.

**Perception**

Perception is awareness, comprehension or an understanding of something (http://www.yourdictionary.com/perception). Perceptions are the ways something is regarded, understood or interpreted. They are viewpoints from which things are observed, or considered. They refer to the way we try to understand the world around us and concern people's knowledge and beliefs about the world. Perceptions are people's interpretation of reality.

**A child**

In the Zimbabwean context, any person below the age of 18 years may be defined as being a child and as such may lay claim to the rights accorded children by law (Javangwe, 2008:4). In the context of this study a child is a learner/pupil (the word 'pupil' is often used in the Zimbabwean context) in the school.

**Child sexual abuse**

Louw et al. (2007:363) define child sexual abuse as any illegal sexual act, which is committed against a child by an older person, where the older person uses their power over the child to involve that child in sexual activity. A lot of disparity exists regarding the age of

sexual consent. The age of consent varies greatly across countries from as young as 12 or 13 (for example, in Spain) to 17 or 18 years of age (for example, United States, and Australia) (Collin-Vezina, 2013:2). Sixteen years of age is considered the legal age of consent in Zimbabwe (Birdthistle, Floyd, Mwanasa, Nyagadza, Gwiza and Glynn, 2010: 1076).This study views child sexual abuse as the invasive, inappropriate and criminal sexual action of adults abusing innocent and immature children for their personal sexual gratification without taking into the account the long-term physical and psychological effects thereof on the young victim.

**Learner**

According to Hornby (1995:671) a *learner* is 'a person who is gaining knowledge or skill'. For the purposes of this study, a learner is a child who is attending school, for the purpose of receiving effective, formal education. A learner is a child who learns from a teacher or takes up knowledge or beliefs. (The term child and learner/pupil will be used interchangeably in this thesis). Pupil is used because it is a term used in Zimbabwe.

## 1.12    ORGANISATION OF CHAPTERS

The study is organised into six chapters.

**Chapter 1: The Problem and its Context**

This chapter begins by outlining the nature of the problem giving its background and context. Motivation for the study is spelt out. A preliminary literature review is given. The statement of the problem and aims of study are highlighted. The systems theory whose main belief is that parts, which make up the whole, affect and are affected by each other, guide the study. The scope of the study is the sexual abuse of learners by teachers in schools mainly focusing on the Masvingo district in Zimbabwe. The qualitative research approach and the

phenomenological perspective to be used in the study are briefly discussed. In this chapter, the selection of both research participants and research instrument are discussed giving justification for the selection. Some ethical considerations before, during and after conducting research are highlighted. Finally, key terms used in the study are precisely defined with a view to help the reader understand the study better.

**Chapter 2: Understanding Child Sexual Abuse**

This chapter presents the conceptual foundation (literature review). It conceptualises child sexual abuse, its forms and indicators. Factors contributing to sexual abuse of learners by teachers are discussed. The chapter also reviews the impact of the abuse on the physical, social, emotional, behavioural and educational development of sexually abused learner.

**Chapter 3: Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse**

In this chapter a historical background on the prevention of child sexual abuse is presented. The various ways of prevention of sexual abuse of learners in schools are reviewed. The methods discussed are targeted to parents, teachers, and learners themselves.

**Chapter 4: Research Design and Methodology**

The chapter presents the qualitative research approach as guiding the research. It also discusses the phenomenological research paradigm in helping to understand experiences from participants. Sampling techniques for schools and participants are discussed. Justifications for the adoption of qualitative interviews as a data gathering tool are made. Data collection procedure and data analysis and presentation are explained in detail. Ethical considerations observed in the study are presented.

**Chapter 5: Findings and discussion**

The chapter presents the findings gathered from learners, teachers and educational psychologists on their perceptions of child sexual abuse by teachers in educational institutions. The data is presented in narrative format together with tables, and diagrams. A comparison is made between the findings of this study and similar studies carried out elsewhere.

**Chapter 6: Conclusion of the Research**

Chapter 6 concludes the study. A synthesis of findings is given. The chapter also outlines recommendations meant to curb this vice in schools. It is hoped that this study is going to provoke further research in those areas, which arose from the study, but were outside the scope of the current study.

## 1.13   SUMMARY

In this chapter the area of investigation was clearly outlined and it was shown that child sexual abuse is a worldwide problem found at all levels of society. It was further noted that child sexual abuse is not only prevalent in homes but in schools as well, which is why child sexual abuse in schools is the focus of this study. Child sexual abuse by school staff, who should be caring for their learners motivated the researcher to carry out the study. The researcher asked a question about the perceptions of teachers, learners and educational psychologists about sexual abuse of learners by teachers. The ultimate aim was to get information about forms of sexual abuse, signs and symptoms, contributing factors in the school situation and effects of the abuse on the affected so as to put preventative measures in place, especially in Zimbabwean schools where the empirical research was conducted. A

preliminary literature review of the study indicates that there is not one definition of child sexual abuse, because there are many factors contributing to the abuse in a variety of contexts. The effects of sexual abuse on learners are however, devastating and survivors or victims need help. Possible ways of eradicating or preventing the abuse should be given some thought. The systems theory whose key belief is that parts which make up the whole both affect and are affected by each other was used to guide this study. The school does not exist in isolation (Lunenburg and Ornstein, 2011:20), hence based on the systems theory, the school is linked to other contexts which also can help in the fight against sexual abuse in schools such as the family, the police, and social welfare. A brief outline of the research design and methodology was given guided by the literacy review which in turn gave focus to the empirical research.

# CHAPTER 2

# UNDERSTANDING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

*For myself, if I had been informed as a child, I think I would have made a better choice...In school, the children are learning to learn, so why not teach them everything else too, especially if it can prevent something.*

*Source: Save Children (2005:62)*

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Child sexual abuse is a major problem which affects an individual's physical, cognitive, inter-personal and emotional functioning. It is a phenomenon which occurs more frequently than people realise. Most people do not have adequate knowledge concerning the nature of child sexual abuse, and as such they do not do much to prevent it. Therefore the problem is on the rise, especially in the educational context.

The epigraph above is a statement from a child, which clearly implies that while the child was at school, the child did not get all the information he/she needed in order to reach full potential. Schools need to cater for all the needs of their learners. If the learners need information about an issue that causes as much heartache as sexual abuse, schools need to educate the learners and educators in an effort to prevent or at least decrease the occurrence. Learners and educators need to be better educated in child sexual abuse issues. It is important for both adults and children to understand what child sexual abuse is about, how it happens, symptoms associated with it, its impact, and to know what to do when it takes place.

The concern of this chapter is to review views of other scholars on their understanding of child sexual abuse with special reference where possible about sexual abuse of learners by

teachers, because that is the focus of the empirical study. The chapter also aims to highlight the main factors contributing to the sexual abuse of children and discuss the effects of the abuse on the abused children. Disclosure and the reasons for non-disclosure of sexual abuse are also examined to help curb the problem. Lastly the chapter gives a summary on the literature reviewed.

## 2.2 MEANING OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

To fully understand the meaning of child sexual abuse, the following sections give some definitions, different forms and the signs and symptoms of child sexual abuse.

### 2.2.1 Defining child sexual abuse

Abuse is defined as a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse a child either directly by inflicting harm or indirectly by failing to act to prevent harm (NSPCC, 2009:1). Child abuse is any recent act or failure to act on the part of the parent or caretaker, which results in death, physical or emotional harm, or exploitation; or an act or failure which presents an imminent risk of serious harm (The CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010:5). Child abuse as defined by Newton and Gerrits (2010:7) is when an adult whom the child trusts and depends on hurts, mistreats or does not care for the child. Simply put, abuse refers to the violation of an individual's human rights by another person(s). It is cruel treatment of children, regardless of age and gender. Four major types of abuse are recognised namely neglect, physical abuse, psychological abuse and sexual abuse. From these different forms of abuse this study specifically focuses on child sexual abuse as a form of child abuse.

Most researchers in the field of child sexual abuse seem to fully appreciate the importance of defining the concept to gain a full understanding of the phenomenon. In numerous attempts to

define child sexual abuse, it seems most researchers concentrate on a particular aspect of the phenomenon, for example, age of the victim and perpetrator, contact or noncontact sexual acts, or the type of relationship between abuser and victim, but there is not an all-encompassing definition.

According to Maltz (2002:321) sexual abuse occurs whenever one person dominates and exploits another by means of sexual activity or suggestion. The United Nations Global Study on Violence against Children (UNVAC) defines child sexual abuse as any kind of sexual activity to which children are subjected, especially by someone who is responsible for them, or has power or control over them, and whom they should be able to trust (Plan West Africa, 2008:8). Alexander, Christopher, Bernier, Collins and Hmurovich (2012:44) posit that from a feminist approach, child sexual abuse is viewed as a microcosm of a greater and wider domination of the weaker parties.

Although there is no single nationally, regionally or globally accepted definition of child sexual abuse, attempts at defining it by various UN agencies and major global child protection agencies, and some governments, usually categorise child sexual abuse as a form of violence involving contacts or interactions between a child and an older or more knowledgeable child or adult when the child is being used as an object of gratification for an older child or adult's sexual needs (UNICEF, 2012:16). These contacts or interactions are carried out against the child using force, trickery, bribes, threats or pressure.

From the above it can be noted that definitions of child sexual abuse generally include the following:

- Sexual exploitation of a child by an adult;
- Sexual abuse aimed at the sexual gratification of the adult even if it involves attempts to sexually stimulate the child;

- A child as a minor who is unable to give legal consent to the sexual activities that adult involves him/her in. The perpetrator disregards the psychological development level of the child.

The definitions focus on types of behaviour, the intent, as well as the age and power discrepancies between offenders and victims. For the purpose of this research, the following definition is used: Child sexual abuse is any physical, visual or verbal behaviour by an adult directed at a child that is intended to sexually arouse or titillate the adult or the older child.

**2.2.2 Forms of child sexual abuse**

There are two categories included in the definition of child sexual abuse namely non-contact and contact sexual abuse (Bezuidenhout, 2008(b):198; Heighberg, 2005:462; Richter, Dawes and Higson–Smith, 2004:31).

**2.2.2.1 Non-contact sexual abuse**

Bezuidenhout (2008:198) as well as Richter, Dawes and Higson–Smith (2004:3) point out that non-contact sexual abuse occurs without actual sexual contact between the abuser and the child. In schools learners face various forms of non-contact sexual abuse from school personnel such as teachers, coaches, or fellow students. Non-contact sexual abuse can also include verbal sexual harassment, such as sexual innuendos, and derogatory remarks about a child's body, as well as requests for sexual favours (Heighberg, 2005: 462). It also involves sexual gestures which are a form of non–verbal communication where visible actions communicate sexual messages for example an inappropriate air kiss. Pornography, which is any media with sexual activity or nudity that is explicit and has sexual arousal as its main purpose is also a type of non-contact sexual abuse (Ferguson and Hartley, 2009:324). Sometimes children are forced to watch adults engaging in sexual activity, revealing sex organs to the child. 'Sexting', which involves sending sexually explicit messages and/or

photographs electronically via text messages or by internet is non-contact abuse. Non-contact forms of sexual abuse are often a prelude to contact sexual abuse.

### 2.2.2.2 Contact sexual abuse

Gandari and Chihambakwe (2010:69), Collin-Vezina, Daigneault and Herbet (2013:1) point out that contact sexual abuse involves sexual contact activities such as caressing, fondling, or tickling genitals, breasts, or thighs directly or through clothing. A child can be invited to touch or be touched sexually. Contact sexual abuse can also involve oral sexual activities such as sucking of breasts or tongue kissing and oral genital contact. According to the above authors, penetrative sexual activities such as oral, anal and vaginal intercourse and rape are examples of contact sexual abuse. Thus, contact child sexual abuse involves physical contact including touching, rubbing and penetration of body parts.

In schools, learners encounter both non-contact and contact sexual abuse. There are children of all ages whose breasts, buttocks, and genitals are touched, who are kissed and forced to have sexual intercourse, who are shown pornographic photographs, and who are made to listen to sexual slurs and stories by school staff or other learners. Most of these sexual acts, however, occur at the hands of educators (Shakeshaft, 2002:10). Sexual abuse happens in all grades and in all age groups in the school. Sometimes the sexual abuse happens in front of other learners. It is not unusual for a teacher to take a learner into a storage room attached to the classroom and have sexual intercourse with the learner (Shakeshaft, 2002:10).

Child sexual abuse in school settings as alluded to by Shakeshaft (2002:10) is a serious problem. To alleviate the occurrence of child sexual abuse in schools educators need to know the signs and symptoms of child sexual abuse.

**2.3 SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

Sexual abuse often does not result in lasting physical injuries or produce clear observable evidence. However, it can be associated with various psychological and behavioural problems (Cruise, 2004:95). The author further asserts that in many substantiated cases of child sexual abuse there are no physical symptoms of harm to alert adults and in such a scenario, parents and educators should use indicators to prompt them to consider that something is wrong, that is, that children have been sexually abused. They should be knowledgeable about the signs and symptoms of the sexual abuse to help the children as early as possible.

Deb and Mukherjee (2009:32) indicate that some of the behaviours might have other explanations, but it is important to assist the children no matter what the cause of these symptoms. Some indicators are diagnostic of sexual abuse whereas others may be consistent with sexual abuse but could be an indication of other problems.

Sanderson (2005:222) and Faller (1993: 22) assert that sexual indicators of child sexual abuse can be classified as high-probability indicators and lower probability indicators. In each classification signs and symptoms can be divided into those more characteristic of younger children, 10 years and below and those found primarily in older children, 10 years and above. However, some can also be found in both age groups.

**2.3.1 High probability sexual indicators**

Sanderson (2005:222) asserts that with high probability indicators it is more likely that the child was sexually abused. This means that there are strong signs and symptoms that the child was sexually abused. The reason why they are high probability indicators is because there is little dispute over the fact that sexual activity has taken place.

## 2.3.1.1 High probability sexual indicators in young children

Faller (1993:26) declares that when young children`s behaviour manifest in sexual knowledge not ordinarily possessed by young children, this is a high probability indicator of sexual abuse. Young children who have been sexually abused may engage in inappropriate levels of sexual behaviour. These behaviours as alluded to by Faller (1993:26) and Sanderson (2005:230) include sexually explicit drawings. Children often try to communicate their inner and social world through drawings and paintings (Sanderson, 2005:231). Therefore teachers, parents and therapists should be conscious of these signs. Children often draw stick figures which are genderless and sometimes include hidden parts of the body such as nipples or genitalia. Drawings by sexually abused children according to Sanderson (2005: 231) often feature the sexual parts of the body in graphic detail for example, large penises or large breasts.

The children who externalise their response to sexual abuse avoid closeness and intimacy with others through displays of hostility, explosive outbursts of anger and aggression (Jump, 2008:98).The sexual aggression towards other younger children can represent identification with the abuse. On the other hand, Faller (1993:26) is of the notion that sexually abused children can make sexual gestures or invitations to older persons. This suggests that children expect and accept sexual activity as a way of relating to adults.

According to Sanderson (2005:230) play can reveal a lot about the inner world and experiences of sexually abused children. Children may re-enact their sexual abuse through role play either with other young children or with toys. This view is asserted by Faller (1993:27) who indicates that sexual play with peers might be an indication that the children probably experienced a degree of pleasure from the sexual activity because they represent sexual knowledge not ordinarily possessed by young children. Scenes of the children being

sexually abused may be replayed, including sexual acts performed on the children. Sexually abused children according to Sanderson (2005) and Faller (1993) are often overly serious in such play and do not display the sense of fun, delight and giggling that most children do when they engage in consensual sexual exploration. When playing alone, the children may act out child sexual abuse scenarios with toys or animals. The children may subject their toys or pets to precisely the same violations that they experienced. A child, for example, can be observed sucking a dog`s penis.

**2.3.1.2 High probability sexual indicators in older children**

As children mature, they become aware of societal responses to their sexual activity, and therefore, overt sexual interactions are less common (Faller, 1993: 27). Sexual indicators that may signal sexual abuse include sexual promiscuity among girls and boys, and adolescent prostitution. Adolescents often become involved in prostitution because of sexual abuse. They can also have suicidal behaviours, phobias, depression, and they may show acting out behaviours (Sibnath and Walsh, 2012: 9). Pregnancy in older girls is also a high probability indicator of sexual abuse.

**2.3.1.3 High probability sexual indicators in all children**

A high probability indicator for all children is when they report to anyone that they are being or have been sexually abused. There is a high probability when they report that they are telling the truth and should be taken seriously (https://www.childwelfare.gov). Unless there is substantial evidence that the statement is false, it should be interpreted as a good indication that the child has in fact been sexually abused.

High probability indicators in all children include semen in the vagina, a torn hymen, injury to the penis, for example, bite marks, redness or bruises (Faller, 1993:23).With indicators like venereal diseases and the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) there is little dispute over

the fact this happened because of sexual activity. There is strong evidence that these illnesses are sexually transmitted unless contracted prenatally or with birth. A pregnant mother with sexually transmitted diseases such as gonorrhoea can pass the disease during delivery when the baby passes through the infected birth canal. HIV and AIDs infection can also be passed to infants during pregnancy or through breast feeding.

### 2.3.2 Lower Probability Sexual Indicators

Sanderson (2005:232) echoes that many signs and symptoms of sexual abuse can be an indication of other problems children experience. This means that some signs and symptoms may be an indication that children have been sexually abused, but may also be an indication of other problems.

### 2.3.2.1 Lower probability sexual indicators in young children

There are a number of signs and symptoms in young children that can indicate that a child has been sexually abused**.** Behaviour indicators in young children which might indicate other disturbances include sleep disturbances, cruelty to animals (more characteristic of boy victims) and bedwetting (Faller, 1993:24).

### 2.3.2.2 Lower probability sexual indicators in older children

Older children can develop eating disturbances/disorders like bulimia and anorexia (Jump, 2008: 99). They can also engage in self-destructive behaviours for instance, banging heads against walls, cutting furniture and suicidal attempts. These behaviours can be tracked to various disturbances, not necessarily to sexual abuse.

### 2.3.2.3 Lower probability sexual indicators in all children

Burns (2008:107), Deb and Mukherjee (2009:114) and Faller (1993:28) assert that many children who have been sexually abused have trouble focusing, concentrating and paying attention in school. These authors further say that sexually abused children have problems relating to peers. Problems also include urinary tract infections, bowel complications, stomach aches, and emotional complaints such as depression. However, these symptoms may be due to other causes for instance, problems such as urinary tract infections can also be caused by poor hygiene, a bubble bath or taking antibiotics.

Burns (2008:106) advises that parents and educators should not look at every problem children might be having as signs of sexual abuse. If they have questions and worries they should get an assessment of the situation from a reputable therapist or social worker who has expertise in the area of sexual abuse. Besides being aware of the signs and symptoms of sexual abuse educators and parents in addition should also be aware of the factors leading to sexual abuse so that they will be in a better position to prevent the abuse. There are many factors which lead to sexual abuse of children, especially in schools. Several factors are discussed in the section below to explain the high prevalence rate of child sexual abuse.

### 2.4 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Researchers have identified various factors that may contribute to sexual abuse of children. Antonowicz (2010:15) provides a model to try and explain some of the contributing factors to child sexual abuse. Figure 2.1 provides the factors leading to sexual abuse.
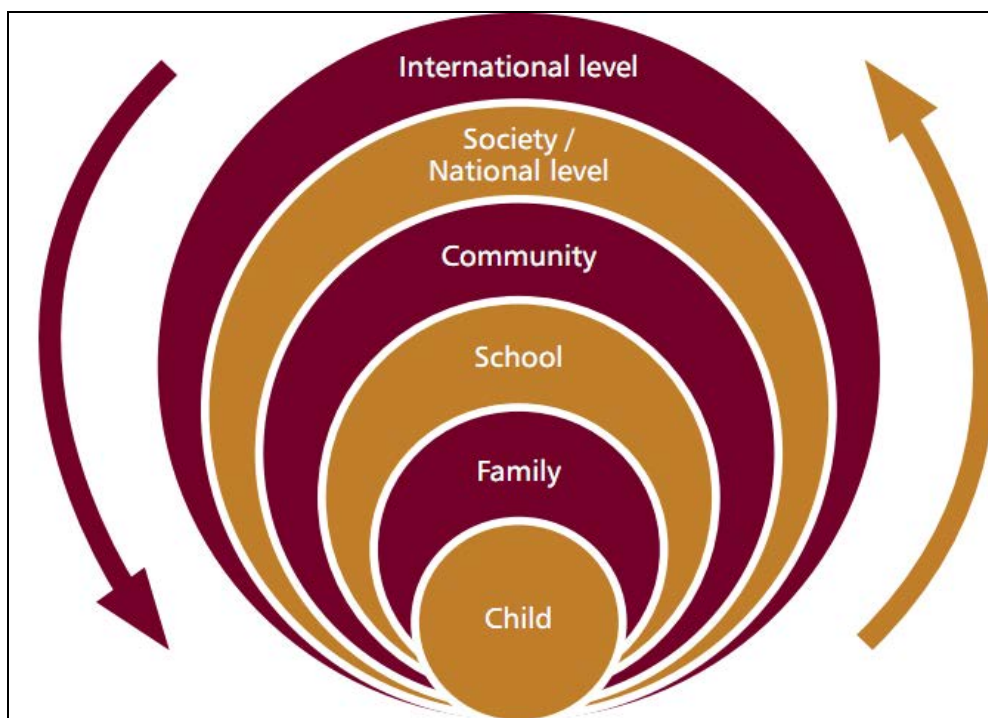
**Figure 2.1: Root causes of child sexual abuse**

*Source: Antonowicz (2010:15)*

Factors contributing to child sexual abuse are presented on a continuum from home to school to community and the wider community (see arrows on Figure 2.1) as part of a bigger system as discussed in Chapter 1 in systems theory. Sexual abuse can occur at national level, community level, school level, family level and individual level (Richter et al., 2004:62; Antonowicz, 2010:15). Considering the above expressed views, it would stand to reason that child sexual abuse can occur at any level of the system in which children grow up. Child sexual abuse is a culmination of many direct and indirect influences.

**2.4.1 National level**

The most prominent medium of exposure on this level is the national television and other media available to young people in a specific country. Media exposure of a sexual nature contributes to child sexual abuse. Dehlmer (2009:4) and Magwa (2013:3) assert that media refers to the types of devices most commonly used for communication and entertainment

purposes, including computers (e.g. Internet access and online games), cell phones (e.g. phone calls and text messages), console video games, and television (e.g. television shows and movies shown on television or on VCRs or DVD players). The above mentioned media are influential components in daily lives of most children. Opobo and Wandega (2011:21) point out that media can inform, educate, and influence viewers and listeners in a positive way. However, media can also pose a threat when material of an explicit sexual nature is used by young people or when young people who cannot discriminate between appropriate and inappropriate materials are forced to be exposed to it.

Current technology allows for unprecedented and easy access to sexually explicit materials and has provided increased opportunities for individuals to commit sexual offenses. There is a growing problem of sexual images of children being available for viewing and downloading from different media (Louge, 2006:2). According to Dehlmer (2009:3) the growth of technology has changed the world, which in turn has changed the daily lives of children and adolescents. Many learners have access to computers, the Internet, cell phones, video games, and many other forms of modern technology. Despite the fact that technological media has some benefits to learners, using these media becomes a risk to them, more than most adults realise.

Although the Internet has a positive impact on modern society as a tool for social networking and academic enhancement for learners (Louge, 2006:2; Dehlmer 2009:3), it has also caused various societal concerns. The Internet has become a highly effective and profitable means of distributing sexually explicit material. Text messaging, e-mails, and social network sites such as Facebook are becoming prevalent places where illegal child sexual materials can be accessed (Sanderson, 2006:36; Louge, 2006:2). Louge (2006:2) explains that the sex sites are accessed sometimes unintentionally when a child, often in the process of doing homework, uses an innocuous word to search for information or pictures. They may also deliberately

access inappropriate material, particularly as they move into adolescence. Adolescents are naturally curious about sex. Sexually explicit content may put children at risk of developing obesity, reducing time for healthy development like playing .and also causing poor peer relationships (Agarwal and Dhanasekaran, 2012:41). Children exposed to sexual acts on television or the internet are almost twice as likely to initiate sexual intercourse with other kids and tend to model the behaviour they see. This is in line with Albert Bandura's social learning theory, which advocates for observational learning. Observational learning is a type of learning that occurs as a function of observing, retaining and replicating behaviour executed by others (Bandura, 1971:5).

Based on the views above, it can be said that exposure to media has a strong effect on children because they lack the real life experiences to judge whether something they access on various media is realistic or not. Grapes (2012:18) expresses the viewpoint that children are the most vulnerable to sexual abuse, both because they are in the process of forming their own sense of right or wrong and because they cannot distinguish fantasy from reality.

### 2.4.2 Community level

Contributing factors of child sexual abuse do not solely emanate at the national level, but also from the community where children live. At this level cultural practices within a particular community are the main contributors to child sexual abuse. Some cultural practices have been identified as major obstacles to the rights of children in general (de la Vega and Dahlstrom, 2007:13). Culture is the amalgam characteristic and knowledge of a particular group of people, defined by everything from language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts (http://www.livescience.com/21478-what-is-culture-definition-of-culture.html). Thus, culture involves shared meanings which are transmitted from one generation to the other. Onyango (2005:5) states that culture is made for, of and by men. People in a particular society create

and share patterns of behaviours, habits, and beliefs for understanding the social realities around them. Schein (2010:3) expresses the view that culture implies stability and rigidity in the sense that the way people are supposed to perceive, feel, and act in a given society or community has been taught to them through various socialisation experiences and these cultural practices become compulsory to maintain social order. Various families, especially in African and Eastern countries adhere to and practice different cultural practices which could result in child sexual abuse such as child marriages and virginity testing. The power of patriarchal systems is however a world-wide phenomenon.

**2.4.2.1 Unequal gender and power relations**

Unequal gender and power relations endemic in patriarchal societies in most African cultures go a long way towards explaining why men sexually abuse both women and children. Feminist theorists, like Thompson (2001) and Oakley (1981) list the unequal gender-based power relations within patriarchal society as an etiological factor of child sexual abuse (Best, 2003:147-148). In the feminists' views all women share a bond of oppressive patriarchy that was enforced by fathers, husbands and a range of other men through the ages. Male domination is not only found in public aspects of a woman's life, such as unequal access to professions and politics, but in personal aspects such as bodily integrity. Women, for example, are often forced to have sex even if they do not want to, and their decisions are not respected or taken into cognisance. A common theme in patriarchal societies is the so-called 'uncontrollability' of male sexual urges and the role of physical force in sexual relations (Lalor, 2005:11). Men are thought to be sexually powerful and as such can be engaged in sexual activity when they wish. Best (2003:148) argues that men in patriarchal societies are recognised as having the status of 'human' because the penis is the 'only symbol of human' status allowed under the conditions of male supremacy. Women are complicit with this ideology in that they accept the second class status that is accorded to them and allow men to

use them sexually even without their consent. Men assume that women and children are naturally subordinated to them and are bound to serve their needs.

The influence of socialisation and child rearing practices play a role in child sexual abuse. Men are not biologically made to behave abusively towards children or women but through wider ideological and environmental influences they come to believe that they have a right to be sexually sustained by females. In view of this, Dawes and Higson-Smith (2004:66) assert that patriarchal ideology and the process of socialisation have the effect of constructing a notion of childhood that renders especially the girl child, vulnerable to sexual abuse since young children are socialised into a set of unequal gender and power relations.

Another issue noted by Richter, Dawes and Higson-Smith (2007:62) in relation to socialisation, environmental influences and child rearing practices, is that of children's silence. Cultural scripts regarding respect and obedience to elders make it probable that children do not speak up against elders, who are senior to them. If they do, they may be punished. Under these circumstances, the perpetrator is encouraged to continue to sexually abuse children. Thus, the silence of children and unquestioned obedience may well have the effect of making them compliant targets.

**2.4.2.2 Child marriages**

These are a violation of human rights. Many cultures especially African cultures, practice arranged marriages, which are often arranged at very young ages (Thompson and Wilkinson, 2010:49). Early marriages represent the most prevalent form of sexual abuse of children. The family deliberately exposes children to sexual abuse. Child marriages are still a common occurrence in parts of Africa, India and parts of Latin America and the Caribbean (Kirton, 2011:190). Parents make marital choices for daughters and sons with little regard for personal

implications. Rather, they look upon marriage as a family building strategy or an economic arrangement (Stark, 2007:23).

Child wives are more vulnerable to sexual abuse (Cheal, 2008:79), because of the unequal power relations that exist in child marriages as grooms normally tend to be older than the brides. Cheal (2008:79) asserts that child wives have sexual intercourse before the onset of menstruation. They have early and very painful sex and forced sexual activity with their husbands, even if they have indicated an unwillingness to do so. According to the World Health Organisation, 48% of 15-18 year olds in Bangladesh reported being sexually assaulted by their husbands (de la Vega and Dahlstrom, 2007:13). Forced child marriages give a man licence to impose sex upon a girl, denying her control over her own body.

### 2.4.2.3 Virginity testing

Virginity testing is another sexually abusive cultural practice which involves the intrusive examination of a girl child for the purposes of determining whether she has retained her virginity (de la Vega and Dahlstrom, 2007:11).Virginity testing is mainly practised in rural areas in the home by mothers, aunts, neighbours or at a communal level during ceremonies where the elderly adults insert a finger in the vagina of a girl resulting in some penetration.

### 2.4.2.4 Myths and prejudices

Myths and prejudices also contribute to sexual abuse against children. A man's potency is believed to increase, or sexually transmitted diseases are thought to be cured, by having sexual intercourse with children (Devasia and Kumar, 2009:71).Virgin girls are at a high risk of being raped and infected by HIV positive men due to the 'cleansing myth' that is harboured by some traditional healers who advise their patients to have sex with virgins in order to be cured of the disease. The myth of 'HIV and AIDS virgin cure' is prevalent in many African communities. The idea that one may cleanse oneself of HIV and AIDS and

STDs by having intercourse with a virgin or young girl is frequently referred to as a possible explanation for the apparent increase in the occurrence of child sexual abuse (Kibarue-Mbae, 2011:38; Thompson and Wilkinson, 2010:48). The scare of HIV infection and AIDS is thought to be a major contributing factor for the increase in sexual abuse of young girls who are considered to be relatively free of the infection (Lalor, 2005: 451).

Another issue relating to the HIV and AIDS pandemic is the emergence of an alarming number of HIV and AIDS orphans and with it many cases of sexual abuse arise. According to Richter et al. (2004:72) there is evidence to suggest that many of these orphans will not have the benefit of growing up in adult supervised homes and will most likely be vulnerable to sexual abuse by neighbours and relatives since they may not have the protection from parents. Sexual abuse has been regarded as the highest form of abuse of orphaned children by close relatives such as uncles, and nephews. Without care and support of one or more responsible adults, orphaned children may be vulnerable to sexual abuse since the relatives will not bother to advice and caution the orphans against any risks, seeing that the orphans are not their children. The caregivers may not have a keen interest in the wellbeing and the whereabouts of the orphaned children. Furthermore, guardians like grandparents may, due to old age, fail to notice when the orphans engage in risky sexual behaviours (Richter et al., 2004:72).

### 2.4.3 School level

Child sexual abuse has been a major problem in schools leading to many adverse consequences to the affected learners. Learning institutions have gained notoriety as venues of sexual abuse (Ruto, 2009:177). Situations that lead to children being sexually abused in a school context are multi-factoral.

The physical environment of the school, educator-child relationship, and peer pressure can contribute to sexual abuse of learners at school level. The school environment, unequal power relations, peer pressure and one–on-teacher /learner contact can be factors contributing to sexual abuse of learners.

A safe school may be defined as one that is free of danger and where there is absence of possible harm, a place where all learners learn without fear or harassment (Prinsloo, 2006:310). Incidents of sexual abuse by fellow learners and teachers who have a legal obligation to protect learners from any form of sexual abuse are serious infringements of learners' rights to a free and safe environment.

### 2.4.3.1 Physical environment

The physical environment of a school is crucial to learners' safety and security, but sometimes the environment can lead to sexual abuse of learners. Sexual abuse can take place in toilets, where the toilets are mixed for boys and girls, or for teachers and students. Sexual abuse of learners can also take place in dormitories in the case of boarding schools if the dormitories do not have secured doors or good supervision.

Teachers' houses are another place where sexual abuse can take place. The social expectation or in some instances the agreement between communities and school staff, that children should undertake chores for teachers such as cooking, increases the risk of learners being the victims of sexual abuse in teachers' homes (Antonowicz, 2010:27).

### 2.4.3.2 Unequal power relations

Power relationships between elders and juniors that flourish in many communities also exist in the school environment. Schools, like any other social context, are sites of power relationships among teachers and students and among students themselves (Plan West Africa,

2008:12). Javangwe (2008:8) points out that most of the school based sexual abuses are perpetrated by males on females. Violence in and around the schools is situated within gender-based norms and gender based socialisation dynamics in which male violence is accepted and which promotes female submission and passivity (Antonowicz, 2010:27). Sexual abuse of children, especially girls may be facilitated by a wide spread belief in the urgency of male sexual relief and use of physical coercion in sexual relations. Boys are socialised into a set of unequal gender and power relations, learn that their power is endorsed by a patriarchal system, which provides an often unquestioned opportunity for them to control and intimidate those who are less powerful than themselves namely, children and women. Some girls may accept a certain level of gender violence in the school context because that is aligned with what they experience and have been socialised to accept as normal in the home and community. Sadly, girls' socialisation into obedience and silence, and their realistic fear of breaking such codes, may contribute to their sexual abuse.

Sometimes these relationships are articulated in abusive ways. Shumba (2001) asserts that in schools, teachers are in a position of power towards their learners such as assigning grades, and reporting their behaviour to their parents. Child sexual abuse in school settings often involves sexual favours in exchange of good grades. Antonowicz (2010:5) asserts that sex for grades is one of the most reported practices of sexual exploitation, usually involving a male member of staff and a girl learner. Kibarue-Mbae (2011:63) notes that child sexual abuse in school settings involves learners being coerced into sexual activity in return for educational benefits such as payment of school fees as well as to pass or get good marks for tests and examinations. This creates a situation that is conducive for sexual abuse. Teachers exploit their authority, knowledge, and power to achieve sexual ends when in fact they should be acting 'in loco parentis' or as substitute parent/caregiver. Learners might not be in a position

to decline involvement because of teachers' authority and thus feel pressured to comply with teachers' demands for fear of negative repercussions.

### 2.4.3.3 Peer pressure

Peer pressure is another factor that can lead to sexual abuse in a school context (Leach et al., 2003:77-78). Phillips and Straussner (2006:224) assert that peer pressure and perceived peer behaviour profoundly affect adolescents through group influence. Girls, who have engaged in transactional sex (sex in exchange for money or other gifts) for example, encourage others to do likewise in order to get money to buy fashionable clothes, cosmetics and other essentials. Perceptions of sexual activity among peers tend to be wildly exaggerated. Boys, for example, engage in sexual abusing of girls or other boys, simply because other peers are doing it and also as a way of asserting their manhood. According to Leach et al. (2003:78) both boys and girls want to fit in a specific group, even if the behaviour is not socially acceptable. Peer pressure from other learners encourages boys and girls to engage in pre-mature sexual behaviour where for example, older boys can force themselves sexually on girls or smaller boys.

### 2.4.3.4 One-on-one adult–child contact

Education in schools relies on the fostering of positive relationships between educators and learners. Schools are places where all staff can have a significant influence in the lives of learners (Grooves, 2011:8), because the relationships involve regular contact over long periods of time. These features make it extremely important that staff understand how to foster positive relationships in ways that do not compromise learners' welfare. Professional boundary violations such as one-on-one interaction with a child in private settings by a staff member represents a breach of trust, and a failure to follow the conduct requirements of the employer (if written in the Code of Conduct) (Hobson, 2012:8; Grooves, 2011:11).

Mitchel (2010) asserts that more than 80% of sexual abuse cases occur in situations with one child and one adult. Virtually all sexual abuse of learners takes place behind closed doors, in private settings in a one-on-one interaction with a school employee or older learner (Hobson, 2012:8). In the school situation, employees such as coaches, teachers, and counsellors constantly have one-on-one encounters with learners to for example, provide extra teaching. If the adult is only concerned with the extra teaching a child might benefit from the session. However, some teachers fail during the one–on-one extra teaching to control their sexual appetites and end up sexually abusing the child. Some organisations have a policy to limit one-on- one interaction between adults and children with the goal of preventing the isolation of one adult one learner, a situation that elevates the risk for child sexual abuse. According to Shakeshaft (2002:33) a negative outcome of being alone with a teacher could be that a teacher could take a learner into a storage room attached to the classroom, engaging the learner in sexual intercourse. The same author gives an example where in one class of boys a teacher would call one at a time while discussing homework and would fondle each boy's penis. Despite the fact that learners can benefit educationally, emotionally and socially from individual attention the risk involved in this practice as can be noted in the above discussion may outweigh the benefits.

### 2.4.4 Family level

At the family level, poverty, single parent headed families and domestic violence can be contributors to sexual abuse of children.

### 2.4.4.1 Poverty

Globally, researchers have found a strong correlation between poverty and child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse often has its roots in poverty (Antonowicz, 2010:28). Poverty makes parents renege on their responsibility of providing for the needs of their children. A parent

may ask of a girl child to look for a capable person to take care of her basic survival needs such as clothing, and educational fees. Out of confusion, the child will give in to such a proposition and end up engaging in sexual activities in return for money. In line with this, Mapp (2011:118) asserts that poverty can create a risk factor for sexual abuse in that children may be tempted to perform sexual acts for a financial reward. According to Antonowicz (2010:28), poor school girls may engage in transactional sex, that is, they will offer themselves sexually to teachers, in order to get financial support for their education such as payment of school fees or in exchange of gifts. In some cases parents may also turn a blind eye to their children's sexual relationships with teachers or other adults simply to receive financial support for their children' education.

Olsen (2010:12) affirms that poor or inadequate sleeping arrangements lead to overcrowding and sharing of beds, factors which could lead to inappropriate sexual behaviours. In particular, the physical proximity of adult males, in most cases step-fathers, to their step-daughters increases the risk that these girls would be sexually abused. In situations where parents also share one room with their children and the mother happens to be away for a night or more, the father can take this opportunity to sexually abuse a child /children. From these examples, it can be noted that sexual abuse can occur in home environments characterised by overcrowding.

Overcrowding limits the possibility of separation between adults and children. Poor shelter, which may lead to overcrowding within the poor population, also encourages early exposure of children to sexual activities because they share the same bedrooms with their parents (Okello-Wengi, 2005:16). In these situations where children share sleeping areas with parents or older children, children might hear or see parents having sex and may want to experiment with that.

According to Bandura's social learning theory, children learn from observing and imitating others. Social cognitive theory provides a framework for understanding how cognitive and environmental influences affect human behaviour (Figure 2.2). Bandura (1971) believes interactions of behaviour, environment and personal factors result in triadic reciprocity (Hardin, 2010:21). Thus, in this case, after observing some sexual materials or real sexual encounters (social influence) children who are by nature curious (self -influence) can be led to sexually experimentation and in the process abuse of others (behaviour outcome).
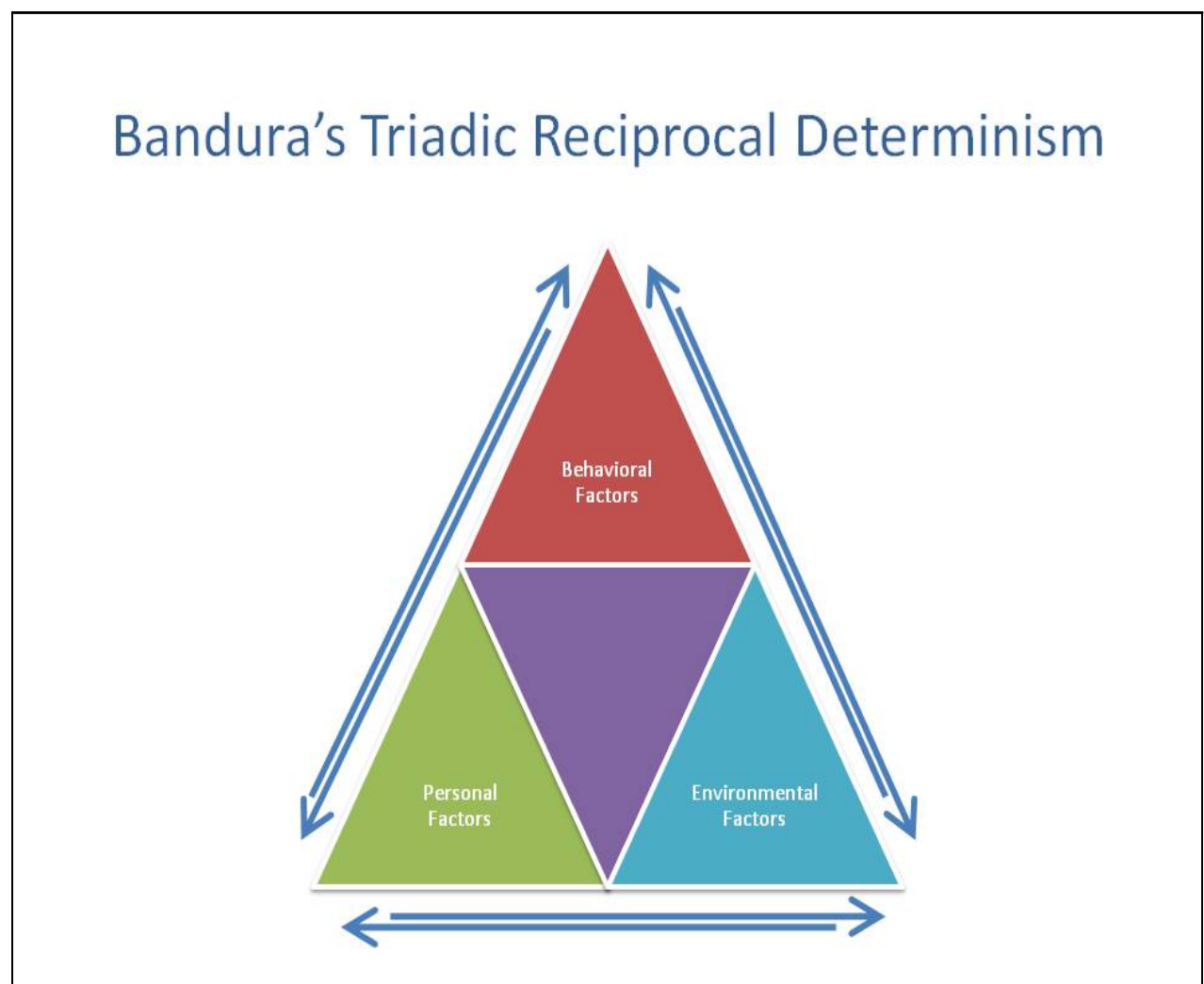


**Figure 2.2: Bandura's triadic reciprocal determinism**

*Source : McLoughlin (2015)*

**2.4.4.2 Single parent families**

Richter et al. (2007:457) are of the view that children from incomplete and broken homes are generally more vulnerable to being sexually abused than children from stable home environments. Hunter (2010:15) reiterates that children have been shown to be more vulnerable to child sexual abuse following parental separation, when they are living with single parents. Children raised in incomplete families generally have more freedom to do as they wish, because of the lack of parental control. The parents from such a home may have many responsibilities and fail to monitor children fully. These children are often emotionally neglected and feel that the attention of the perpetrator fills a void in their lives. However, in many single parent homes the above is not a problem, because these parents spend quality time with their children, in spite of being single.

**2.4.4.3 Domestic violence**

Child sexual abuse is directly linked to domestic violence in the family (Magwa, 2013:591; Gorman, 2012:9; Opobo and Wandega, 2011:21). Literature has demonstrated that children who are exposed to domestic violence may also experience child sexual abuse at the hands of their parents and caregivers. Fathers who sexually abuse their partners are more likely than mothers to engage in sexual abuse against their children. Fathers sexually abuse their daughters to retaliate against mothers for example, for denying them their conjugal rights (Gorman, 2012:30). Continuous fighting in families has been reported to be greatly contributing to domestic violence leading to separation and divorce in families. Children are vulnerable to sexual abuse in the context of separation and divorce.

**2.4.5 Individual level**

At the individual level disability as a factor leading to sexual abuse is discussed.

**2.4.5.1 Children with disabilities**

Children with disabilities are more susceptible to sexual abuse than other children (Krohn, 2014:4; Mapp, 2011:118). There are many reasons why they are considered more vulnerable according to the above authors. Firstly they are typically perceived weak and passive and many have been trained by well-meaning caregivers to be compliant, making them easy targets for abuse. They have been socialised to comply with the instructions of those in charge. If the person in charge is sexually abusing the child, this learned compliance will undermine a person's power to seek protection.

Children with disabilities are frequently victims of sexual abuse in and around the school (Antonowicz, 2010:28). Research suggests that children, who are perceived as more marginalised and less connected to their parents and peers are at greater risk of being targeted by school staff and other learners for sexual abuse. These children as alluded to by Smith and Harrell (2013:6) might be more likely to respond positively to initial friendly luring attempts and might be less likely to report the abuse because of the stigma attached to their disabilities. Although children are trained to be compliant to authority figures in society, including in schools, compliance is stressed to an even greater extent for children with disabilities. In such environments, learners with disabilities are denied the right to say 'no' in everyday choices such as what to wear, leaving them completely unequipped to say 'no' when someone is trying to hurt them.

Another source of vulnerability is the result of stigma against the disabled and because of the stigmatisation they frequently exhibit a negative self-image and perceive themselves to be inferior and therefore deserving of the abuse (Krohn, 2014:4). Children with disabilities are often segregated from the general public, which limits their participation in common social settings. This isolation increases their dependence on service providers, or other people

involved in their lives. Perpetrators take advantage of this in order to maintain power and control over victims and sexually abuse them. Krohn (2014) further asserts that some disabled children exhibit an intense desire to fit in and the eagerness to be accepted can leave these children vulnerable to perform sexual acts which they are made to believe will lead to acceptance and friendship.

Children with intellectual disabilities are often not educated about healthy relationships, including sexual relationships, appropriate boundaries, correct names for body parts, legal rights and individual rights such as the right to live life free from violence and this leads to them being sexually abused (Smith and Harrell, 2013:6). They do not receive information about human sexuality. Krohn (2014:5) argues that even when they receive sex education the educational materials are not targeted to children at lower than average cognitive levels. Sexual education is rarely provided in special education classrooms. Therefore, without such fundamental lessons, learners with disabilities have no language to describe what would have happened to them. They lack vocabulary to describe what has happened to them and strategies to defend themselves against abuse (Bryen, 2011). Having looked at the above contributing factors to child sexual abuse it is crucial to know who the abusers are and how they identify and target their victims.

## 2.5 VICTIMS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

From the foregoing discussion it is very clear that both girls and boys are vulnerable to sexual abuse. Research has shown that girls are abused three times more often than boys (Finkelhor, Turner, Ormrod, Hamby and Kracke, 2009: 6). In a review conducted by Collin-Vezina, Daigneault, and Herbert (2013) reported that child sexual abuse is a major issue which affects more than 1 out of 5 girls and 1 in 10 males globally. The major factors which put girls at

more risk compared to boys as highlighted above are because of their gender. Society is generally agreed that girl child is most vulnerable for she has to survive against a background where the woman, fairer sex is unjustly treated and taken as a second class (Antonowicz, 2010:27; Richter et al., 2007:62; Dawes and Higson-Smith (2004:66)). Cultural practices such as virginity testing, and early marriages account also for sexual abuse of girls (Kirton, 2011:190; Thompson and Wilkinson, 2010:49; Cheal, 2008:79). Girls are also more susceptible to sexual abuse as a result of myths held like cleansing oneself of HIV and AIDS and STDs (Kibarue-Mbae, 2011:38; Thompson and Wilkinson 2010:48; Lalor, 2005: 451). Due to some of the above reasons most researchers have concentrated on girl child sexual abuse. This section is interested in looking at sexual abuse of boys

## 2.5.1 Boy child sexual abuse

Male victims of childhood sexual abuse have not yet garnered the same amount of attention from researchers as their female counterparts in spite of estimates that 16% of men have received some form of sexual abuse (Finkelhor, Hotaling, Lewis, and Smith, 1990). Available data indicate a somewhat higher prevalence of sexual abuse against girls than boys (Tillyer, Wilcox and Gialopsos, 2010:1074; Sweeney, Despota and Linder, 2013:90). Society in general tends to deny the sexual abuse of boys this may explain why sexual abuse of boys is less frequently reported than abuse of girls (Slugget, 2003).

The general invisibility of sexual abuse is due in part to societal definitions of masculinity and maleness. Cultural norms that define masculinity often restricts males ability to report sexual abuse and create a mistaken belief that males are immune to sexual abuse (Antonowic, 2010:27; Lalor, 2005:11; Best, 2003). Society perpetuates these expectations by maintaining a code of silence, rarely asking about it and not even considering the possibility of boys as victims of sexual abuse. Boys are less likely than girls to maintain their silence. Kia-Keating,

Grossman and Sorsoli, (2005:170) cite a study by Risin and Koss with a sample of 216 men who reported on child sexual abuse and discovered that 81% had never told anyone. Some of the myths about sexual abuse of boys include males cannot be sexually abused, and males are less traumatised than females.

Boys are sexually abused by both males and females (Olsen, 2010:19). Perpetrators tend to be male who consider themselves heterosexual. Most studies of boyhood sexual abuse demonstrate that boys are more often abused by men and older boys than women and older girls (Olsen, 2010:19; Sexual Abuse Information Series, 2008: 8). In one larger sample of college men among those who reported boyhood sexual abuse histories, 61% had male abusers, 28 % had female abusers, and 11% reported having both female and male abusers (Gartner, 1999:3). In schools male teachers and older boys are more likely to sexually abuse boys. The abusers are often in positions of trust like teachers. They are also sexually turned on the boys by the fact that they can exercise their power over them (Sexual abuse Information Series, 2008:8).

According to Antonowicz (2010:23), and Ford (2006:7) females sexually abuse male learners. Sexual abuse by females is not reported or seen as abusive. Boys are taught to believe that sexual experience with an older female is a greater way to learn about sex. They can believe that having sex with an adult woman is something to be proud of (Sexual Abuse Information Series, 2008:7).

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## 2.6 CHILD SEXUAL ABUSERS

It should be noted that the word *abuser* is used interchangeably with *perpetrator,* and *offender* in this study. The term child sex offender is used to denote an adult who is sexually

attracted to children below the legal age of consent, as well as those accused or convicted of child sexual abuse or child pornography or related offences (Hallian, 2009:14).

Rowan (2006:3) suggests that each of us is a product of a lifelong series of sexual urges, some reinforced and practised in healthy and others in unhealthy ways and some banished from conscious thoughts. Sigmund Freud used the expression *polymorphous perverse* to describe the primitive sexual urges in all of us. Potentially then, people might have deviant arousal patterns, that is, unhealthy sexual urges. Most people however, choose not to act on these unhealthy urges if they are inappropriate in the context. Sexual arousal becomes a problem when it leads to the involvement of an unwilling participant.

### 2.6.1 Who are the abusers?

Child offenders come from all walks of life. They can be male or female, rich or poor, religious or non-religious, an adult or an older child, educated or illiterate, employed or unemployed, married or unmarried (Sanderson, 2006:34). The abuser can be a parent, relative, neighbour, teacher, priest, or someone else known to the child. Hallian (2009: 14) indicates that when a case is reported in the press, readers wonder how it could have happened. They question how parents, teachers and friends could have been ignorant about an offender in their midst. When many people imagine a child abuser, they envision an ugly man, in a trench coat coaxing children with candy. They do not picture a neighbour next door, the friendly parishioner, a trusted co-worker, father or mother. Child sexual abusers are usually known and trusted people. Sanderson (2006:35) contends that although the majority of sexual assaults are committed by adults, a significant minority of sexual assaults, approximately 20%, are committed by juveniles.

The majority of sex offenders are male. Despite at least a century of knowledge pointing to a significant number of women engaging in sexual behaviours towards children, it is a

phenomenon that has not been accepted as a generalisation (Ford, 2006:7). Women who are convicted of sexual abuse against adolescent boys can be seen as victims in a society where adolescent males are seen as more sexually dominant and powerful than adult women. Women who have been acknowledged as perpetrators of sexual abuse are often seen as mentally unwell. Men committing exactly the same offences are prosecuted. Society is unwilling to accept women as abusers, because of the defined role for women, namely that of child carers. The role of child carers does not encompass the possibility that women can sexually abuse children. Sexual abuse by female abusers may be disguised as child care, but this is not always a true picture, because sexual abuse of children by females is a reality (Ford, 2006:7).

Child sexual abusers are also found in the school situation. Sexual abuse occurs in institutions assumed to be "safe" such as schools where perpetrators include peers and teachers (World Health Organisation, 2012: 4). Antonowicz (2010:23) asserts that male teachers together with a few female educators and other school staff such as sports coaches take advantage of their situation of authority and trust to sexually abuse learners. In a study of primary schools in Machinga district of Malawi, it was found that at 32 out of 40 schools students reported knowing a male teacher at their school who had propositioned a student for sexual intercourse, while teachers at 26 out of 40 schools reported that a male teacher at their school had got a student pregnant (World Health Organisation, 2012: 4-5). In schools sexual abusers namely teachers and peers use various grooming tactics to sexually abuse their victims.

### 2.6.2 Identification and targeting of victims by child sexual abusers

Victimisation can occur in many ways. Some offenders rely on threats, while many others look for ways to secure the compliance without relying on force and this is known as grooming. In grooming the victims, offenders are more likely to use flattery or blackmail to

control and manipulate the victims than to use physical force. Physical pain is avoided because abusers believe children are more apt to report abuse if physical pain is experienced. The sexual abuse of children is usually carefully planned and premeditated. Salter (2013:128) defines grooming as the preparation of children for sexual abuse whereby perpetrators can use inducements and emotional manipulation to coerce children into sexual abuse situations. Grooming is defined as a process by which a person prepares a child, significant adults, and the environment for the abuse of children (Borden, Hawkey, Jordan, Kearney, Kuhl, Otto, Pinna, Steinman, Tessier, Zemanek, Casper, Koch and Landbert, 2014:1). In the process, perpetrators create conditions that will allow them to sexually abuse children while remaining undetected by others. In addition, the children are gradually prepared for when the offenders first engage in sexual abuse (Parkinson, 2003:66).The grooming process may take weeks or even months.

The perpetrator identifies a target and spends time developing a trusting relationship with the child and their parents or carers (Randhawa and Jacobs, 2013:11). Forming an alliance with children is one means of grooming (Salter, 2013:130; Parkinson, 2003:67; van Dam, 2001:9). Attempts are made to establish rapport with children through friendly and reassuring behaviour.

According to Buckley (2008:2) sex offenders will not only select victims they are attracted to physically, but victims whom they believe they can control. They do not abuse every child to whom they have access to. Instead, they generally select children who are vulnerable in some way. Perpetrators are very good at identifying the vulnerabilities of children. Offenders are able to identify weaknesses in children's personalities or life circumstances like those who come from poor backgrounds whom they can lure into sexual activities with gifts and other essentials and then exploit them. Salter (2013:128) explains that when children for instance, come from a single parent home, this creates an emotional void in children's lives. The

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offender sees this as a vulnerability that can be manipulated. Often the offender then befriends the child's mother and becomes the male role model in the child's life and later when the relationship has been established the offender sexually abuses the child.

Children who have been starved of affection are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse from someone who befriends them or shows them special attention. Parkinson (2003:66) highlights the fact that children who are experiencing some strains in relationships with parents or who are somewhat isolated from protective parents are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse; the same applies to children who are lonely and have few friends. Children who come from dysfunctional families where they may be subjected to physical or emotional abuse or where there is substance abuse are at risk of sexual abuse. The children will have nowhere to go for support.

Children who are trusting and friendly are more likely to respond positively to the friendship and attention of an abuser, than children who are reserved and distrustful (Parkinson, 2003:66). Children who have been trained to obey adult authority without questioning are also less likely to resist abuse than the strong-willed. Children who have already been sexually abused and are perceived by an offender as "damaged goods" may also be targeted by an offender. This helps to justify the offence in the mind of the offender because the children have already been emotionally scarred by someone else.

In the school situation, the onset of organised sexual abuse is also marked by small gifts and compliments from perpetrators. The offenders form particular bonds with the children including showing special attention to them, spending a lot of time alone with their victims, and familiarising themselves with the children's interest in television shows, hobbies, music and books. Abusers can also treat children like adult friends, sharing details about their own sex life and adult relationships. Irenyi, Bromfield, Beyer and Higgins (2006:9) argue that

providing children with gifts is a way designed to gain children's friendship and making them get used to the idea of being touched in an increasingly intimate way.

Another feature of the grooming process as noted by Parkinson (2003:70) and van Dam (2001) is that children are often alienated from peers and parents. The abusers may side with the children against the adults, their rules and restrictions. Alienation from peers or parents may also occur as a result of special attention shown to the children by the abusers. Gradually as the victims respond to attention and affection, the abusers initiate a degree of sexual contact (Parkinson, 2003:67). The abusers may talk to the victims about sex or show them sexually explicit pictures. The abusers evaluate if it is safe to progress with the abuse. Touching games for example, can be used to test the child's resistance or level of interest. The offenders can, for example, tickle or touch the victims' private parts to gauge their reaction. If the victims react negatively to the touch, the offenders would apologize and tell the victims the touch was accidental. If victims do not react negatively, the offenders perceive this as permission to continue with the abuse. As time goes on, this sexual intimacy increases. Gradually the relationship is transformed, for example, from being that of teacher and learner; until the stage is reached when the teacher treats the child more as a lover than a learner.

Perpetrators rely on children's ability to keep the abuse a secret (Buckley, 2008:3). The perpetrators will make statements, threats, and promises or will lie to the children, so as to maintain silence and to prevent the victims from disclosing the abuse. They coerce the victims into believing that if a report is made, the children would get into as much trouble as the offenders.

It is evident from the foregoing discussion that perpetrators of child sexual abuse use both physical and psychological grooming tactics to sexualise the relationship with child. Physical

grooming techniques include playing body contact games, tickling, and contact that progresses from on top of clothing to contact without clothing (Borden et al., 2014:2). The same authors cite paying special attention, buying gifts, isolating children, telling sexualised jokes to test boundaries, showing pornographic images to normalise behaviour, and encouraging harmless secrets in preparation for later sexual secrets as psychological grooming techniques.

Thus, as echoed by Randhawa and Jacobs (2014:17) there are variations in how child sexual perpetrators operate. Sexual offenders engage in a fairly typical pattern for the majority of the adult offenders. Therefore an understanding of the offending cycle highlighted in Figure 2.3 can provide a context for grooming and the actions and motivations of the grooming.



**Figure 2.3: The offender cycle**

*Source: Randhawa and Jacobs (2013:17)*

Based on Randhawa's and Jacobs' model presented in Figure 2.3, Table 2.1 explains the stage and grooming behaviour characteristic of each stage.

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**Table 2.1: Offender cycle behaviour in different stages**

| Stage | Grooming behaviours |
|---|---|
| Stage I Thoughts and feelings | Abusers experience having feelings like depression, sadness, anger, anxiety, and loneliness |
| Stage 2 Pro offending thinking | Offenders convince themselves that their behaviour is not harmful and this makes them feel better. |
| Stage 3 Fantasy and rehearsal | Often used to escape from anxiety about desire to abuse. Desire to repeat the feelings reinforce the fantasy and leads offenders to act out their desires in reality. |
| Stage 4 Targeting | This is the selection process used to isolate and choose victims. Targeting includes the parents and caregivers of the children. |
| Stage 5 Grooming | It is manipulation of children, parents, and caregivers in order to gain access and isolate the child. |
| Stage 6 The Offence | The actual sexual abuse occurs and abuser relies on this act to reinforce and replay earlier fantasies used to escape negative feelings. |
| Stage 7 Guilt and Fear | These feelings emerge after the offence and abuser may convince the self that it did not happen. |
| Stage 8 Maintain secrecy | The grooming continues and victim is stressed upon to remain silent using bribes, and threats |
| Stage 9 Pretend things are normal | Portraying themselves as normal they are able to maintain the respect of community, or parents to ensure continued access to the children. Feelings of guilt, fear anger, and excitement reoccur. |

Perpetrators of sexual abuse use the power they have over the children to coerce them into sexual activities for their own sexual gratification. Sexual abuse, however, has long lasting effects on victims.

**2.7 IMPACT OF SEXUAL ABUSE ON CHILD VICTIMS**

Child sexual abuse has been analysed from every angle. From what has been written, perhaps the most striking aspect about sexual abuse is its power to disrupt lives. According to Hall and Hall (2011:2) child sexual abuse infringes on the basic rights of human beings. It has serious negative public health consequences. Children should be able to have sexual experiences at the appropriate developmental time and within their own control and of their own choice. Sexual abuse impacts on the physical, emotional, social, and cognitive aspects of victims.

**2.7.1 Physical impact**

Miller (2008:172) notes that child sexual abuse is often accompanied by wide ranging physical and mental adverse outcomes. Sexual abuse can have immediate as well as long term physical consequences on victims. A strong relationship exists between sexual abuse and the development of infectious diseases. Penetrative sexual abuse can result in HIV infection (Kibarue-Mbae, 2011:63). Children are at a higher risk of infection than adults for reasons related to their anatomy and physiology. The pre-pubertal vaginal lining of the girl-child is only a single cell thin. The risk of physical injury to the genitals and reproductive organs is higher in young girls due to small size, inelasticity and lack of lubrication of the vagina and cervix. This is exacerbated if there is exposure to frequent and unprotected or forced sexual intercourse. The fact that the vagina will be torn or damaged is high, thus facilitating the transmission of HIV or STIs.

In addition, according to Mpofu et al. (2003:115) other physical symptoms of sexual abuse may include genital warts and feelings of pain in the private parts. To boys, anal rape can lead to anal tissues being damaged, allowing the HIV virus easier entry into the body. A history of child sexual abuse has been linked to a higher risk of a range of health issues,

including irritable bowel syndrome, headaches, backaches and joint pains (Allnock and Hynes, 2011:12; Irish, Kobayashi and Delahanty, 2009:451).These authors also concur that individuals with a history of child sexual abuse are more likely to experience chest pain, shortness of breath, and irregular heart-beat.

## 2.7.2 Social impact

Child sexual abuse is a social problem with devastating effects on victims. The consequences of child sexual abuse on victims as a result of their experiences and their memories of these experiences are diverse and numerous (Spies, 2006:62). Humans are social beings and if the social aspect of holistic development is disturbed, this creates enormous difficulties for the young people to socialise. Sexual abuse occurs in the context of human relationships, with as many of cases perpetrated by individuals known to victims.

The violation and betrayal of boundaries in the context of developing intimacy can create interpersonal difficulties in many survivors. Victims of sexual abuse may experience difficulty especially in establishing intimate relationships as adults (Hall and Hall, 2011:3). Sexually abused children tend to be less socially competent, and more socially withdrawn than non-abused children. Sipe (2009) affirms that when children are sexually abused their self-esteem, self-concept and ability to establish solid relationships are destroyed. Others constantly disappoint themselves and people with whom they could have meaningful relations, by acting in socially inappropriate ways. Difficulties in relating with others mark the world the abused child inhabits with family, peers, and teachers. Victimised children feel uncomfortable in the company of others, being fearful that their 'dark secret' will be discovered. Forming relationships may expose the truth behind the abuse and the children do not want this to happen. These children tend to be less trusting of those in their immediate environment and have fewer friends (Hall and Hall, 2011:3).

### 2.7.3 Educational impact

Woolfolk (2010:77) asserts that within many classrooms, there are one or more learners who are sexually abused and the effects thereof could hamper their adequate academic progress. Global research indicates that poor academic performance is common amongst children who are sexually abused (Bromberg and Johnson, 2001:346). Children who are being sexually abused often lose interest in the drive to succeed in school activities, both in the classroom and extra-curricular activities. When learners are being sexually abused, their education is disrupted. The disruption has a profound impact on the ability of the learners to concentrate at school. The learners experience poor concentration as their minds are pre-occupied with bad memories and as such their academic performance is affected. Interferences with education limit learning potential. Poor concentration, delay in acquiring language, problems in Mathematics, problems with reading and comprehension and general deterioration of academic performance are some educational problems encountered by sexually abused learners. Children's capacity to study, to pay attention in the classroom, and to academically achieve may be severely compromised. Allnock and Hynes (2011:16) assert that children with histories of child sexual abuse show poorer cognitive performance and lower achievement. They also often engage in disruptive behaviour, and are more likely to engage in truancy or drop out of school than other children. Under such conditions, even intellectually gifted children can become school failures.

Not every child who is sexually abused will however, experience academic problems at school (Ah Hing, 2010:283). Some sexually abused learners become high academic achievers, because they channel all their energies into focussing on their schoolwork as a coping and compensating mechanism. This view is also shared by Salter (2003:180) who points out that a number of children in an attempt to remove the feelings of pain and anguish

of being sexually abused use escapism as a means of coping with daily life. Reading is a popular form of escaping from reality; hence these children become high achievers.

### 2.7.4 Emotional impact

Child sexual abuse results in a disturbance of the normal healthy emotional state that most children should experience. The most frightening of all consequences is self-destructive behaviour where the sexually abused children may no longer feel worth anything for anybody and for the self. The various forms of emotional impact include for instance Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, stress, feelings of betrayal, and powerlessness (Abdella, Sewasew, Abate and Bitew, 2014:1-2) .

PTSD is a psychological or mental disorder that can occur after a person experienced a sudden traumatic event such as sexual or physical abuse on a child who cannot defend him/herself (Abdella et al., 2014:1-2). It stands to reason that post-traumatic stress disorder is a debilitating illness characterised by symptoms of re-experiencing the trauma, avoidance, emotional numbing, and hyper-arousal resulting from an emotionally traumatic event with actual or perceived threat.

Some traumatic experiences can 'alter people's psychological, biological and social equilibrium to such a degree that the memory of one particular event comes to taint all other experiences' (Allnock and Hynes, 2011:13). Thus, PTSD is a chronic and often disabling condition. Victims have experienced, witnessed or have been confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury or threat to physical integrity of the self or others. A traumatic experience impacts on the entire person. Sexual abuse, especially rape, is one of the most traumatic experiences anybody can experience. The victims' responses to the sexual events involve intense fear, helplessness or horror.

According to Erik Erikson, one of the best known developmental theorists of personality psychology, children pass through eight stages of development, and in each stage a person confronts some challenges which can seriously disrupt their development (Sokol, 2014: 140). Erik Erikson's eight psychosocial stages are explained in Figure 2.4.
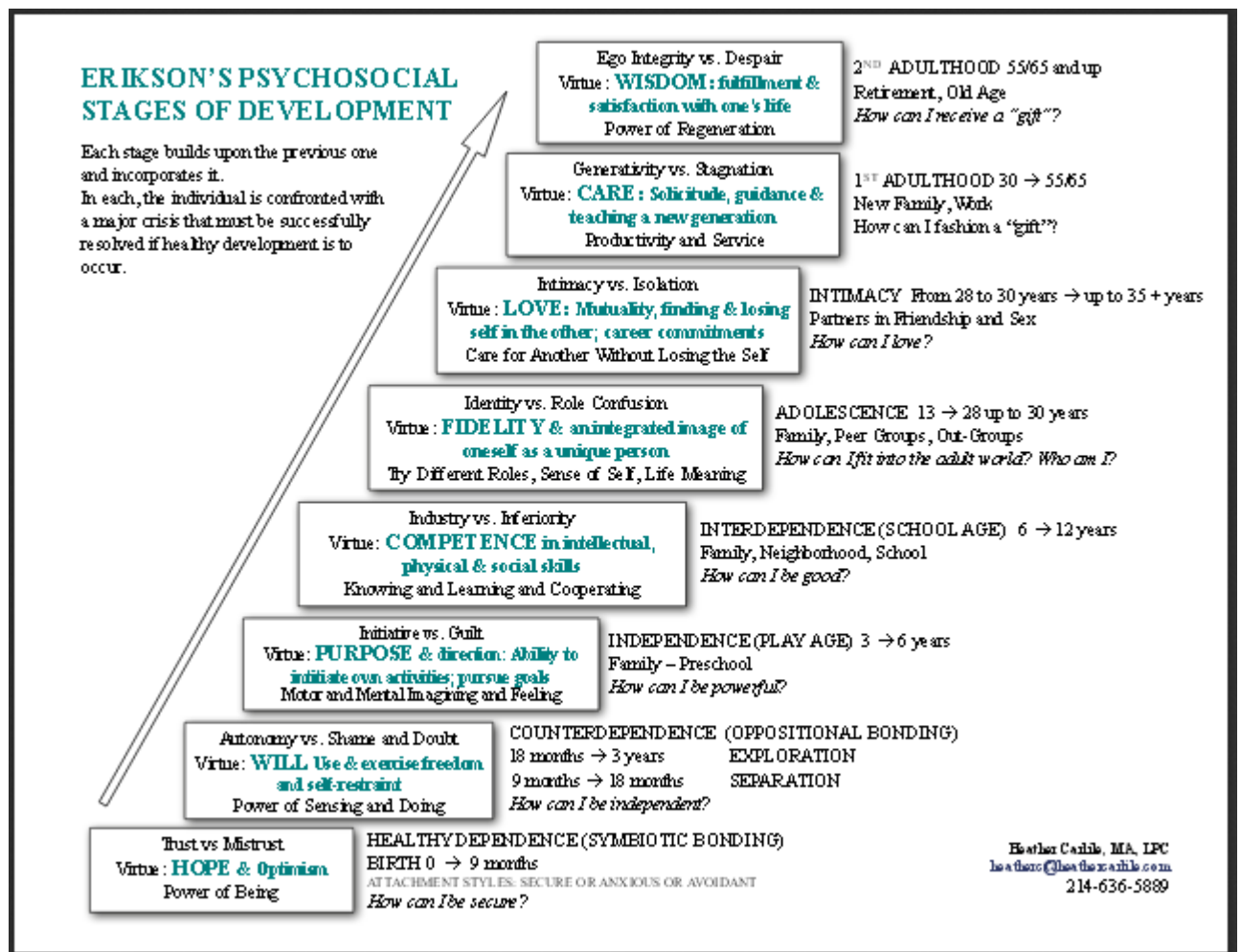


**Figure 2.4 Erik Erikson's psychosocial stages**

*Adapted from:* http://heathercarlile.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/ERIKSON.pdf

Failure to negotiate any stage successfully has the potential to derail normal development. Erikson's theory is relevant in that sexual abuse can disrupt the life of learners during infancy, early childhood, pre-adolescence, and adolescence stages. Interruption of normal

emotional development due to sexual abuse in the first five stages of the eight psychosocial stages will be discussed as these are the stages relevant to this study. The possible emotional effects of sexual abuse on children's development will be discussed**.**

### 2.7.4.1Trust versus mistrust

Children's development of trust versus mistrust may be interrupted at this stage if they experience abuse. Children require the presence of an attachment figure to achieve a feeling of basic trust. Trust can be impaired if children experience sexual abuse (Currin, 2007:45). When children realise that the adult they trusted has hurt them the incident becomes a life-altering condition long after the real threat of abuse has passed. This severe result prevails when the abuser is a parent and the loss of trust is nearly irretrievable. Trust is fundamental to life. Life becomes intolerable if one cannot trust. It can be full of fear and paranoid suspicion. Trust is a crucial issue for many abused victims (Hall and Hall, 2010:3).

In a school situation learners are betrayed by the very people who are supposed to care for them and love them, that is, teachers, headmasters, boarding mistresses or masters, and senior learners. Abused children find it difficult to revive trust again. Many sexually abused children cannot ever recover confidence and trust in a world that betrayed their existence. Learning to trust can be next to impossible when the abusers are people trusted by the sexualised children.

### 2.7.4.2 Autonomy versus shame and doubt

Currin (2007:45) asserts that when children are sexually abused, they feel the loss of self-control leading to lasting feelings of shame and doubt. In addition, a sense of responsibility for having allowed the abuse to take place enhances these feelings.

### 2.7.4.3 Initiative versus guilt

Sexual abuse at this stage of development is likely to lead to a sense of overwhelming guilt as children feel responsible for some if not all the sexual abuse that has occurred (Currin, 2006:46). The professional response to children's sexual abuse, particularly the investigatory stage, physical examinations, interviews or questions about the abuse which took place, may exacerbate children's feelings of guilt.

Hall and Hall (2011:3) affirm that depression is common amongst survivors of sexual abuse. Depression is a widely felt emotion that can become debilitating. The depression is accompanied by very low levels of self-esteem, poor body image and feelings of guilt. The core symptoms of depression include persistent sadness or low mood and marked loss of interest or pleasure in activities normally enjoyed .According to Sipe (2009) when the sexual abuse is done by an esteemed trusted adult, it may be hard for the children to view the perpetrator in a negative light, thus rendering them incapable of seeing what happened as not their fault. They blame themselves and internalise negative messages about themselves. It can therefore be noted that depression affects the mental as well as the physical health of the sexually abused people.

### 2.7.4.4 Industry versus inferiority

At this stage development may also be distorted by the experience of child sexual abuse and it may lead to a prevalence of feelings of inadequacy and inferiority. Sexually abused children are likely to feel isolated resulting in separation from other children (Currin, 2006:46). Abusers may strive to keep the child away because of fear that the child might disclose the abuse to friends. The author adds that if children's normal development is interrupted at this stage they can become under-achievers at school as they are unable to

establish the emotional space required for intellectual growth. In contrast, some children may become over-achievers as they attempt to regain some control over their lives.

### 2.7.4.5 Identity versus role confusion

This period is characterised by increased self-reflection and awareness of others' opinions. Erikson (1968) postulates that at this stage young people are struggling with issues of identity (Sokol, 2014:142). Sexual abuse intrudes into the adolescents' self-definition. After experiencing the sexual assault, people often feel a change and loss of identity as if they are no longer the person they were.

As can be noted from the above literature, sexual abuse impacts negatively on the overall development of the child victims. Having experienced some of these consequences a few children report and most of the children fail to report. Reasons for taking such decisions are the focus of the next section.

### 2.8 DISCLOSURE OR NON- DISCLOSURE

Child sexual abuse often comes to the attention of adults only when children disclose, although only a small percentage of sexually abused children disclose. There are many reasons why sexually abused children choose to disclose the abuse or not.

### 2.8.1 Non - disclosure

There exist many barriers to disclosure by sexually abused children. Despite the disturbingly high worldwide prevalence of sexual abuse, sexually abused children seldom report it, if at all. Children often do not tell anyone about the abuse they are experiencing. This is a major cause of concern, because it means that they continue to suffer in silence which can have both short and long term impact on their wellbeing. Furthermore, as echoed by Allnock (2010:5)

until perpetrators are caught other children remain at risk. Allnock (2010) argues that while children who have experienced sexual abuse may tell others gradually, many children remain silent about it, denying that it actually happened. Investigations about the abuse have frequently been impeded when children fail to disclose abuse, deny that it occurred, and recant a prior disclosure. Failure to make a clear disclosure at the time of investigation results in termination of investigation as suspicions of the abuse is unfounded. The children will then remain at risk of continued sexual abuse. There are many reasons why children delay or never disclose sexual abuse.

There are *individual factors* that influence decisions not to tell. Children report negative feelings, because there is no one to talk to, no one who will listen and no one who can be trusted. They believe that they will not be taken seriously and that nothing will change if they tell someone, they fear getting themselves and others in trouble, and they feel embarrassed (Allnock, 2010:8). They fear that they will not be believed or worse, blamed for their own abuse. Questions such as: 'Why didn't you tell?'; 'What did you do to provoke the abuse?'', and 'How could it go on for so long?' are automatic responses for many people when children disclose sexual abuse (http://www.aifs.gov.au). Thus, some children may not disclose out of fear that they will not be believed, an idea often suggested and reinforced by the offender. Sometimes, although the children are uncomfortable with the abuse, the abuser may have convinced the children that the abuse, although secretive is normal.

*Contextual factors* also play a role in a child not disclosing the abuse. Intra-familial abuse (in particular the degree of closeness of the child to the perpetrator) has been found to be the reason for a large number of students to delay disclosure of the abuse (Allnock, 2010:8; Tang, Freud and Wang, 2007:7). Some children feel embarrassed, reluctant to burden others, or are fearful of getting themselves or someone else in trouble. An explanation may be that children who experience abuse by a parent, teacher or any trusted person have greater fears

about betraying the abuser, or fear punishment and/or other negative consequence as a result of their disclosure.

Bezuidenhout (2002:57) argues that despite feelings of distrust, sexually abused children generally keep the perpetrator's actions a secret as instructed by the perpetrator, because the perpetrator makes threats to ensure that the abuse is kept a secret. The threats create fear in the children. Lyon (2002:117) asserts that fear on the part of the victims is probably the most important reason for non-disclosure of sexual abuse. The fear according to Lydon (2002) is threefold: fear of harm to self, harm to loved ones, for example, the humiliation a parent might face and harm to the perpetrator, for example, that the perpetrator will be put in jail.

Child sexual abuse is largely a silent and witness-free crime, often leaving no physical signs, and actively hidden by the perpetrator (Allnock, 2010:9). These features make its detection very difficult. Fuelled by societal myths and stereotypes such as, "Only strangers abuse children", "Parents do not abuse their own children", "Boys do not get abused", "Women never abuse" and "Children do not abuse other children", sexual abuse continues to remain an unfortunate reality affecting perhaps the lives of billions of children (http://www.cehd.umn.edu).

Children with disabilities are likely to encounter more problems disclosing their abuse. Impediments like social isolation related to disability, impaired ability to communicate, and increased dependency and vulnerability make disabled children unable to disclose abuse (Paine and Hansen, 2002:272). In addition to the difficulties they may experience in trying to communicate their abuse to others, Paine and Hansen (2002) assert that the disclosures of disabled children, especially with cognitive impairments are less likely to be viewed as credible.

Allnock (2010:9) points out that gender differences have also been identified as impacting on the disclosure of sexual violence. There are similarities between boys and girls in how they feel about the abuse, for example, feelings of fear, shame, and guilt. For boys and men, however, disclosure raises conflicts about their own sexuality as well as being masculine in a society that assigns a particular value to masculinity; these feelings will impact on the motivation to disclose the abuse. Male victims are ignored at best and re-victimised, ridiculed and denied services at worst. The male victims are far less likely to report and are often faced with challenges such as society's stigma for not protecting themselves. Boys who are sexually abused sometimes do not perceive it as abuse, since the stereotypical notions of masculinity teach them to enjoy sexual activity and therefore even acts of violent sexual adventures (http://www.cehd.umn.edu/). Boys who are sexually abused by other men will fear that others will say they are homosexual. They may also worry about being blamed when women are abusers because they have an intuitive understanding that women have less authority than men. Children on the one hand, are less bound to do what women want them to do than what men want them to do. Girls on the other hand, have to deal with notions of feminine purity (Allnock, 2010:9). They think that their purity (that they are no longer virgins) has been compromised because of the abuse and therefore girls do not disclose. In some African cultures, sexually abused girls are expelled from their families or may be forced to marry the man who abused them. In the western cultures, if it is found that girls have been sexually abused, they will be labelled as 'whores'. Fears of such responses silence many girl victims of child sexual abuse.

The nature and dynamics of child sexual abuse make it exceedingly difficult for children to disclose their victimisation. Most children either maintain the secret or delay reporting for a long time. There are many imposing obstacles to disclosure faced by sexually abused children

as seen from the above discussion. Despite these challenges in disclosing, there are some children who disclose the abuse.

## 2.8.2 Child sexual abuse disclosure

Disclosure of sexual abuse is a necessary precursor to intervention and treatment. The most reliable indicator of child sexual abuse is a child's self-disclosure. A disclosure according to Caring for Kids (2009) is when a child tells another person that he/she has been sexually abused. Child sexual abuse disclosure by victims can be critical in order to stop the abuse and provide legal intervention. There is also an assumption by some researchers that disclosure will bring emotional relief to the victim and result in improved psychosocial functioning later in life (Tang et al., 2007:3).

Disclosure can be a scary and difficult process for children. However, it is important that children can safely tell someone about their abuse to make it stop and for them to receive help and support. Hunter (2011:2) asserts that disclosure by sexually abused children is not a straight forward concept as children can disclose the abuse in so many ways. Abused children may disclose while the abuse is happening. Other children may disclose either immediately after the abuse ended or years later. Many children do not disclose at all. In reality the disclosure may happen in different situations and different ways. Allnock (2010:8) asserts that close friends are the most common confidants, followed by mothers, other relatives and non-family members of the community such as police, and priests or pastors. Few disclosures made in childhood are to professionals or authorities. Of all professionals, teachers are the most likely recipients of disclosure.

Child sexual disclosures can be accidental, purposeful or prompted. *Accidental disclosures* are one of the ways of disclosing sexual abuse (Hunter, 2011:2). This refers to situations when the abuse is found out by someone else through observation or through medical

examination (Allnock, 2010:5). Children can also make comments which lead adults to suspect that the children have been sexually abused. A disclosure can happen when a child makes a comment like, 'He touched my vagina with his penis' which leads an adult to suspect that the child has been sexually abused.

### 2.8.2.1 Purposeful disclosure

Purposeful disclosure is another means of disclosing abuse which occurs when children intentionally tell someone about the abuse, whether directly or indirectly (Ungar, Barter, Mcconnel, Tutty and Fairholm, 2009: 345). Children sometimes attempt to alert adults by their behaviour or by making ambiguous verbal statements. Children may for example, suddenly refuse to attend the house of a previously loved relative. Some older children may indirectly attempt to disclose their abuse through risk taking behaviours such as suicidal behaviour, eating disorders, and self-harm.

According to Hunter (2011:3) some disclosures occur because the learner has seen something or participated in a prevention programme. In the school situation, learners who learn about sexual prevention may value reporting as this will lead to the perpetrator receiving a sentence for the offence. This will in turn stop other would-be perpetrators from committing such offences. A child may also decide to tell about the abuse because other children have started telling about their abuse. Some children, who do disclose, do so for specific motivating reasons, such as to protect a younger sibling.

### 2.8.2.2 Prompted/elicited disclosure

Prompted/elicited disclosure is used to describe situations when authorities, professionals, parents and other adults encourage a reluctant child to tell about the abuse (Ungar et al., 2009:346). When children are interviewed in a friendly context and are clearly and firmly encouraged to describe their experiences this influences their willingness to disclose

(Hershkowitz, Lanes, Lamb, 2007:114). Other children may initially deny that they have been sexually abused, only to disclose later. Children may disclose only to retract what they have said later. The children might say they lied, made a mistake or that the abuse happened to other children.

The type of disclosure may be impacted by developmental features of the children such as their age at onset of the abuse or age at the time of the disclosure (Hershkowitz et al., 2007:120). Disclosure can be particularly difficult for younger children who have limited language and developmental abilities. It is widely believed that perceived support is an important factor mitigating children's willingness to disclose sexual abuse. Thus, based on the above, responding sensitively and supportively is crucial in helping children talk about what is happening to them.

Allnock (2010:12) posits that children heal more quickly from the abuse if parents, teachers, and caregivers are supportive. Adults should maintain a calm appearance. Inevitably, a disclosure will evoke strong feelings for the adult hearing it. The adult may become angry or get out of control and this will make disclosure difficult. The news may be overwhelming. It is helpful for adults to be calm and patient. When children disclose their abuse, an adult's natural reaction is to get angry at the offender. However, children may believe that anger is directed to them.

Allnock (2010:5) assert that when children disclose the abuse the adult needs to believe the children. The adult needs to let the children know that they are not to blame for what happened. The children have to be supported and listened to without interruption, blame or judgement. When reporting the incident/s children should use their own words as children have their own ways of describing their experiences. Children can be protected by getting them away from the abuser and immediately reporting the abuse to the local authorities. The

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adults should not confront the perpetrator. Confronting an alleged perpetrator should only be done by professional child protection workers or the police. (Allnock, 2010:5; Mitchell, 2010:104). Therefore it can be noted that when sexually abused learners do not disclose abuse there is a possibility of continued sexual abuse. On the other hand, disclosure leads to intervention thereby stopping the abuse.

## 2.9 SUMMARY

A variety of definitions of child sexual abuse were given in a bid to clearly understand the concept. Child sexual abuse has been viewed as involving an act or attempted act of a sexual activity committed by an older person against children. The sexual activities range from exhibition to penetration. Sexually abused children may manifest a range of signs and symptoms which reflect the specifics of their abuse and how they are coping with the abuse.

There are multiple factors which lead to children being sexually abused at national, community, school, family and individual level. Television, Facebook and other social media, Internet and videos are some powerful contributors to child sexual abuse (Dehlmer, 2009:4). Dawes and Higson-Smith (2004:66) assert that patriarchal ideology and the process of socialisation have the effect of constructing a notion of childhood that renders, especially the girl child, vulnerable to sexual abuse since young children are socialised into a set of unequal gender and power relations. Unquestioning obedience to authority figures perpetuates the abuse because it discourages the victim from escaping the abuser. The belief that having sex with children provides a cure for HIV and AIDS is another factor leading to sexual abuse of children.

Perpetrators of child sexual abuse come from all walks of life, with the majority of them being males and being well known by the children they abuse. The abuser uses both physical

and psychological grooming techniques to sexualise the relationship with the victim (Borden et al., 2014:2).

Miller (2008:172) notes that child sexual abuse is often accompanied by wide ranging physical, behavioural and psychological adverse outcomes. Difficulties in relating with others mark the world the abused child inhabits with family, peers, and teachers. The victims' self-esteem is undermined. Sexual abuse has health consequences like unwanted pregnancies, and HIV and AIDS infection, as well as other STIs. When learners are being sexually abused, their education is disrupted. The learners experience poor concentration as their minds are pre-occupied with bad memories and as such their academic performance is affected. They have poor performance and lower achievement (Allnock and Hynes, 2011:16)

The literature reviewed reveals that children do not disclose their abuse, mainly because of fear of getting themselves and others in trouble, fear of being blamed for the abuse, and that no one can be trusted. Some children, however, do disclose the abuse. They may disclose indirectly, accidentally or they may be prompted to disclose (Hunter, 2011:2).

The next chapter outlines the actions adults and children can take to prevent child sexual abuse.

# CHAPTER 3


# PREVENTION OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE


*There is no silver bullet to solving this problem. This is going to require a sustained effort over a long period of time and we will not stop until we've seen this scourge eliminated.*

**Barack Obama, President of the United States, May 16, 2014.**


*Source: (Report to the President of the United States on SAPR, 2014:11)*


## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Child sexual abuse is a problem with far reaching implications for child victims, their families, communities and societies. Child sexual abuse is a serious worldwide social, public health and human rights concern, because it causes enormous damage to the child's overall development (Hunt and Walsh, 2011:63; Kisanga, 2012; Gwirayi, 2010:253). Child sexual abuse is a significant challenge facing many nations. For the first time in history, sexual abuse of children has become a part of the national conversation and collective awareness and desire for action have emerged. President Barak Obama of the United States of America for example, stressed that there is a need for nations to take deliberate and meaningful actions to stop the scourge as reflected in the quote above. All children deserve childhoods free from all kinds of abuse. Without concern for the safety of children the future of society is at risk. Article 3 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNUDHR, 1989) stipulates that:

"*Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person*" (www.eycb.coe.int/compasito/chapter_6/pdf/1.pdf). Article 19 (1) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by world leaders (CRC, 1989) states that:

" *State parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse...neglect, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s) or any other person who has care of the child* " (http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx*).*

The effects of child sexual abuse are very costly both economically and psychologically. (Bowlus, Mckenna, Day and Wright, 2003:1). In order to prevent sexual abuse of children, proactive measures are required for safeguarding children's rights. People such as social workers, educators, police and other adults should have information on the most vulnerable children in society in order to help keep children safe. Being able to identify children who need help could assist in preventing child sexual abuse. Vulnerable children are unable to protect themselves. They are dependent on others for sustenance and protection. They need to be protected. The sexual abuse risks faced by vulnerable children need to be reduced. In order for stakeholders in institutions to fight against sexual abuse they need to be aware of the various ways that have been used in the past to prevent child sexual abuse. Being aware of prevention measures used in the past to curb child sexual abuse helps improve on current ways of prevention.

## 3.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PREVENTION INTERVENTIONS

No ancient civilisation considered child protection to be a function of the government. In ancient Rome, for instance, fathers were vested with an almost unlimited natural right to determine the welfare of their children (http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1828/Child-Protective-Services.html). The welfare of minors was a family matter not a governmental interest or obligation.

Tabachnick and Klein (2011: 8-11) provide the following historical background of previous efforts in the prevention of child sexual abuse. Before the 1970s child sexual abuse was largely ignored. Few resources were allocated to preventing abuse. Isolated cases may have been mentioned in the news; however, widespread societal attention was not focused on the problem. At the beginning of the 1970s and 1980s, adult survivors of child sexual abuse began telling their stories. Through the emergence of these personal accounts, it became clearer and later confirmed by research, that child sexual abuse was being perpetuated within every community, and race (Tabachnick and Klein, 2011:8-11). People began to look for ways to protect children from child sexual abuse.

Clinical approaches working with victims for instance in the United States of America, began to change in the mid-1890s, but not in a helpful manner. Children were labelled as instigators of sexual abuse. Freud's work revealed patient confessions of childhood sexual experiences with trusted adults, relatives and even fathers (Burhardt and Rotatori, 2013:18). Freud proposed his seduction theory which maintained that these incidents of childhood sexual experiences at the hands of significant adults were instrumental in the development of subsequent psychoneuroses. Freud later reversed his position and maintained that the reported sexual incidents were products of female fantasies fuelled by *id* impulses residing within the child.

Fortunately, Freudian theories of children as the seducers of adults were challenged by professionals such as Judith Herman. According to Bolen (2003:174) awareness of child sexual abuse was largely the result of writings by Judith Herman (1981) who believed that child sexual abuse was symptomatic of a patriarchal society in which men had power over women and girls. One effect of this literature was to bring the problem of child sexual abuse to public awareness. Herman wrote the first popular or popularised book about the problem of father-daughter incest. Incest according to Herman (2003: viii) is the most extreme form of

child sexual abuse. Female children are regularly subjected to sexual abuse by adult males who are part of their intimate social world such as family, friends, uncles, cousins, stepfathers, and fathers. The book was written to help incest victims alleviate feelings of isolation and shame. It was also written for professionals in the area of mental health, child protective services, and law enforcement who regularly encounter cases of father–daughter incest. Herman (2003: viii) point out that any serious investigation of the emotional and sexual lives of victims of incest, leads eventually to the discovery of the incest secret. This means that if thorough investigations are made when a child has been sexually abused then the perpetrator can be found and brought to book.

Thompson and Wilkinson (2010:13) state that prior to 1974 there were no child abuse reporting laws in many countries. In Australia legislation was first enacted in 1972 and in Canada, provinces introduced reporting legislation from the 1960s (http://eprints.qut.edu.au). In 1961, during the American Academy of Paediatrics Conference on child abuse, the first model law was drafted. The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act or CAPTA (Public Law 93-247) was passed on January 31, 1974. Its passage established a National Centre on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN). The National Centre on Child Abuse and Neglect provided money to different countries for identification, investigation, prosecution and treatment of child abuse and neglect, and established a minimal definition of child abuse and neglect. Acts or failures to act that placed children at immediate risk of serious harm such as emotional harm, as well as all kinds of sexual abuse were classified as abuse and neglect. Tabachnick and Klein (2011:8-11) point out that in the 1990s-2000s legislators in the United States of America initiated new laws such as the 1994 Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) to teach children how to protect themselves from sexual abuse. The awareness that had resulted from the survivor stories of the 1970s-1980s grew into daily media coverage of child sexual abuse. Television dramas and best-selling books utilised sexual abuse story

lines. Sensational news coverage of rare, horrific child abductions and sexual abuse shocked the public. Bolen (2003:174) also notes that in the 1980s high profile cases, especially in day centres, started to be sensationalised in the media and professional literature on the problem of child sexual abuse also began to expand, contributing further support for a sense of urgency.

Research also indicates that both adolescents and children are open to behaviour change (Tabachnick and Klein, 2011:11). This means that the earlier the intervention, the greater the chance that a child or teenager will live a healthy or productive life. More recently, there is widespread access to the information necessary for a more realistic and holistic understanding of the problem of child sexual abuse. Many studies are being carried out to clearly understand how this problem can be dealt with.

## 3.3 PREVENTION OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Child sexual abuse is an internationally recognised problem (Thompson and Wilkinson, 2010:46). The authorities from local and national to regional and global levels are responsible for protecting children against all forms of child abuse (Antonowicz, 2010:40; Save Children, 2005:85). Following research evidence regarding the devastating consequences of child sexual abuse, many countries have been and continue to grapple with various prevention programmes. Hunt and Walsh (201:64) assert that strengthening and sustaining human capacity to prevent child sexual abuse can be conceptualised as a process of reducing risk factors and building protective factors in potential perpetrators and victims, their families and communities by making them aware of the effects of the abuse on the affected.

Combating sexual violence requires a comprehensive, systematic and analytical approach that takes cognisance of the contextual situations that cause child sexual abuse (Ruto, 2009:189-

190). Any plans, strategies or interventions divorced from the socio-cultural milieu will not have sustained impact. The comprehensive approach would be multi-focused, reaching victims, the perpetrators as well as interrogating specific practices evident in many institutions that are not protective of children. Interest in the prevention of child sexual abuse has culminated in a diversity of initiatives implemented internationally, regionally, and nationally (Finkelhor, 2009:172).

The model by Antonowicz illustrated in Figure 2.1 Section 2.3 characterises a human system almost similar to Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory with the levels, microsystem (child), mesosystem (school, local community), exosystem (wider community), and macrosystem (whole social system). The figure illustrates that every part of the system contributes to sexual abuse. Based on the same model, prevention of sexual abuse as echoed by Antonowicz (2010:40) can take place at international, national, societal, family, school and individual level. Child sexual abuse is the result of a combination of individual, relationship, community, and societal factors all of which need to be addressed to effectively prevent the vice. A comprehensive prevention approach would target all people, children, the youth, parents, professionals and the public in an array of settings including schools, early childhood centres, homes and communities, as well as on the national and international arena.

**3.3.1 International level**

On this level, it is mostly legal input that can help to prevent abuse. Laws are the brick and mortar of all efforts aimed at the realisation of children's rights. According to Finkelhor (2009:173) laws are believed to have primary prevention effects, because the fear of swift, certain, and serious punishment by the justice system may deter the abuse before it happens. Hundreds of children over the world live on streets, and are abused on a daily basis and often do not have the most fundamental rights. Strong laws, together with effective reinforcement

procedures which are child sensitive, are of crucial importance in protecting children from all forms of child sexual abuse (Beaulieu, 2008:9).

To protect the rights of children, The United Nations in 1989 adopted a historic agreement: The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which is the first legally binding international instrument to incorporate the full range of human rights for children (Blanchfield, 2013. Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international human rights treaty created with the goal of realising all rights of children everywhere in the world. It is recognised by world leaders that children have human rights and people under 18 years of age often need special care and protection (http://www.netoosh.org.au). A child is defined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child as every human being below the age of 18 years, unless the laws of a particular country set a legal age for adulthood younger.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified and accepted by virtually all countries except Somalia and the United States of America (http://www.education.gov.uk). The adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 was intended to bind people in every country, every culture and every religion to work in order to ensure that all the world's children enjoy the rights they deserve: rights to survival; health education; to a caring family environment; to play and culture; to protection from abuse of all kinds including sexual abuse and to have their voices heard and opinions taken into account on issues affecting their lives (http://www.un.org).

Kibaru-Mbae (2011:77-78) points out that the rights of children are protected by international treaties. The Convention on the Rights of the Child was the first binding international instrument to set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of children in the entire world. Articles 34 and 35 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child directly obligate countries to protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation, child prostitution, child

pornography and trafficking. These articles constitute the cornerstone of international legal protection of children against sexual abuse.

Article 34 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989) states that

'*State parties must undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse and take all the necessary national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent:*

*i) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity;*

*ii) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; and*

*Iii) The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.'*

According to Clarhall (2011:3) an internationally elected body of independent experts sits in Geneva to monitor the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by State Parties to the Convention. Each state party is required to submit reports to the UN committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) on how it is fulfilling its obligations. Where necessary, the committee calls for international assistance from other governments and technical assistance from organisations like the United Nations Children's Educational Fund (UNICEF).

In addition to the international treaties and mechanisms, there are also mechanisms promoting and protecting human rights (including children's rights) at regional level in the different continents.

### 3.3.2 Regional level

The United Nations has divided the world countries into regions. As an example, Southern Africa is a region in Africa comprising of the countries highlighted on the map in Figure 3.1.

 **Figure 3.1 : Southern Africa Region**

*Source: http://maps-africa.blogspot.com*

The countries on the map comprise regional communities in Southern Africa, committed to regional integration to protect human rights including children's rights. Regional human rights are relatively independently coherent human rights that are nested within the larger framework of international human rights practice (Australian Development Agency, 2010:10). The United Nations has encouraged the development of regional human rights treaties. Three Regional human rights instruments can be identified as the European Convention on Human Rights, the American Convention on Human Rights and the African Charter on Human Rights (Australian Development Agency, 2010:10; Beaulieu, 2008:25).

The regional human right mechanisms offer many advantages. According to Peterson (2011:184) countries within the same region often share similar cultural traditions and political histories as such governments may find it easier to reach consensus on the content of rights and to endow a regional court with meaningful enforcement powers. These human rights bodies provide avenues for recourse against countries that fail to meet their obligations

under human rights treaties. Within the broad framework of regional human rights, regional conventions addressing child sexual abuse has also been developed (Australian Development Agency, 2010: 10).

The Council of Europe (CoE) which was founded in 1949 is the most highly evolved and effective human rights system which initially consisted of Western European countries. Its membership has expanded since then to include countries that were formally part of the Soviet Union like; Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Moldova, Kyrgzstan, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan (Petersen, 2011:184; Australian Development Agency, 2010: 11). The Council of Europe, for example, developed the Convention of the Protection of Children against sexual abuse in a bid to prevent and combat sexual abuse and promote collaboration in prevention.

The Organisation of American States comprises all states of the American hemisphere with the exception of Cuba. The most important treaty for the Americans is the American Convention on Human Rights (ACHR) of 1969, which, like its European precedent, has its own Inter-American Court of Human Rights in San Jose (Australian Development Agency, 2010:12).

According to the Australian Development Agency (2010:12) the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was founded in 1963 and was transformed into the African Union (AU) in 2002, modelled on the European Union. All African States belong to it, except Morocco. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACC) is the first African regional treaty on children's rights. It is modelled on the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child calls for protection against abuse and maltreatment, negative social and cultural practices and all forms of sexual abuse including involvement of children in prostitution and pornography.

Article 16 of the African Charter (AU) contains declarations of protection of children against abuse, similar to article 19 of the Convention on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (CRC). Other relevant international treaties which also provide for the protection of children from various forms of sexual abuse at regional level include the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action and The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (WHO, 2012:80).

According to Mugambi and Morara (2012:v) countries in Africa are faced with many challenges that predispose children to child sexual abuse and in view of this, the African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) organised and held the First International Conference on child sexual abuse in Africa in September 2007 in Nairobi, Kenya. Four years after the Nairobi Conference, some efforts had been made in research on child sexual abuse and in strengthening child protection systems. However, child sexual abuse was and is still rampant and this led the ANPPCAN to organise and hold the Second International Conference on child sexual abuse in Accra, Ghana on 12-14 March, 2012. The main objectives of the conference were to assess the progress made so far in various African countries on the issue of child sexual abuse, identify pertinent issues that hinder or enhance responses to child sexual abuse in Africa and  provide a forum for learning responses on child sexual abuse globally (Mugambi and Morara, 2012:v). Some of the main highlights of the conference were that sustained efforts have been made and are being made on research, education, and advocacy work on child sexual abuse in a number of African countries; that child sexual abuse in Africa was still shrouded in a conspiracy of silence, and it was observed that financial and human resources allocated to fighting child sexual abuse by African governments were inadequate.

Regional child protection instruments as noted from the above discussion have an important role to play in preventing child sexual abuse. As alluded to by Mugambi and Morara (2012: iv) protection instruments are also found at national level.

### 3.3.3 National level

Prevention of child sexual abuse can effectively take place at a national level in various countries (http://www.mrc.ac.za). Using the map in Figure 3.1, national level is when each of the countries above (e.g. Zimbabwe) takes steps to combat sexual abuse. National laws protect and promote human rights (including children's rights) at a national level. National laws that protect children against all forms of sexual abuse are compatible with international laws as enshrined in the United Nations Conventions on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (UNCRC).

Different countries have set laws in their countries in a bid to protect children from sexual abuse. In Russia for instance, the protection of children against sexual abuse is regulated by several laws. The Constitution of the Russian Federation is the primary document in this field which states that human rights and freedoms are recognised and guaranteed in Russia in accordance with the international law (Huntley, 2013:3). Russia is a party to the UNCRC which protects children from all forms of sexual abuse. The above author goes on to assert that punishment and prosecution of the perpetrators of sexual offences are regulated by the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation. The Criminal Code criminalises sexual offenses against children and establishes penalties for the crimes.

Russian legislation regulates the distribution of information harmful to children' health and development through Federal Law No.436-FZ on protection of children from Information harmful to their Health and Development adopted on 29 December 2010 and entered into force on 1 September 2012 (Huntley, 2013:3). Among the prohibited information is

pornographic information and information inciting children to engage in prostitution. Huntley (2013:5) propounds that with regards to children' access to Internet, the Russian Federal Law requires Internet telecom operators to filter websites that are dangerous for children.

This study also looks briefly at examples of national laws in Tanzania, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Due to an increase in sexual offences, the Tanzanian parliament enacted the Sexual Offence Special Provision Act (SOSPA) in 1999 (Kisanga, 2012:7). The Act clearly states that severe punishment is proposed for anyone charged and incriminated for a sexual offence against a child. To be more explicit in protecting children, the government of Tanzania enacted the Law of Child Act 2009 which further reiterates that any person under the age of 18 years is considered a child.

South Africa has recently undergone a legislative reform process aimed at providing children with increased protection. The Sexual Offence Act number 32 of 2007, The Children's Act Number 38 of 2005 and the Children's Amendment Act Number 41 of 2007 have all been introduced to strengthen the South African child protection system (http://www.mrc.ac.za). The Children's Amendment Act Number 41 of 2007 provides a framework for psychological, rehabilitative and therapeutic services for abused children to help them process what has happened and to help them heal from the abuse.

In Zimbabwe, the Victim Friendly Courts system was established by the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs in 1994. The objective of the programme is to provide a holistic response to the crisis of child sexual abuse. The programme effectively uses a multi-disciplinary and multi-sectorial approach to improve the quality of services available to abused children, to provide a more effective legal response, to create a safer environment for potential victims of abuse and to improve responses of the community and families (Barkers, 2003:2). Child sexual abuse is a criminal offence punishable by law in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe

has promulgated laws such as the Criminal Law Act (Chapter 9.23) and the Domestic Violence Act (Chapter 5.16) in an effort to protect children against sexual abuse (Mutandwa, 2012:18 Gwirayi, 2010: 260). The Domestic Violence Act recognises that child sexual abuse occurs in the family setup, and that there are certain cultural practices such as child marriages, which are mostly localised in the family. These are criminalised and punishable by a fine or imprisonment. Mutandwa (2012:18) argues that the criminal justice system therefore requires that any person accused of child sexual abuse be brought to court for prosecution aimed at punishment upon conviction.

At national level there are offender management laws aimed at preventing child sexual abuse. There are few crimes more damaging than sexual offences against children. The offences cause great anxiety and trauma to the vulnerable children. Sex offending is a serious crime, but it is greatly under reported (Holmes, 2007:5).

Offenders range from adolescents to the elderly. Most abusers are probably never caught (Finkelhor, 2009:172) because of inadequate and weak enforcement mechanisms. These inadequate and weak enforcement mechanisms communicate to sex offenders that they can continue to abuse with impunity, and to families and children they communicate that they will not be protected. Gwirayi (2010:260) notes that court procedures in handling child sexual abuse cases are cumbersome. The processing of cases takes so long that information may end up being forgotten or facts might get mixed up by the victims. This could end up in some of the cases being thrown out of court. The way cases are handled can discourage people from reporting. Finkelhor (2009:169) points out offender management as an initiative to prevent child sexual abuse at national level. Offender management according to Finkelhor (2009:169) includes registering sex offenders, conducting background employment checks, controlling where offenders can live and imposing longer prison sentences.

The sex offender's registry was first established under the Sex Offenders Act 1997 in the United Kingdom and it is an invaluable way for the police to keep track of the whereabouts of known offenders (Holmes, 2007:7). Finkelhor (2009:175) asserts that in all countries there are sex offender registries with the goal to allow more rapid apprehension of re-offenders and another being to prevent crime by deterring existing and future offenders. In the United States, sex offender registration seems to be popular with the general public. As an example, in one study, 95% of the respondents agreed that the name and photograph of the registered sex offender should be available to the public. The Sex Offenders' register requires offenders to provide their local police station with a record of their name, address, date of birth, and national identity number. This helps police monitor sex offenders living in the community. It allows police to keep track of the whereabouts of individual offenders. The register is thought to deter sex offenders from re-offending, as the police will immediately know which offenders are living in the area if an offence has been committed. Offenders are managed under multi-agency arrangements involving the police, probation and prison services.

According to Gwirayi (2010:261) lengthening jail sentences reduces the number of offenders at large. The period of incarceration for sex offenders has increased substantially over the past years in most states (Finkelhor, 2009:175). Sentences can be served both in prison and in the community. When offenders serve part of a sentence in the community, they are supervised by the probation service and must comply with the conditions designed to support rehabilitation and reduce the risk of re-offending. Conditions might include requirements to attend treatment courses, to reside at a hostel, not to have contact with children. If an offender breaches any of the conditions they may be called to prison for the remainder of their sentence (Gwirayi, 2010:261).

Treatment of sex offenders is crucial to prevent sexual abuse. Psychological treatment is one of the means to manage the risk posed by sex offenders and reduce re-offending (Losel and

Schumucker, 2005:13). This treatment has been shown to be very effective in addressing offending behaviour. Treatment of sex offenders involves helping them confront their criminal behaviour and taking responsibility for their actions (e.g. learn to avoid sexual aggression, develop victim empathy, learning social skills to live responsibly with others). It also helps them learn to recognise and avoid risk situations where they are more likely to offend.

The treatment usually begins with comprehensive assessments that include psychological tests, clinical interviews and other techniques to define treatment goals and strategies for each offender (http://www.doc.wa.gov). According to Losel and Schumucker (2005:13) existing treatments are mostly for convicted offenders. Some people realise that they are developing worrying sexual thoughts and behaviour towards children and want help before they go on to offend. Governments in various countries have funded child helplines, for example 'Stop it now' where callers concerned about their own behaviour seek help to deal with their own deviant sexual thoughts about children. Early access to therapeutic techniques like cognitive-behaviour therapy help non-convicted individuals concerned about their sexual thoughts or behaviour to prevent new or continued sexual abuse from occurring (Lipsey, Landenberger and Wilson, 2007: 4). A set of structured techniques such as anger management and components related to social skills and moral development are part of the therapy. Losel and Schumucker (2005:13) are of the view that drug treatment can be applied in conjunction with psychological treatment. This would involve using either hormonal medication to reduce an offender's sexual urges and to break the cycle of offending behaviour.

Public offender registries in some countries made it possible to identify potential offenders who may be applying to work or volunteer in various organisations (Mitchel, 2010:103; Finkelhor, 2009:174). In Figure 3.4 countries marked on the map by a red tag have laws governing sex offender registration and notification systems at the national and /or provincial

level. On the other hand, countries marked by a yellow tag have considered or are considering sex offender registration and notification laws but such laws have not yet passed.



**Fig 3.2: Countries with or considering sex offender registration systems**

*Source: SMART Office of sex offender sentencing, monitoring, apprehending, registering, and tracking (2014: 3).*

There is no single characteristic that identifies someone as being unsuitable for working with children, but a number of behaviours and attitudes can help identify relevant traits and signs that indicate someone may be unsuitable to work with children. Erooga (2007:3) asserts that those employees known to present risk, whose behaviours have been picked up as potential threat or who have actually been convicted of sex offences will be barred from their present employment. Checking for previous convictions is an important part of the recruitment process, but not sufficient in itself, as the majority of the offences remain unreported and unrecorded. Employers should use preliminary interviews where a behavioural specialist sits in, as a standard part of establishing a fuller picture of the character and attitudes of short

listed candidates. Candidates' answers to interview questions are examined more closely to assess whether they are authentic or not.

### 3.3.4 Community level

Communities can be understood as groups of people who interact on a regular basis because of where they live, common interests such as hobbies or mutual belief/value systems like in religious organisations or political groups (Plummer, 2013). These are spaces where individuals and families have regular and on-going contact, build a larger network of relationships and have some shared experiences. Communities have the capacity to prevent and respond to sexual abuse against children. Engaging communities at the grassroots level can help address real causes of child sexual abuse thereby preventing the abuse.

Communities should help in the prevention of sexually abusive cultures by establishing community-based child protection groups (Save the Children, 2008). An important outcome of establishing community-based child protection groups is that it increases awareness among adults of their own responsibility for protecting children. In line with this, Scholes, Fawcett and Bernier (2012:458) provide an implementation framework for prevention of sexual abuse at community level (Figure 3.3).The framework provides 5 phases of collaborative community action to prevent people from sexually abusing children and to prevent children from sexually abusive behaviours in the future as shown in the Figure 3.3.
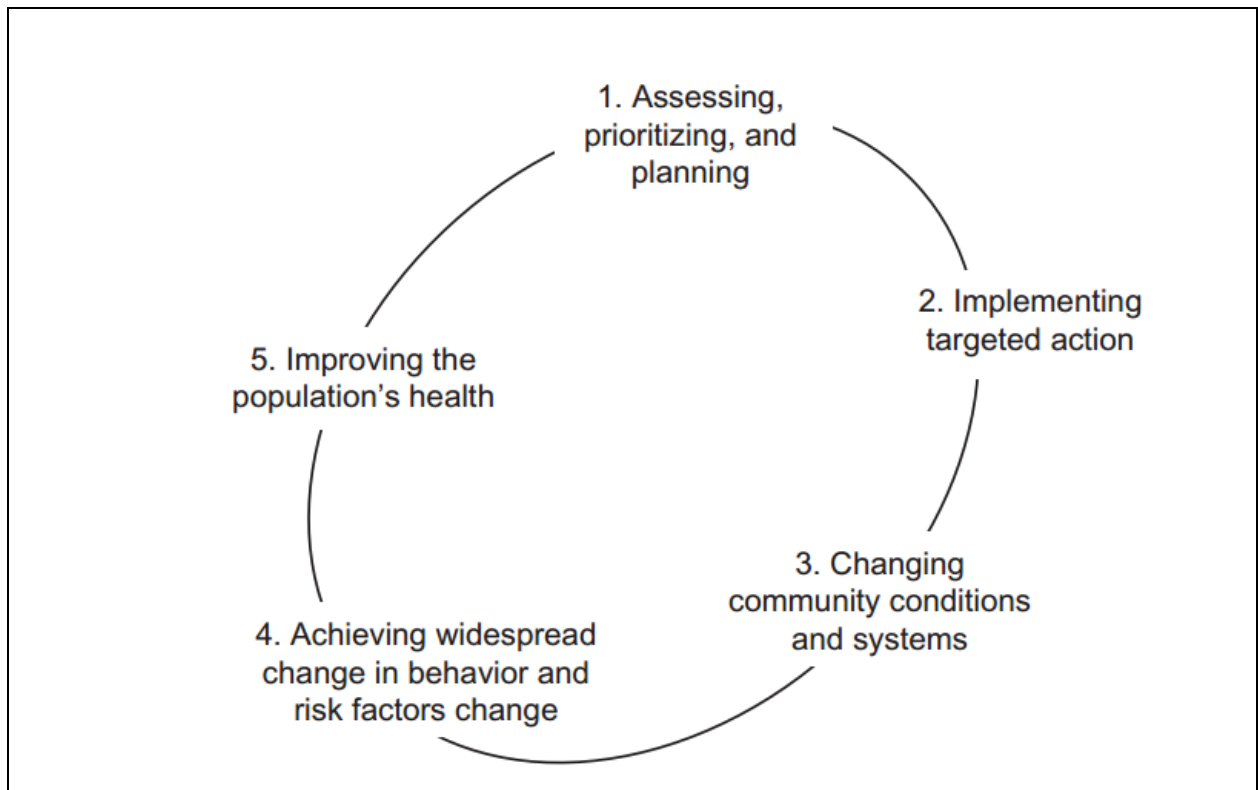
**Figure 3.3: Implementation framework: Prevention of child sexual abuse at community level**

*Adapted from Schober, Fawcett and Bernier (2012:458)*

### 3.3.4.1 Phase 1: Working with local partners

In the first phase, working with local academic partners, an assessment of child sexual abuse is conducted in the community to get the public opinion and knowledge about child sexual abuse. The aim of the group would be to improve the protection and well-being of vulnerable children in the village, urban neighbourhood or other settings. The findings are then used to develop public education targeting parents, professionals and other concerned adults (Schober et al., 2012:460; Save the Children, 2008).

**3.3.4.2 Phase 2: Training of community leaders in child sexual abuse prevention**

At the second phase of implementing targeted action, community leaders are trained as child sexual abuse prevention trainers. The trainers conduct workshops with parents, professionals and other residents to prevent the abuse.

**3.3.4.3 Phase 3: Changing community conditions and systems**

Changing community conditions and systems is the third phase where for example, community risks are identified and a local prevention plan developed. Community notification is one strategy that can be used. As noted by Finkelhor (2009:174), community notification is a strategy used to help community members to take steps to protect themselves against specific offenders in their midst and help law enforcement to educate the public about how to protect children in general. Community notification laws authorise the public release of information about registered sex offenders (Plummer, 2013). The public may be notified by a law enforcement officer when a convicted sex offender has moved in their neighbourhood. Notification can include a community education meeting where people can learn more about the methods they can employ to prevent sexual abuse of children. The public believes that knowing where sex offenders live can enhance their ability to protect their children from sexual abuse. Critics, in sex offender registration, however, say it may inhibit the re-integration of offenders into society and result in more maladjustment and deviant behaviour. Nevertheless researchers have shown that notification makes families more likely to take steps to prevent sexual abuse.

Sexually abused children are typically inclined not to disclose their feelings and experiences due to socialisation that discourages boys and girls from freely talking about sexual issues (Karlsson and Karkara, 2003:5) like sexual desires. Karlsson and Karkara (2003) point out that those adults who value children's opinions and create an inclusive environment for

children to express themselves will enable children to disclose all types of information freely, even in the case of child sexual abuse. Issues of sexual abuse which are commonly seen as a taboo or very sensitive should be talked about openly (Save the Children, 2008). A family or social environment that encourages children to express selves promotes the development of more resilient behaviour.

Adults have power over children and these unequal power structures (patriarchal structures or authoritarian parents) and power relations provide adults, especially men, with space to sexually abuse children. Karlsson and Karkara (2003:7) assert that to appropriately shift and acknowledge the rights of children would change this imbalance. Positive beliefs and norms that recognise girls and boys as RIGHTs-holders lead to the development and evolution of child friendly social institutions that are gender sensitive, inclusive and respectful of children's voices. Working with communities to promote gender equality and child participation is fundamental to bring about a paradigm shift in socialisation processes and institutions (Save the Children, 2008; Karlsson and Karkara, 2003:10). Such a shift will lead to a more inclusive and participatory culture that respects the rights of all human beings and denounces sexually abusive cultural practices such as early marriages, and virginity testing.

### 3.3.4.4 Phase 4: Achieving change in behaviour

This phase is concerned with achieving widespread change in behaviour and risk factors. Historically, much of child sexual abuse prevention has focused on educating children to recognise inappropriate touch and responding appropriately (Schober, Fawcett and Bernier, 2012:463). Community campaigns, while supporting a comprehensive model that includes educating children and youth, should promote adult and community responsibility to work towards preventing child sexual abuse.

**3.3.4.5 Phase 5: Improving population health**

The last phase of the framework is improving population's health. This involves linking changes in the community behaviour to the desired health outcome where there is a decrease in child sexual abuse. Schober et al. (2012:463) point out that one way to measure progress is through behavioural indicators. One of the behavioural indicators of success may be increase in the percentage of physicians who report assessing for signs of child sexual abuse during patient visits. Indicators of success could also reflect changes in the living environment that may affect health and wellbeing (e.g. increase in number of community organisations that provide child sexual abuse prevention and treatment services. Another key indicator of success could be substantiated reports of child sexual abuse by child protective services.

From the above framework it can be deduced that educating community residents through campaigns contributes to increased public awareness and possibly to preventive action against child sexual abuse.

**3.3.5 Family level**

The family is described as the foundation of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of its members. The family has rights and duties to nurture, socialise and develop children in a manner consistent with local customs and practices (Hanzi, 2006:21). Most of the sexual abuse of children is done within the family through cultural practices such as children sleeping with parents, early child marriages, female genital mutilation, virginity testing, and not reporting cases of sexual abuse that occur in the family (Thompson and Wilkson, 2010:48; de la Vega and Dahlstrom, 2007:11). Culture is one of the obstacles to the joy of children in most African families as the families do not always observe the relevant human rights instruments that protect children from harmful cultural practices or

are not aware of them. Some of the cultural practices like early marriages, and virginity testing are harmful resulting in sexual abuse of children.

Family members have a duty to protect children against sexual abuse so that the children enjoy their childhood as a time of play that is free from sexual abuse. Cultural practices must not allow sexual abuse of children hence affecting the survival and healthy growth of the child as stated in Article 27 of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The convention acknowledges the rights and duties of the family. The child has a right to survival and healthy development and this can only be achieved in a stable caring environment that does not subject children to cultural practices that will perpetuate sexual abuse. There is growing recognition that children have been more harmed than helped by some of the cultural practices, yet they have all been, and in many instances continue to be justified by adults while the children themselves have gone unheard. These practices are characterised by a consistent failure to consult children themselves (Hanzi, 2006:25). Lansdown (2001:2) asserts that parents in most cases are responsible for decisions and actions that are inappropriate, if not actively harmful to children, while claiming to be acting to promote their welfare.

Children should be given the right to challenge what is happening to them. Their stories need to be heard and believed (Lansdown, 2001:2). Article 12 of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child introduces a radical and profound challenge to traditional attitudes which assume that children should be seen and not heard. The article imposes an obligation on adults in their capacity (in this case as parents) to ensure that children are enabled and encouraged to contribute their views on all actions and decisions that affect their lives. Listening to children leads to better decisions since their views and ideas are often a result of experience. Where it is recognised that children are entitled to challenge their situation, abuse is easily exposed. Children who are encouraged to talk are empowered to challenge abuse and

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are not simply reliant on parents to protect them (Lansdown, 2001:3). Furthermore, adults in families can only protect children if they know what is happening in children's lives and only children can provide that information.

To help prevent child sexual abuse at family level, parents need to be involved in sexual abuse prevention. The first step to protect children from sexual abuse is educating parents about the nature of the problem. Awareness about child sexual abuse: what it is, who commits it, how it happens, and why children often do not disclose abuse, opens the door to some simple steps that can be taken to protect children (National Catholic Services, 2003:1). Parental engagement is crucial to the success of child focused prevention programmes (Hunt and Walsh, 2011:64). Strengthening a parent's protective instincts and capabilities remain the single best defence mechanism against child sexual abuse (Daro, 1994:217). When parents are trained in abuse prevention, children receive repeated exposure to prevention information in their environment. Educational programmes can improve parents' knowledge and ability to talk with their children about personal safety. Parents' awareness can be raised about the nature of child sexual abuse through educating them on how to recognise the warning signs and what to do when they suspect a child is being victimised.

Daro (1994:217) asserts that many adults feel uncomfortable to discuss sexual behaviour with their children. They may delay raising the issue until the child reaches puberty. Parents want information about children's cognitive and social development, but often do not enquire about sexual development or educational programmes about sexual development.

### 3.3.6 School level

Child sexual abuse is a serious problem for learners worldwide. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) states that 'children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically and mentally' and the international

community needs to investigate ways this can be done effectively. One widespread method used by different countries is to teach school aged children, using school-based programmes, about child sexual abuse and how to protect themselves from it (Zwi, O`Brien, Tait, Wheeler, Williams and Woolfenden, 2007:7). Educational programmes include teacher and parent education, as well as child participation programmes.

While parents and other professionals have a significant role to play, the teacher's role in prevention is critical as children are mandated to attend school and educators have the most contact with children outside their families (Scholes, Jones, Stieler-Hunt, Rolfe and Pozzenbon, 2012:104). Teachers also witness the social and emotional indicators, inappropriate behaviour and academic consequences of sexual abuse and are therefore in a position to implement prevention strategies as part of their daily classroom pedagogy and practice. Teachers who have knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes towards child protection can contribute to the safety of their learners.

Goldman (2005:82) believes that schools should be the first line of defence against child sexual abuse. However, evidence about the adequacy of education that teachers receive regarding child sexual abuse and mandatory reporting indicates minimal and inadequate training for the majority of teachers in many schools. A study in Queensland by Walsh, Farrel, Schwetzer and Bridgstock (2005:4) suggests that teachers experienced particular difficulties in identifying child sexual abuse. They had little confidence in their own ability to identify child sexual abuse. Within Australian tertiary institutions Mathews (2011:17) asserts that research indicates low levels of pre-service teacher training regarding issues on child sexual abuse. Teachers have inadequate training in child sexual abuse issues. According to the same author 76.6% of tertiary teacher education programmes do not address child protection. The study shows that to this end teachers need in-depth knowledge to empower them to carry out their responsibilities in the protection of children. There is a need for pre-

service and in-service teacher education to create an environment where teachers study and discuss child sexual abuse and improve their competence and skills to recognise child sexual abuse and to educate children about child sexual abuse prevention strategies. Professional development in the area of child sexual abuse is seriously lacking and evidence suggests a critical need for training. Training should include background information about child sexual abuse, identifying sexual abuse, handling of disclosures, and positive attitudes towards the reporting duty (Scholes et al., 2012:106; Finkelhor 2009:173). In addition, staff development training should be initiated where school personnel such as teachers and coaches are encouraged to work together to preserve learner trust, protect the students from sexual abuse, and nurture the special bond that exists between learners and teachers.

Mitchel (2010:103) indicates that every employee of the school should be informed about the identification and prevention of child sexual abuse. The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) (2013) also assert that staff should receive safeguarding training to ensure that they have a good understanding of safeguarding issues including causes and signs that alert them to possible abuse, as well as how to effectively respond when they have concerns or when a child discloses sexual abuse incidents to them. Goldman (2005:81) indicates that '*not only do teachers have a role in recognising the signs of abuse and referring such concerns, they have to be able to provide information for child protection enquiries and be involved in the preparation of inter-agency child protection plans*.' Schools should have clear guidelines or a Code of Conduct for learners, and staff, so as to create a positive and safe environment for learners.

Some organisations have a policy to limit one-on-one interactions between learners and staff (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2007:11). The goal of such a policy is to prevent the isolation of one adult staff member and a learner; a situation that increases the risk of child sexual abuse. Mitchel (2010:103) agrees that it is of great importance to

minimise the opportunity of child sexual abuse to occur in schools. Child sexual abuse cases occur in one-adult-one-child situations in schools. In regular school settings, counsellors, principals, tutors, nurses, coaches and other school employees often have one-on-one encounters with students. Eliminating or reducing one-adult-one-child situations lowers the risk of sexual abuse for children. Spitalli (2012:26) shares this view and says teachers should develop a positive learner-teacher relationship, yet maintain a professional distance. Teachers should not regard learners as equals or place them on an adult level emotionally, because that could lead to the development of a more personal, rather than professional learner-teacher relationship. This means that teachers should not interact with learners in a way they interact with adults or engage learners in a way that would erode a professional learner-teacher relationship. In addition, limiting one-on-one interactions whenever possible, by for instance having at least two adult staff members present with one-on-one learner interactions limits the chances of a child being sexually abused.

Furthermore, it is essential for schools to keep accurate records of all incidents and concerns arising in relation to members of staff. The significance of each small piece of information is only appreciated when all the information is considered and patterns of behaviour are detected. All members of staff should be made aware of policies and procedures and their responsibility to learners. School supervisors and school heads need to be clear that any sexual contact with a learner, regardless of age, is ground for dismissal, even if it occurs off school grounds (Mitchel, 2010:103).

Child sexual abuse prevention should be one of the many areas considered when deciding whom to select for employment. All personnel who will be interacting with children need to be screened by the school employers. The screenings should include personal interviews, professional recommendations and criminal background checks. Recruitment and selection of staff is another way of preventing sexual abuse in schools (Mitchel, 2010:103; NSPCC,

2013). Effective recruitment procedures for staff should help to screen out those whose behaviour may already have identified them as unsuitable to work with children when applying to work in a school. Safe recruitment practices followed through interviews, identity verification, address verification and references need to be ensured. The school employers may also consider using value based interviewing as part of a selection process. Value based interviewing is a way of helping organisations to recruit the most suitable people to work with children (NSPCC, 2013). Candidates who have positive safeguarding attitudes and values will be identified. Reference checks provide additional information about applicants and help verify previous employment records. Criminal background checks are also important in screening and selection (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2007:127). A limitation however, is that criminal background checks do not often identify sexual offenders, because most have not been reported to the police. Rigorous selection processes make it clear to applicants that the school is proactive in creating a culture of safeguarding within the school. By letting applicants know that the school is serious about protecting learners, some people at risk of abusing will hopefully be deterred from applying (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2007:12). Applicants need to be informed about the school's policies and procedures relevant to child sexual abuse prevention.

In a bid to prevent sexual abuse in schools, learners need to be kept from situations in which they are at increased risk of sexual abuse by creating a safe environment (Mitchel, 2010:103; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2007:12). Schools as organisations should not only focus attention on academic attainment, they should also promote emotional health and well-being of learners. One aspect of a safe environment is for schools to have buildings or spaces that are open and visible to multiple people. Meetings of, for example, teachers and students should occur in a place where they can be 'walked in on' at any time. To increase visibility, Mitchel (2010:103) proposes that classrooms should have windows where other

people can easily observe what will be taking place inside the rooms. Installing bright lighting in all buildings, locking closets and storerooms and instituting an 'open door policy' are some of the ways of increasing visibility in trying to create a safe environment free from sexual abuse.

Teachers can help in preventing child sexual abuse through learning the facts and understanding the risks of sexual abuse, talking about it, acting on suspicions, and breaking the cycle of silence (Mitchel, 2010:102-104). Teachers and caregivers need to learn the facts and understand the risks involved in sexual abuse. Learning the facts and understanding the risks involve, inter alia, educating oneself about the statistics in order to have knowledge of the prevalence and effects of child sexual abuse (Mitchel, 2010:103).

Setting clear guidelines on children's internet and video game usage is another step teachers need to take in prevention of sexual abuse. The internet is a source of risk to children because of the anonymity it offers (Holmes, 2007:24). There is a growing problem of sexual images being available for viewing and downloading on internet (Stop it Now, 2007). Teachers need to supervise and monitor children's use of the internet, provide children with clear information about their expectations and teach them how to make safe choices.

Mitchel (2010:104) recommends that to break the cycle of silence adults should get involved, donate time and resources to support programmes and organisations that fight the tragedy of sexual abuse. Parents can work with teachers to review available programmes and make recommendations to school administration. Not only should the prevention target adults, children also need to be able to protect themselves from sexual abuse. Educational programmes that focus on prevention should also target children.

### 3.3.7 Individual (Child) level

While child sexual abuse prevention has mostly been directed at educating teachers and parents, prevention strategies should be directed at children as well. Bolen (2003:175) asserts that prevention programs should have three objectives, namely to teach children the concept of sexual abuse, to teach them they can refuse sexual advances and get away from the abuser and to encourage the children to tell an adult about the overtures that occur. This is also echoed by Sanderson cited in Scholes et al. (2012:108) explaining that programmes have tended to focus on three core aspects namely the definition of child sexual abuse and notions of good and bad touching; methods of refusing; saying no and escaping situations and encouraging children to tell a trusted adult. Sanderson further asserts that there are four additional messages evident in some programmes, namely the child is not to blame; addressing the misconception that perpetrators are strangers; and what constitutes caring touch and the issue of secrecy.

### 3.3.7.1 Sexual knowledge to be learned at various ages of childhood

Sexual abuse can occur at any age and as a result it is best for teachers and parents to start talking about sexual matters when children are still young (National Catholic Services, 2003 :1). Age affects what knowledge and skills children learn. Preschool teachers should teach children from eighteen months to three years proper names of body parts. Children need to know what to call their genitals. This knowledge gives them correct language for understanding their bodies, for asking questions that need to be asked, and telling of any behaviour that could lead to sexual abuse.

From ages three to eight years children should be taught to say 'no' to anyone who touches them in a way that makes them uncomfortable. Children do not always recognise appropriate and inappropriate touching. Teaching children the difference between bad and good touching is important to help children from being sexually abused. Good touching is healthy for

children and is presented in some of the following ways: pat on the shoulder, shaking hands, and a friendly hug (http://www.examiner.com). Examples of bad touching are kissing mouth to mouth, and patting on the buttocks.

From eight to twelve years the focus should be on personal safety issues. It is important that children have accurate information and are taught skills to keep them safe (http://www.examiner.com). They need to know and understand principles of personal safety; some of which include trusting their feelings, especially if something is amiss; moving away from uncomfortable situations; and identifying supportive persons. For children from thirteen to eighteen years issues like rape, date rape, HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases need to be discussed (National Catholic Services, 2003:2).

From the school based programmes there are key messages children need to understand and practise in order to prevent themselves from being sexually abused. With insight from Scholes et al. (2012:112) some key messages for inclusion in child sexual abuse school based prevention programmes are presented in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1 Key child sexual abuse prevention messages**

| Domain | Key Message |
|---|---|
| Clarifies and describes | Children need to clarify and explain child sexual abuse for example, identify contact and non-contact forms of abuse, distinguish appropriate and inappropriate touching, describe private parts and describe possible offenders. |
| Grooming | Aware of some techniques offenders may use including developing relationships, tricks and bribes. |
| Secrets | Children know bad secrets need not be kept secret. |
| Feelings | Children know what sexual abuse is and do not rely on feelings to determine whether something is right or wrong. |
| Strategies and skills | Children develop self-protective strategies and skills for example, they develop a support network of trusted adults, have a healthy self-concept and are self-confident; they could stop and report unsafe behaviour, and reject inappropriate touching. |
| Disclosure | Supports, promotes and practices disclosure (e.g. recognising that teachers can help children to stay safe). |
| No Fault | Children should know that sexual abuse is illegal and never their fault. |

In most schools around the globe, classes on life skills, sexual abuse and HIV and AIDS have been included in the curriculum for learners (Finkelhor, 2009:179). These classes have a participatory approach with children being encouraged to have opinions, share their knowledge and learn about sexual abuse prevention with facilitation from teachers. Child participation is also promoted by involving child activists who are people involved individually or with others, to act, to promote and to protect the rights of learners in workshops, seminars and conferences where the learners can have a dialogue with main stakeholders asking questions and offering ideas on issues pertaining to sexual abuse. It can therefore, be said that prevention and protection initiatives can also be informed by the views and experiences of those who participate.

All in all, it can be said that understanding the prevention of child sexual abuse in a comprehensive manner is foundational to creating safe environments for children, be it in the family, school, community or the larger society. Individuals and organisations can take steps one at a time in a coordinated way as illustrated in Figure 3.4 thereby lessening the risk of harm.
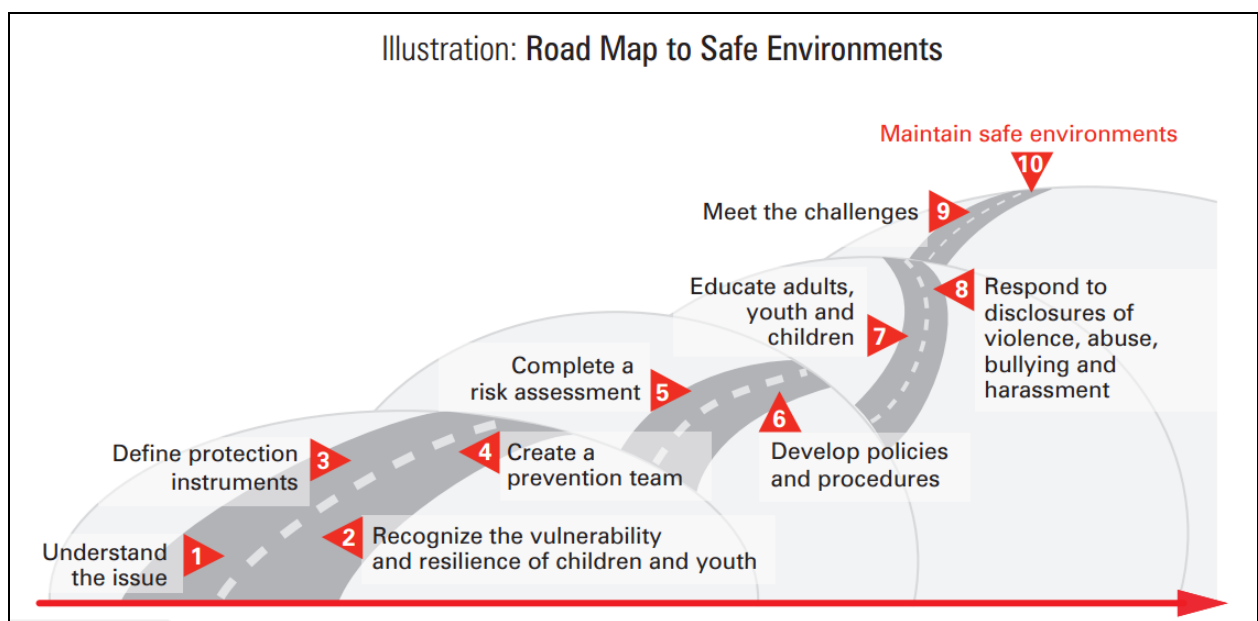


**Figure 3.4: Road map to safe environments**

*Adapted from Fairholm, Singh and Smith (2009:6)*

## 3.4 SUMMARY

As concluded by Finkelhor (2009:187) sexual abuse is a special challenge, different in many of its dimensions from other types of child maltreatment, crime and child welfare problems. Too many children live a life of not being happy or fulfilled. Children are vulnerable to sexual abuse and it is the responsibility of adults to provide safety to children. In the past very few measures were taken to prevent child sexual abuse. Prevention of sexual abuse is seen as

a process of altering the potential victim, the potential perpetrator and the environment in which both exist. Strides have been made internationally and locally to understand the problem, educate the public and mobilise resources to address sexual abuse of children. Strengthening families and parenting practices is important in preventing sexual abuse of children. An empowered community group can be very influential in preventing sexually abusive cultural practices by putting in place prevention systems.

In schools sexual abuse is rampant. School authorities should be as mindful of learners' wellbeing as they are of their academic success. Learners, parents, and educators need to work together to curb this vice. As pointed out by Scholes et al. (2012:104) adults should contribute to protecting children and creating safe environments by implementing multi-component, coordinated, preventive interventions that include educators, parents and learners. This approach offers the greatest potential for keeping children safe from sexual abuse. Education increases knowledge and informed people who have power. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure (Scholes et al., 2012:104).

The next chapter describes the research methodology adopted in the study to investigate the perspectives of learners and teachers and educational psychologists on child sexual abuse in educational institutions in Zimbabwe.

# CHAPTER 4

# RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Nachmias and Nachimias (1996:13) assert that research methodology is a system of explicit rules and procedures upon which research is based and against which claims for knowledge are evaluated. In this chapter, the design and methods for the study on perceptions of selected stakeholders on child sexual abuse by teachers are discussed.

To begin with the researcher will restate the research problem and sub questions already mentioned in Chapter 1 (section1.5) in order to clarify the design and methodology. The chapter explains why the explorative qualitative research design and phenomenological paradigm were adopted to assess the perceptions of the participants on child sexual abuse by teachers.

The chapter also explains the interview technique as a data gathering tool used in the study. The way data was analysed using Tesch's method is presented. A description of the ethical considerations that guided the researcher during data collection from the participants is described. The themes and categories deduced from the transcribed data will be presented in narrative format in Chapter 5.

The following section highlights the research question and its sub questions to substantiate the empirical research.

## 4.2 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

### 4.2.1 The research question

The research question asked in this study was: 'What are the perceptions of learners, teachers and educational psychologists on child sexual abuse by teachers in schools?

### 4.2.2 Research sub questions

In striving to achieve the purpose of this study the following sub research questions were formulated which were addressed in the literature study, but also in the empirical research:

i) What is the nature of child sexual abuse as perceived by learners, teachers and educational psychologists?

ii) Which are the contributing factors of child sexual abuse perceived by learners, teachers and educational psychologists in schools?

iii) What are the effects of child sexual abuse on learners as perceived by learners, teachers and educational psychologists in schools?

iv)What are the perceptions of teachers, learners and educational psychologists on prevention of child sexual abuse in schools?

Some of the above sub questions were already in part answered through the literature review. The empirical research was done in Zimbabwe to contextualise answers to the above research question and sub questions. The empirical research was approached in the following ways:

## 4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN, APPROACH AND PARADIGM

In this section the research, approach and paradigm are discussed.

### 4.3.1 Explorative research design

Research can be grouped into three main types depending on the purposes of the research. Accordingly, they are classified as exploratory, descriptive and explanatory (Bhattacherjee, 2012:6). For the purpose of this study the exploratory research design was used. Exploratory research is defined by Burns and Groove (2001:374) as research conducted to gather new insights, discover new ideas and for increasing knowledge of a phenomenon. Exploratory studies are a valuable means of finding out what is happening, seeking new insights, and clarifying the understanding of a problem. Exploratory research was carried out in this research to assess the nature of child sexual abuse by teachers in schools by generating ideas about the phenomenon through the eyes of specific stakeholders such as, its forms, contributory factors, effects and possible ways of prevention.

There are three principal ways of conducting exploratory research: a search of literature, talking to experts in the subject and conducting interviews (http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/7670/9/09-chapter%204.pdf). In this study a literature review was done to deduce the current state of knowledge in the area of this study, to establish key findings in the area and to identify knowledge gaps in the research area. The researcher carried out in-depth interviews with head girls and head boys, educational psychologists, and guidance and counselling teachers to collect data.

### 4.3.2 Research approach

Quantitative and qualitative approaches are two primary approaches to conduct social research (Magwa and Magwa, 2015:15; Devetak, Sasa, Glazar and Vorrinc, 2010:78; Tewksbury, 2009:38). Holliday cited in King and Horrocks (2010:7) suggests that qualitative and quantitative approaches represent very different ways of thinking about the world. According to Devetak et al. (2010:82), an approach is the sum of values, convictions, and assumptions telling us the values, beliefs, convictions, assumptions and laws regarding the specific research. In this study the qualitative approach was employed. The quantitative approach and qualitative approaches are compared to explain why this study employs the qualitative approach.

### 4.3.2.1 Quantitative research approach

Quantitative research is typically considered to be a more scientific approach to doing social science (Tewksbury, 2009:39). It focuses on gathering numerical data and generalising it across groups of people (Sibanda, 2009:2). The main aim of quantitative research as echoed by Devetak et al. (2010:78); King and Horrocks (2010:7); Tewksbury (2009:38) is to obtain reliable, exact, precise, measurable, objective and valid results by accurately capturing the aspects of the social world that are expressed in numbers- percentages, probability values, and variance ratios. It focuses on using specific definitions and carefully operationalising what particular concepts and variables mean.

### 4.3.2.2 Qualitative research approach

Qualitative research is defined by Berg (2007:3) as meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols and descriptions of phenomena. It is an exploratory approach which gathers data more in verbal and visual than in numeric form. The aim of

qualitative research according to King and Horrocks (2010:7) is to capture aspects of the social world in numerous ways that do not rely on numbers as the unit of analysis.

The qualitative approach was chosen by the researcher to provide a deep understanding of sexual abuse of learners in schools by teachers. Thus, the researcher in this study decided on the qualitative research approach to lead her more efficiently to the most credible findings that adequately answer the research question and sub questions.

Tewksbury (2009:54) asserts that qualitative research primarily focuses on micro level issues. In this qualitative research the focus was on depth not breadth of understanding very specific individuals and settings. The study focused on a small number of participants namely 8 learners, 8 teachers and 3 educational psychologists in a specific region in Zimbabwe in order to provide in-depth, detailed information about perceptions of sexual abuse in schools by teachers. The qualitative approach allowed for the identification of issues from the perspective of the research participants, as well as understanding the meanings and interpretations that they gave. The ideas emerging from this qualitative study represented the meaning given by participants and not the values, preconceptions or meanings held by the researcher.

The researcher had to go to the schools to learn more about the abuse of learners by teachers since according to Magwa and Magwa (2015:18); Henning, Hutter and Bailey (2011:9) and Hossain (2011:145) qualitative researchers study people in their natural settings in order to identify how their experiences and behaviours are shaped by the contexts of their lives such as the social, economic, cultural and physical contexts. Wisker (2001:140) also asserts that in qualitative research, participants are met in their natural environment. In the case of this study, opportunity was created for participants to speak for themselves in their natural settings on issues such as the nature of child sexual abuse, factors contributing to the abuse,

how learners are affected and how it can be curbed. The researcher went into the natural setting of the school environment in four schools namely rural day, rural boarding, urban day and urban boarding schools to try and understand the participants' perceptions of child sexual abuse by teachers. By meeting the participants in their natural settings the researcher gained a deeper insight into their world.

Through the qualitative approach the researcher was continuously and actively involved in the research process. In fact, Lincoln and Guba (2010:37) state that the researcher and participants 'interact to influence one another, knower and known are inseparable'. Willig (2013:8) posits that all qualitative methodologies recognise that the researcher is in one way or the other, implicated in the research process. Burns and Grove (2005:29) also share this view when they assert that the qualitative approach is interactive and systematic. There is an intimate relationship between researcher and what is being studied.

One other strength of qualitative research is that social phenomena are viewed holistically (Chinyoka, 2013:106). In this study the qualitative approach provided a contextual understanding of the complex interrelationships between causes and consequences and the possible prevention of sexual abuse of learners by teachers in schools.

Tichapondwa (2013:109) asserts that the strength of qualitative research is that the research framework and direction can be quickly revised as new information emerges. Some research questions could be refined as the researcher learnt what to ask and who to ask.

### 4.3.3 Research paradigm

The study utilised the phenomenological research paradigm. Creswell (2009:13) define phenomenology as a specific way and method of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by the participants themselves. The qualitative phenomenological inquiry relied on tape recorded interviews

whilst exploring the phenomenon in greater depth (Ganga, 2013:88). The aim was to allow the phenomenon to present itself rather than to impose pre-conceived ideas on it.

Phenomenology aims to develop a complete, accurate, clear and articulate description and understanding of a particular human experience. The researcher seeks to generate knowledge that captures and reflects a phenomenon as truthfully as possible. With this in mind, this study aimed to describe in depth and as accurately as possible the phenomenon of child sexual abuse as a negative human experience in schools.

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001:57) the purpose of a qualitative phenomenological study is to understand an experience from the participant's point of view. Henning et al. (2011:9) and Yin (2011:7) declare that the qualitative approach represents the perspectives of the participants in a study. Capturing the perspectives of participants is thus, a major purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study. Phenomenology places special emphasis on the individual's views and personal experiences (Denscombe, 2007:76). Hossain (2011:51) points out that the key question of phenomenology is "What is the experience of an activity or concept from these particular participants' perspectives?"

While the above points applaud the qualitative phenomenological paradigm as very effective, the researcher was aware of a few drawbacks. Chinyoka (2013:107) insists that it is time consuming. Gray (2011:215) also asserts that at times the analysis of data is not clear cut, as the data cannot always fall into neat categories, because working from a phenomenological paradigm generates a large quantity of interview notes and tape recordings which all have to be analysed. The researcher, however, tried to overcome this issue in various ways - where data seemed fairly disorganised the researcher read through the interview transcripts and unstructured notes and listened to tape recordings to get a feel of what was being said.

In order to make conclusions about a given phenomenon, people have to observe that phenomenon. It is not always possible to observe the whole population and it is not necessary in qualitative phenomenological research, because the goal is not generalisation, but depth of study. Only a sample representative of the whole population needs to be studied when using a qualitative approach.

## 4.4 DATA COLLECTION

In this section the selection of participants, method and procedure for obtaining data are discussed.

### 4.4.1 Sampling

According to Burns and Grove (2005:233) and Chiromo (2006:16) sampling is the process of selecting a subset of the population to participate in a research study. In the same vein, Merriam (1998:60) defines sampling as the selection of a research site, time, people and events in field research. Sampling is crucial since there is not enough time, energy, money and equipment to measure every single item or site within an entire population (Saunders et al., 2006:212; Chiromo, 2006:16). Magwa and Magwa (2015:63) also aver that collecting data from fewer cases means information is more detailed and more accurate than studying an entire population because it affords researchers a lot more control over subjects. The researcher drew participants from a population of secondary school learners, secondary school teachers and educational psychologists in the Masvingo district in Zimbabwe. This was done in the expectation that the sample will generate adequate and relevant information, with sufficient quality data to offer new insights into child sexual abuse by teachers in schools.

To select the sample, this study adopted a non-probability sampling method. Oliver (2010:109) emphasises that non-probability samples, typical of research within a qualitative perspective are usually much smaller than in quantitative research, but collected data is more detailed than in the case of probability samples. Within non-probability sampling, the researcher selected a sample using purposive sampling. Oliver (2010:109-110) defines purposive sampling as a sampling method in which the researcher identifies certain participants as being potentially able to provide significant data in the study. Purposive sampling provides rich information for in-depth study. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about the phenomenon being studied which in this case is child sexual abuse. The qualitative researcher is more concerned with the level of depth of information than the number of participants. Purposive sampling was more applicable in this study because the researcher uses own judgement to select cases that will be best in enabling the researcher to answer research questions and meet the objectives of the study (Magwa and Magwa, 2015:68).

This study was conducted in 4 different school settings namely one (1) rural day, one (1) rural boarding, one (1) urban day, and one (1) urban boarding school. Child sexual abuse can be caused by different factors and handled in different ways in these various settings. There were also other factors influencing the specific choice of schools. Distance from the researcher's workplace to each of the particular schools was for instance a factor to be considered in the selection of the schools, because of the accessibility, as well as the possibility for the direct involvement of the researcher in these settings. The different settings of the schools mean that learners are exposed to different environments in schools, hence the need for participant representation from all types of schools within the district namely rural day, rural boarding, urban day and urban boarding schools. From each school two (2) learners and two (2) teachers were selected.

Teachers were purposefully selected. The criteria targeted the teachers in the above mentioned schools mainly involved in Guidance and Counselling and those who have been trained in that area since they have continuous contact with and knowledge of children who may be at risk. In the selection of teachers the researcher considered gender balance so that views were from both males and females. Preference was given to teachers who had spent a year or more at a school as compared to those who had recently joined the school.

The researcher also purposively selected two (2) learners - the head boy and head girl of each of the mentioned schools to represent both male and female students. These learners were selected because they often interact with other learners and school staff in these schools and act as mediators in certain cases between staff and learners.

In addition to the learner and teacher participants, the study also involved 3 educational psychologists from the district who were meant to help triangulate and authenticate findings. Devetak et al. (2010:78) point out that the combination of multiple perspectives in a single study is best understood as a strategy that adds rigor, complexity, richness and depth to any inquiry. Educational psychologists deal with psychological issues pertaining to learners in schools. Child sexual abuse is a social, emotional and psychological issue, hence the inclusion of educational psychologists. From a total of 5 educational psychologists from the district offices, 3 of the most experienced educational psychologists, based on records from the human resources office, were also purposively selected. Priority was given to those with at least five (5) years working experience. Four of the educational psychologists were male and one was female. The female psychologist was unavailable to take part in the study, due to work commitments, thus only 3 of the total male educational psychologists who were experienced were selected. A total of 19 participants made up the sample of this study. Thus, except for the educational psychologists, the researcher purposively picked a proportional representation of each gender to avoid gender bias as reflected in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.1: Profile of participants**

| Key Stakeholders | Female | Male | Total |
|------------------|--------|------|-------|
| Learners | 4 | 4 | **8** |
| Teachers | 4 | 4 | **8** |
| Educational Psychologists | - | 3 | **3** |
| **Total** | **8** | **11** | **19** |

## 4.4.2 Data collection method

Data collection is a vital part of any research because the conclusions and recommendations of a study are based on the outcomes of data analysis after collecting appropriate data. Qualitative research is an approach that allows one to examine people's experiences in detail by using a specific set of research methods such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observations and/or life histories (Henning et al., 2011:8-9). These qualitative methods are particularly effective in bringing to the fore experiences and perceptions of individuals from their own perspective (Chinyoka, 2013:106). Burns and Grove (2003:373) comment that data gathering is a precise and systematic gathering of information relevant to the topic with its sub problems/questions, using various tools. Tools, according to Khan (2008:97) are the ways and means to conduct research. Qualitative interviewing was deemed the most appropriate method for data collection in this study.

## 4.4.2.1 Interviewing

Interviews are probably the most commonly utilised method of data collection within qualitative research (Holloway, 2005:39). Tuckman (2012:216) describes an interview as a

way of getting data about people by interviewing them and observing them. An interview is a technique by which the research participants get involved in the study and talk about their views (Magwa and Magwa, 2015:71). Interviewing refers to verbal communication between the researcher and the participants where information is given verbally to the researcher (Hossain, 2011:153).

**Types of interviews**

Types of interviews depend upon how they are structured (Tom, Chigunwe and Nkala, 2011:91).

*Structured interviews*

Tom et al. (2011:91) as well as Chiromo (2006:26) describe structured interviews as interviews consisting of a list of specific questions administered by an interviewer who is not allowed to deviate from questions provided (quantitative interviews). The interviewer is not allowed to make any changes. Pathak and Intratat (2012:4) point out that in a structured interview detailed questions are formulated before the interview. Structured interviews are sometimes called standardised interviews where all participants are asked the same questions with the same wording and same sequence (www.culi.chula.ac.th/Research/e-Journal/bod/Annabel.pdf).

*Unstructured interviews*

An unstructured interview is where the interviewer has no predetermined questions (qualitative interviews). Unstructured interviews take the form of a conversation where the interviewer has no predetermined questions (Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick, 2008: 292).They are time consuming and difficult to manage as the lack of predetermined interview questions or probes provide little guidance on what to talk about. Participants give their

reactions to general issues in the absence of specific questions. Participants may talk of important issues the researcher had not thought of hence researcher may obtain data that is relevant to the question of study or they may start talking about totally irrelevant issues (www.culi.chula.ac.th/Research/e-Journal/bod/Annabel.pdf). Each interview and its outcome are different in unstructured interviews.

*Semi-structured interviews*

Most interviews fall somewhere between the above mentioned two extremes that is, between structured and unstructured interviews. This kind of interview is referred to as semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews, the most widely used method of data collection in qualitative research (Willig, 2013:29), was employed in this study to provide an opportunity for the researcher to listen to the participants' perceptions about child sexual abuse in schools by teachers. Semi-structured interviews are used when more useful information can be obtained from more focused yet conversational two-way communication with participants. While preparing for such interviews only topics and sub-topics are identified as probes rather than specific questions. Specific questions would emerge as a matter of course during the exploration of these topics and sub-topics (Pathak and Intratat, 2012:4). This gives the interviewer more freedom to explore issues as a matter of course rather than pre-empting the issues. The order and exact wording can be changed depending on the direction of the interview. Turner (2010:756) points out that this type of interview gives the researcher the opportunity to ask probing questions as a means of follow up. The open ended-ness of questions allows the participants to fully express their viewpoints and experiences. The researcher used semi- structured qualitative interviews in this study.

This study used qualitative interviews to get information concerning child sexual abuse by teachers in schools from participants. The aim of a qualitative interview as with any

qualitative research data collection tool is to explore the 'insider perspective' on a problem. Qualitative interviews are believed to provide a deeper understanding of social phenomena (Gill et al., 2008:292; Holloway, 2005:39).

Tichapondwa (2013:127), Ary, Jacob and Bazavieh (2010:380), Chiromo, (2006:26) as well as Burns and Grove (2003:281) point out that qualitative interviews are flexible, which is one reason why they were seen as appropriate for this research. There was direct human interaction that enabled the researcher to probe and clarify questions misunderstood by the participants (Tichapondwa, 2013:128).

Open ended questions with some probes focussed on participants' perceptions of child sexual abuse, contributing factors, effects of the abuse on the abused and possible ways of stopping the abuse were asked by the researcher (Appendix 10 and Appendix 11).

### 4.4.3 Data collection procedures

Before asking for consent and assent and meeting with all the participants, the researcher asked for permission to conduct the research from UNISA Ethics Review and Clearance Committee, the Department of Educational Foundations at the Great Zimbabwe University, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe and the Provincial Education Director-Masvingo Region through official correspondence with a clear explanation of the study (Appendix 1, Appendix 2, Appendix 3 and Appendix 4).

After permission had been granted eighteen participants were selected to participate in the research. They were approached individually to establish their willingness to participate in the research. A preliminary meeting as alluded to by Englander (2012:27) gives the researcher the opportunity to establish trust with the participants, review ethical considerations and complete consent forms. The researcher held a preliminary meeting at each of the four schools and at the district office a week prior to the actual interviews. All

participants were informed of the purpose of the study, their role and what was going to happen to the information gathered from them. The researcher informed the learners and teachers that interviews will be held at schools during tea and lunch breaks and that the interviews will be more or less one (1) hour in duration. McNamara (2000:27) and Ary et al. (2010:292) claim that semi-structured interviews require settings that are free from distractions. The learners were informed that a special room to interview them in private will be requested for. As for interviews with teachers and educational psychologists, they were informed that they will be carried out in their offices. Participants were also informed that with their consent a voice recorder was going to be used to record responses. They were given the opportunity to ask any questions regarding the process and these questions were addressed. Parents and guardians gave consent to have their children participate in the research by reading and signing the letter of consent (Appendix 6 and 7). Learners gave assent in writing by reading and signing an assent form (Appendix 8). Teachers and educational psychologists read and signed consent forms (Appendix 9). The next step was to set up appointments with all participants for the semi-structured qualitative interviews.

Khan (2008:141) propounds that an interview guide/schedule assists in conducting interviews. With such insights the researcher used interview guides to minimise unnecessary departures from the aim and direction of the study for each stakeholder group. Interview schedules (Appendix 10 and 11) were used to help the researcher keep the interviews focussed. The interviewer familiarised herself with the interview schedule, so that the process appeared more natural and less rehearsed (Ary et al., 2010:292). Ethical considerations with regards to the rights of participants were adhered to (refer to Section 4.6).

Ary et al. (2010: 292) are of the view that to ensure that an interview is as productive as possible, researchers must possess a repertoire of skills and techniques to ensure that comprehensive and representative data are collected during interviewing. Gill et al.

(2008:291) and Seidman (2013:56) point out that at the beginning of an interview, participants should be put at ease so that they build confidence. The researcher established a warm but formal rapport by shaking hands and thanking participants for giving their time to be interviewed. Thereafter, the research topic was reiterated. The researcher went on to specify that the interview would last for approximately one (1) hour. With the consent of the participants, a voice recorder was used to record responses. Voice recording ensured that whole interviews were captured verbatim. To be able to carry out a full analysis of the data it is necessary to audio record the interview (Willig, 2013:31) as this protects against bias and provides a permanent record of what has been said. As suggested by Turner (2010:759) the interviewer verified that the recorder was working before starting the interview.

Listening attentively without unnecessary interruptions when participants are expressing their views is one of the important skills needed by the researcher during interviewing (Gill et al., 2008:291). In this study, during interviewing the researcher listened very attentively as the participants expressed their perceptions of child sexual abuse by teachers within the school context. The interviewer concentrated on listening, probing and responding to the interviewees and was not distracted by trying to write down responses.

To develop the interview further and elicit the meaning of the language and specific meaning involved in the conversation, probes were used (Ary et al., 2010:293; Klenke, 2008:129). Probes are important to deepen responses, and to increase the richness of responses (Klenke, 2008:129). The pre-set probes were used when the participants' statements seemed vague, or incomplete. Probes are usually 'when', 'who else', 'where' and 'what' types of questions. Questions such as 'Would you elaborate on that?' or 'What else do you think makes teachers sexually abuse learners?' were asked (Appendix10 and11).

During the interviews, the interviewer encouraged responses with occasional nods of the head, smiling, and by looking interested. The interviewer as asserted by Turner (2010:759) remained as neutral as possible by not showing any strong reactions to responses made by participants.

Other important skills the researcher incorporated included restating interviewees' comments and incorporating them into further questions throughout the interview. This served to maintain coherence and continuity throughout the interview (Ary et al., 2010: 293; Mathers, Fox and Hunn 2002; Klenke, 2008; Willig, 2013:30). The interviewer in this research repeated questions and explained their meanings in the case where some of the interviewees did not understand. Interviewees were given opportunities to elaborate their ideas at length. The order in which topics were dealt with and the wording of the questions were left to the interviewer's discretion. The interviewer was free to ask questions she deemed appropriate in the words she considered best.

Chinyoka (2013:117) notes that close attention should be paid to non-verbal communication during interviewing. Qualitative interviews provide the only opportunity for the researcher to collect both verbal and non-verbal cues (Tom et al., 2011:92; Chiromo, 2006: 26). The researcher in this study took note of the use of non-verbal communication such as the use of hands, facial expression and other emotional and physical representations which showed for instance, pain, confusion or anger. Thus, the interviewer in this research was able to acquire information through both verbal and non-verbal cues on sexual abuse of learners by teachers in the school context. Interview notes were scribbled as informants were speaking. The researcher also used a notebook to note some of the non-verbal cues expressed by some participants.

## 4.5 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

Holloway and Wheeler (2002: 235) assert that qualitative data which comes in fieldwork notes, interview transcripts, texts and photographs is difficult to interrogate in any systematic and meaningful way. It is also impossible to present all data. Data analysis, however, brings order and understanding of the topic under investigation. Data analysis involves 'breaking up' data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships (Mouton, 2002:108). Qualitative data analysis as echoed by Denscombe (2007:307) is the process of bringing order, structure and interpretation to the mass of collected data.

This study was qualitative in nature and the narrative data came from interview transcripts and fields notes. In this study the researcher avoided introducing unwarranted preconceptions into data analysis and suspended her past experiences, knowledge and predication (de Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport, 2012:337; Denscombe 2007:288; Ahing 2010:195) with regards to sexual abuse of learners by teachers in schools. The researcher read the transcripts with an open mind seeking what emerged directly from the transcripts.

Data was analysed using Tesch' model as outlined in Figure 4.2. As highlighted, data analysis includes steps such as data collection, displaying it, reflecting on it, coding and distilling it into themes, sorting data into categories and sub categories, formatting it into a coherent story and writing the qualitative text story (de Vos et al., 2012: 343).
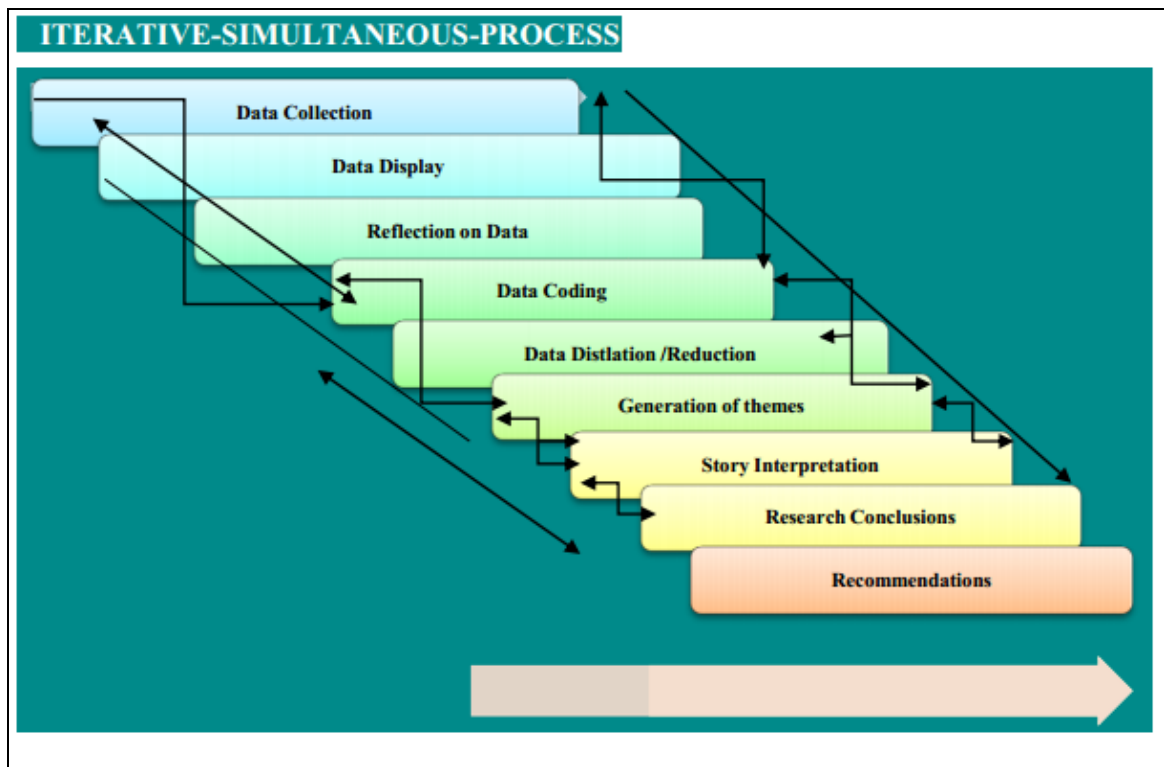
**Figure 4.1 Tesch's interactive data analysis model**

(Adapted from Ganga, 2013:114)

Based on the model, Figure 4.1, before data can be used for research purposes, it needs to be collected, processed and filed in a way that makes it easy to analyse. Preparation of the data is the first stage in the process of analysing qualitative data (Denscombe, 2007:288). With this insight the researcher made back-up copies of original materials .The researcher made a back-up of recordings and photocopied field notes since qualitative data is not easy to replace.

After organising and preparing the data in a suitable fashion the next stage was to become thoroughly familiar with the data. Good analysis depends on understanding the data (Denscombe, 2007:291; Holloway and Wheeler, 2002:235).

The first step towards being able to use interview data, is transcribing the interviews (Leavy, 2011:3). Transcribing data is widely accepted as a key part of qualitative analysis, where a lot of meaning and insights about the data emerge (Shalin, 2014:233). Representation of the audible data into written form is an interpretative process which involves making judgements and is therefore the first step in analysing data (Bailey, 2008:127,130). The transcripts included a wide margin on the right-hand side of the page and double spacing where the researcher was able to add notes that is, write comments next to the relevant text. The researcher did the transcriptions herself since as echoed by Shalin (2014:233) entrusting the transcriptions to someone who cannot make the right decision, for example on what to include or exclude, might compromise the integrity of the findings.

The researcher of this study became fully engrossed with the data during this process such as noting the level of detail needed, what could be included and excluded, as well as noting non-verbal communication. Each written transcript was read several times while listening to the corresponding audio tape to ensure accuracy. The researcher read through the transcripts without coding in order to familiarise herself with data. Reflection on the data entailed becoming immersed in every detail of what was said, done, observed and portrayed through the interviews. Familiarity with the data continued to grow throughout the whole process as a direct result of the iterative nature of the process (Figure 4.1).

After transcribing the data and becoming familiar with the written text, the process of interpreting the data began. Interpreting data according to Ahing (2010:195) and Denscombe (2007:292) involves coding data, categorising data by identifying themes and lastly developing general conclusions.

In labelling audio recordings, rather than labelling the recordings with names of the interviewees and schools, these were identified with separate codes (Chapter 5: Figure 5.1,

Table 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4). The actual codes appearing on raw data sheets and in the written text were confidential (Ahing, 2010:195). Coding as stressed by Miller and Daly (2015:20) is one of the most common ways of handling qualitative data. The researcher in this study compiled data into sections of repetitive ideas across different transcripts of different participants and the information was then grouped together with specific codes. The researcher attached labels to the raw data. Each piece of raw material was identified with a unique serial number and initial. The researcher highlighted anything in the transcripts that helped understand the participants' views as they related to the topic with different coloured highlighter pens, writing comments in the margins next to the highlighted sections. Descriptive codes were written next to the quotes. The researcher repeated the whole process for each transcript, going back and modifying some of the coding on earlier ones. The codes were then redefined (Figure 4.1).

The next stage consists of interpretative coding where the researcher went beyond describing relevant features of participants' accounts and focused more on her own interpretation of their meanings. Similar codes as propounded by Cresswell (2010:256) and King and Horrocks (2010:152) were aggregated together to form a major idea in accordance with the research question and sub questions as well as the literature review. The researcher moved backwards and forth through the above stages with all transcripts. The researcher read transcripts carefully, and continued to read and re-read the transcripts throughout the process of coding and analysis (Willig, 2013:119). The researcher grouped together descriptive codes that seemed to share common meaning. Each theme was given a title with the intention of establishing the perceptions of learners, teachers and educational psychologists regarding child sexual abuse by teachers in schools.

The researcher in this study read the transcripts again paying special attention to the code-generated categories. Coding of the transcripts was done in the light of research questions (Willig, 2013:119). All of the above tasks formed part of the iterative process (Denscombe, 2007:292; Ganga, 2013:114) as illustrated in the model (Figure 4.2). Each task was revisited as the codes, themes and categories became more refined.

Lastly, the researcher developed concepts and arrived at some generalised statements and conclusions based on the relationships, patterns and themes identified in the data. These concepts as echoed by Denscombe (2007:292) provided the basis for the researcher's analysis of data and are the foundation for any generalised conclusions that the researcher might draw. The final step involves the researcher communicating the findings. The researcher will review the analysis in the light of other explanations of similar data by comparing the new generalised conclusions with alternative theories in literature. Recommendations will then be made in the end. The themes and categories will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

## 4.6 MEASURES OF TRUSTWORTHINESS

According to Mabuza and Mash (2014:3), Ahing (2010:169) and Denscombe (2007:296) trustworthiness is part and parcel of the research process and has to be addressed. Qualitative research is trustworthy when it accurately represents the experiences of the participants. Four criteria are used to measure trustworthiness of qualitative data and these include credibility, dependability, conformability and transferability (Matlala, Nolte and Temane, 2014: 4).

### 4.6.1 Credibility

Qualitative researchers can demonstrate that their data are accurate and appropriate in different ways. Triangulation can be used to prove that data are worthwhile and credible

(Lincoln and Guba, 2010:300; Denscombe, 2007:134). Triangulation according to Denscombe (2007:134) involves viewing things from more than one perspective, thus getting better insight into the phenomenon under study. In this study, the credibility of findings was checked using different sources of information thus comparing data from different informants (informant triangulation). At least three groups of participants namely; learners, teachers and educational psychologists were interviewed to get their perspectives on child sexual abuse by teachers in schools. As viewed by Cresswell and Miller (2001:126) researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes in a study. When participants are in agreement, the information is considered credible. If the information is reiterated in the literature review it also helps with triangulation.

The notion of triangulation in this research also incorporated the data of space triangulation that is, the use of more than one cultural, social or geographical context (Denscombe, 2007: 134). The settings included rural schools catering for boarding and day schooling and urban schools also catering for boarding and day schooling, with the aim of getting a fuller picture that enhances the completeness of the findings. Triangulation enhances the credibility of data.

Figure 4.2 illustrates how this study achieved informant and space triangulation in addition to literature review.

| LEARNERS | TEACHERS | EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS |
|---|---|---|
| Rural day and boarding schools | Rural day and boarding schools | Urban |
| Urban day &boarding schools | Urban day &boarding schools | |

**VIEWS ON CHILD SEXUAL ABUSEBY TEACHERS IN SCHOOLS**

**PLUS**
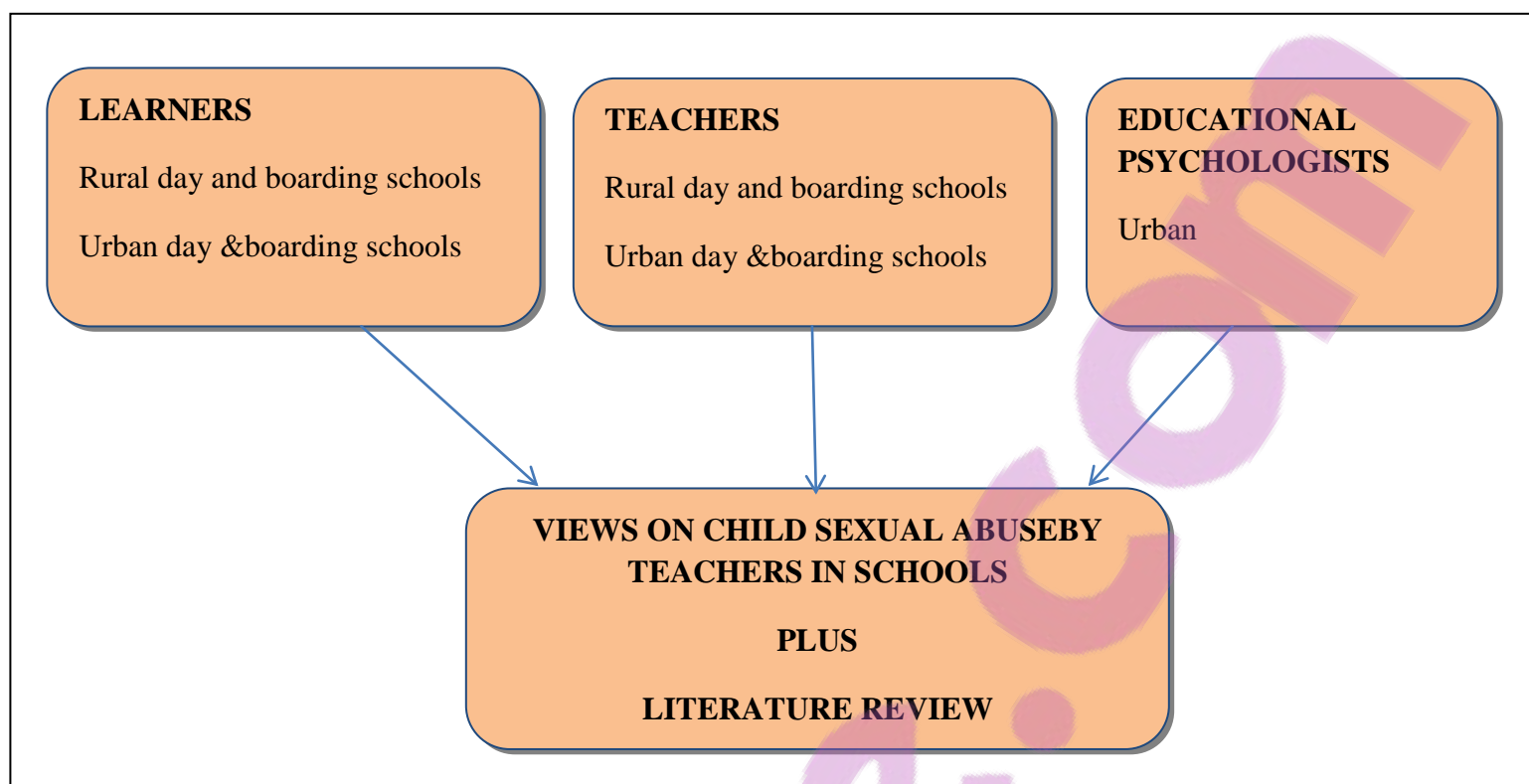
**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Figure 4.2: Informant triangulation, space triangulation plus literature review**

Ahing (2010:169) posits that credibility is also taken care of when the researcher spends time with the participants, thus forming a relationship. In this study, the researcher established this relationship which formed the basis of data collection when explaining the study and when obtaining biographical information. One of the key benefits of qualitative research is that findings are extensively grounded in field work, hence providing a solid foundation for conclusions based on the data and adding to the credibility of the research (Mabuza and Mash 2014:3 ; Denscombe, 2007:104).

**4.6.2 Dependability**

Lincoln and Guba (2013:300) use the concept of dependability in qualitative research which closely corresponds with the notion of reliability in quantitative research. Dependability implies that findings of a study are consistent. It refers to the degree to which the procedures

give almost similar findings under constant conditions on all occasions (Holloway and Wheeler, 2002:255). As an interviewer, the researcher became almost an integral part of the data collecting technique (Denscombe, 2007:298). The researcher reflected on procedures and decisions that other researchers can see and evaluate in terms of how they constitute reputable procedures and reasonable decisions. This acts as a proxy for being able to replicate research.

To ensure dependability an audit trial was provided (Ahing, 2010:202). An audit trail allows readers to follow the researcher's findings in order to see how conclusions have been reached and to guide other researchers who might want to undertake similar research. In this study, the researcher collected all raw data that is, field notes, audio recordings and interview transcripts and stored them forming an audit trail, thus, ensuring dependability of findings.

### 4.6.3 Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the findings of the research can be applied to other events, settings or groups in the population (Holloway and Wheeler, 2002: 206). For this study, the following strategies were used to attain transferability: purposive sampling to select appropriate participants for the study and a rich description of the methodology followed. Establishing transferability was also accomplished by the provision of sufficient details about the research participants and settings so that readers of the research can make a determination as to whether the findings from the study might transfer to their own context and how. To ensure transferability as also hinted by Matlala et al. (2014:4) the researcher provided in-depth descriptions of the findings supported by direct quotations/narratives from the participants. Findings were also supported by a literature control.

### 4.6.4 Conformability

Conformability determines whether research findings are unbiased and it relates to how neutral and objective the researcher is. The researcher's identity, values and beliefs cannot be entirely eliminated from the process of analysing qualitative data. Mouton (2002:240) states that researchers should at all times strive to maintain objectivity/conformability and integrity in the conduct of their scientific research. This researcher was on guard to distance herself from her normal, everyday beliefs and to suspend judgments on sexual abuse issues for the duration of the research. Every effort was made in this study to remain impartial to responses of participants and to put pre-conceived notions aside in order to maintain conformability.

### 4.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In all research involving the collection of data from human beings, there are fundamental moral requirements to treat those people in accordance with standards and values which affirm their humanity (Oliver, 2010:12; Mouton, 2002:238). The research context is no different from any other context in which human interaction takes place. Ethics have become a cornerstone for conducting effective and meaningful research. Researchers need to ensure that research is conducted in an ethical manner. de Vos et al. (2012:114) define ethics as a set of moral principles which is suggested by an individual or group, subsequently widely accepted, and which offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other research assistants and students. Similarly, Magwa and Magwa (2015:104) assert that research ethics is a code of professional conduct that should guide researchers as they engage in research. Research is therefore, a discipline that needs to be governed by the code of conduct, thus ethics in one way or the other impacts on all forms of research. Research ethics demand that

human beings should be treated with respect and should not be harmed in any way. All social research involves ethical issues.

**4.7.1 Access to field**

Basit (2010:59) posits that gaining access to the sample required is not always easy, because potential participants may be busy or uninterested. Access for this research was negotiated in stages with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, with educational officers, school heads, teachers, learners and guardians/parents. Permission to conduct the research was secured from the University of South Africa's Ethics Board (Appendix 1), Great Zimbabwe University (Appendix 2) the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (Appendix 4), Masvingo District office (Appendix 5) as well as from school heads.

According to Oliver (2010:1), Basit (2010:58) and Lincoln and Guba (2010:299), if perceptions of people are to be adequately understood, close relationships should be established between the researcher and participants. This researcher created a non-hierarchical relationship with participants so as to clearly understand their perceptions on child sexual abuse in schools by teachers. The researcher in this study was sensitive to the working milieu and timetable of institutions in which data were gathered (Basit, 2010:58). It would be inconsiderate for example, to request access for fieldwork at a time when students are preparing to sit for their final examinations.

**4.7.2 Informed consent and assent**

The researcher in this study firstly submitted a detailed proposal for ethical clearance, seeking the permission of the institution, specifying how the research was to be conducted. Teachers and educational psychologists gave their consent and learners gave assent with consent from

their parents to take part in the research, after an explanation of the procedure in carrying out the interview was given.

Gaining informed consent from participants means the participants agree to take part in the research after they have been fully informed of the facts pertaining to the research (Basit, 2010:60; Oliver, 2010:15). Prospective participants of this study were informed about the purpose of the study, potential benefits, kind of involvement, estimated time for the interview, what will be done with the data as well as information about the identity of the researcher including the address, telephone number, e-mail and institution where the researcher was employed (Appendices 6, 7, 8 and 9). Basit (2010:60) propounds that informed consent assumes that participants are capable of making a decision about participating or not, in other words that they are of sound mind and are mature enough to understand what is involved.

The researcher has a moral obligation of being ethical during the entire research process by adhering to all ethical standards applicable in the study. The researcher ensured that teachers, educational psychologists, parents and guardians sign consent forms (Appendix 9 for teachers and educational psychologists; and Appendix 6 and 7 for parents). Learners also signed assent forms beforehand (Appendix 8) with consent from parents or guardians. In this study, the consent was given in writing. Participants were regarded as autonomous agents who have the right to choose whether or not to be part of the research. Thus, consent was given without coercion. The participants were also informed that they had the right to withdraw and the right to change their decisions given earlier, at any given stage of research without giving any reason and without any penalty (Basit, 2010:10).

In the first place the researcher explained to the participants that she was only interested in their perceptions and not in the mentioning of specific cases in the school. Participants were

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informed of the reasons for carrying out the study, methods and outcomes of study. If it was to emerge during the interview that a learner was being sexually abused, or that some participants revealed for example, specific incidents of sexual abuse by teachers in the school or giving detailed personal experiences of sexual abuse by teachers in the school, the researcher was ethically and legally mandated to report suspicions of sexual abuse to the school head. Reporting cases of sexual abuse enables child protection services and/or law enforcement to move towards early intervention. In Zimbabwe, legislative reform and policy measures prohibit the teachers from sexual contact with students, and impose the responsibility upon teachers and school administration to protect learners and respond effectively to reports of child sexual abuse. Zimbabwe requires that if one comes across cases of sexual abuse she/he has to report the case to the school head. The researcher in this research was to report any cases of sexual abuse to the school head. The school heads are trained on how to handle cases of sexual abuse in schools. Each school has a child sexual abuse handbook which clearly outlines procedures to be taken when cases of child sexual abuse are reported within the school. The police and children's services are best placed to take the next steps after schools have made reports. In the case where a learner was to reveal being sexually abused by a teacher or reporting that another learner is being or has been sexually abused, the researcher was to assure the learner that he/she had done nothing wrong in reporting and that no harm was going to come to him/her.  In this study no learner revealed being sexually abused by a teacher or reporting that another learner was being sexually abused.

### 4.7.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality refers to the treatment of information that a participant has disclosed in a relationship of trust, with the expectation that it will not be divulged to others without permission. Participant's identity has to be preserved, at all costs by the researcher. Anonymity means that no-one will know the participant's identity (Matlala et al., 2014:4). During this study participants were assured that the information will be treated with strict confidentiality. Ethically, the researcher should respect the participants' right to privacy during and after study According to Magwa and Magwa (2015:107) researchers should maintain appropriate anonymity and confidentiality of information in creating, storing, transferring and dispersing of records under their control, whether these are written , automated or in other medium. With insights from Magwa and Magwa (2015:107) and Matlala et al. (2014:4) the researcher in this study maintained the privacy and confidentiality of the information that participants shared with her, by conducting the interviews in private places and by keeping transcripts locked away, accessible only to the researcher. To further ensure privacy, participants were informed not to mention their names, their school names and names of any other person during the interviews, so that data might not be linked to the identity of the participants in any way. Oliver (2008:116) says the commonest method of trying to assure anonymity is the use of either fictional names, or letters or numbers to specify respondents. In this study the researcher created anonymity and confidentiality of information by separating their names and names of the schools from the data. Data was safeguarded by using pseudonyms during transcription and when reporting. Voice recordings were kept in a safe place. This implies that the identities of the participants were not revealed in the reporting of the information.

### 4.7.4 Protective measures for participants

Ethical considerations were adhered to in accordance with the UNISA Research Ethics Policy. The researcher indicated in the consent and assent letter to the participants that there were no risks involved during the empirical study. In the event that the interviews might cause distress and anxiety to the participants, as they recall unpleasant events, arrangements were made by the researcher for counselling sessions to take place and referrals made to other professionals as the need arose. However, the researcher found no signs of psychological discomfort and stress or trauma experienced by the participants that would have required referral for a debriefing session by a counsellor for support after interviews. There were no risks in the form of physical injury related to data collection process.

### 4.7.5 Freedom to withdraw

The researcher understood that she comes from a position of authority and that participants might feel obliged to participate. Therefore, she highlighted the fact to the participants that they were to withdraw from the study at any time if they no longer wished to participate. The right of participants to withdraw from participation without penalty is a principle of respect (Matlala et al., 2014:4). Participants were informed of this right prior to the actual interview (Holloway, 2005:292). The participants were also informed that withdrawing from the study will not affect them in anyway.

### 4.7.6 Feedback

Participants were informed that the findings will be published as a thesis and journal articles. The participants were ensured that the privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality will be maintained in the write up of the thesis and journal articles. Identifiers which could be traced back to participants were to be removed.

## 4. 8 SUMMARY

The research approach in this study was qualitative in nature and was used to achieve the aim of this study which was to explore perceptions of learners, teachers and educational psychologists on sexual abuse of children in schools by teachers. The phenomenological paradigm was used to attain in depth information about the phenomenon under study. Kruger (2010:189) asserts that phenomenologists are concerned with understanding social and psychological phenomena from the perspectives of the people involved. Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with 18 participants who were selected purposively. Tesch's data analysis method was used to analyse data. Yin (2012:109) points out that this approach involves a systematic process of examining, selecting, categorising, synthesising and interpreting the data to address the initial propositions of the study. The next chapter will focus on data presentation, interpretation and discussion of findings.

# CHAPTER 5

# DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The researcher conducted this study to explore the views of learners, teachers and educational psychologists concerning child sexual abuse by teachers in schools. The methodology described in the previous chapter provided the baseline for data gathering and was discussed in order to respond to the main research question of the topic under study which was:

What are the perceptions of learners, teachers and educational psychologists on child sexual abuse by teachers in secondary schools?

The research was conducted to try to eradicate misconceptions about child sexual abuse and come up with ways of prevention. In Chapter 2 and 3, child sexual abuse was explored through a literature review. Chapter 4 provided the information on how the empirical study was conducted in a specific region in Zimbabwe to contextualise information from the literature review.

The qualitative phenomenological research approach was used to explore the mentioned research questions. Data was collected from 19 participants, namely 8 learners, 8 teachers and 3 psychologists, selected purposefully. Both learners and teachers had an equal gender balance and the 3 educational psychologists happened to be all male. From each school (Figure 5.1) there was 1 female teacher and 1 male teacher. Teachers who are mainly involved in Guidance and Counseling and those trained in the area were selected because they have continuous contact and knowledge of children who may be at risk of child sexual abuse. The learners selected were 4 school head girls and 4 head boys because they often interact with learners and school staff. Educational psychologists are highly trained in areas

of child development, learning, consultation, assessment, counseling and human relationships therefore they were selected to participate (www.casponline.org/pdfs/pdfs/General%20Ed.%20Paper%20Final%201).

Ethical considerations undertaken when carrying out studies with humans were adhered to. It was explained to participants that participation in the study was voluntary and that participants who wished to withdraw could do so during research without any penalties. Confidentiality and non-disclosure issues were also highlighted to ensure participants of anonymity. The schools where the participants were located consisted of rural day, rural boarding, urban day and urban boarding schools (Figure 5.1). In-depth semi structured interviews were conducted with each of the 19 participants. Interviews were transcribed and then analysed using Tesch's method. Schools and participants were coded to conceal identities (Figure 5.1). The different codes for participants are shown in Tables 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3.

Figure 5.1 highlights the codes of the 4 schools used in the study that is, rural day, rural boarding, urban day and urban boarding.
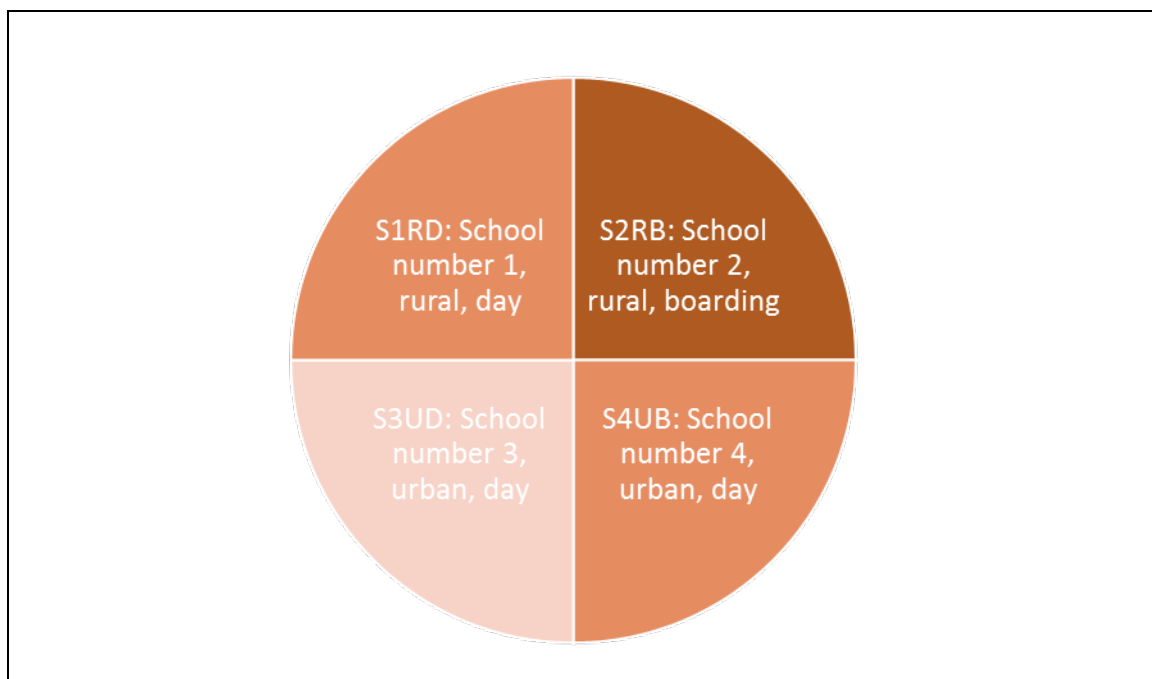
**Figure 5.1: School codes and their explanations**

The researcher drew meaning from the transcriptions of interviews with participants. Given below are the codes of learner participants, teacher participants and educational psychologists given in Tables 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3, in order to address issues of confidentiality and anonymity, but also to help in the narrative presentation of the responses of participants.

**Table 5.1 Learners' individual interview codes and their explanations**

| Code | Explanation |
| --- | --- |
| L1 FRD | Learner number 1, female, rural, day |
| L2 MRD | Learner  number 2, male,  rural, day |
| L3 FRB | Learner number 3, female, rural, boarding |
| L4 MRB | Learner number 4, male, rural, boarding |
| L5 FUD | Learner number 5, female, urban, day |
| L6 MUD | Learner number  6, male, urban, day |
| L7 FUB | Learner number 7, female, urban, boarding |
| L8 MUB | Learner number 8, male, urban, boarding |

**Table 5.2 Teachers' individual interview codes and their explanations**

| Code | Explanation |
|------|-------------|
| T1 FRD | Teacher number 1, female, rural, day |
| T2 MRD | Teacher number 2, male, rural, day |
| T3 FRB | Teacher number 3, female, rural, boarding |
| T4 MRB | Teacher number 4, male, rural, boarding |
| T5 FUD | Teacher number 5, female, urban, day |
| T6 MUD | Teacher  number 6, male, urban, day |
| T7 FUB | Teacher number 7, female, urban, boarding |
| T8 MUB | Teacher number 8, male, urban, boarding |

**Table 5.3: Educational psychologists' individual interviews codes and their explanations**

| Code | Explanation |
|------|-------------|
| EP 1 | Educational Psychologist number 1 |
| EP2 | Educational Psychologist  number 2 |
| EP3 | Educational Psychologist  number 3 |

This chapter focuses on the analysis, interpretation and discussion of views of selected participants on child sexual abuse by teachers in schools. Findings will be presented and discussed in relation to how they collaborate with the literature review and contribute to a new body of knowledge in the field of Educational Psychology.

## 5.2 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Firstly the researcher did the literature review to explore the state of knowledge in the domain of study, identifying key findings in the area and identifying gaps in knowledge on child sexual abuse. The researcher then analysed, synthesised and evaluated the collected empirical data. Data analysis was performed inductively to allow the researcher to build knowledge from the participants rather than structuring the study around existing hypotheses. A thematic analysis of the interview transcripts was conducted manually. The researcher grouped together descriptive codes that seemed to share common meaning and these were placed into categories decided on up front namely the nature, contributing factors, effects and prevention of child sexual abuse as highlighted in Figure 5.2. From each category there were themes and sub-themes that guided the researcher to understand the perceptions of learners, teachers and educational psychologists regarding child sexual abuse by teachers in schools. Findings of participants are mixed, not all participants could give sufficient information on all categories because learners are not trained in the field. Learners gave more intuitive information whilst teachers and educational psychologists gave more in-depth responses because of their training.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│         Perceptions of learners,         │
│         teachers and educational         │
│      psychologists on child sexual       │
│            abuse by teachers             │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
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**Nature of child sexual abuse**

- Concept of child sexual abuse

- Role of teachers in child sexual abuse

-Victims of sexual abuse

-Signs and symptoms of child sexual abuse

**Contributing factors**

-Abuse of power

-Poverty

-Driving forces causing teachers to sexually abuse learners

-Lack of knowledge of Code of Conduct by teachers and poor law enforcement

-Learners lack empowerment

-Abuse/misuse of modern technology

-Ideas about a cure for the HIV and AIDs virus

**Effects on victims**

- Physical effects

- Emotional effects

- Behavioural effects

- Educational effects

**Possible prevention measures**

- Role of school

-Role of educational psychologists

-Role of learners

**Figure: 5.2 Categories and themes that emerged from the interviews**

The structure in Figure 5.2 was used to present and discuss the findings from the empirical study. Narratives from the participants during the in-depth semi structured interviews were quoted to give deeper meaning of participants' views. Reference to the literature review in this section shows similarities and differences between literature and the empirical study.

**5.2.1 CATEGORY 1: THE NATURE OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

In exploring perceptions of learners, teachers and educational psychologists on their understanding of the nature of child sexual abuse, the following themes were yielded namely:

- An understanding of child sexual abuse

- Role of teachers in child sexual abuse

- The victims of sexual abuse in the school situation

- Indicators that a learner has been sexually abused

**5.2.1.1Theme 1.1: The concept of child sexual abuse**

Understanding child sexual abuse begins with the agreement about who a child is. Participants were asked to give their views on who is regarded as a child in Zimbabwe. Participant T7FUB had this to say: *A child is a person below the age of 16 and has not yet reached maturity*. The majority of the participants were in agreement with the mentioned age limit. A few learners viewed a child differently as is reflected in the words of L4MRB who said: *My understanding of a child is that it is a young person from birth to 18 years*. This study views a child as a person below age of 18. The issue however, in this research is whether a person of 16 or 18 years of age is mature enough for sexual consent, in order for the sexual act not to be sexual abuse.

Collin-Vezina (2013:2) asserts that much disparity exists regarding the age of sexual consent. The age of consent varies greatly across countries from as young as 12 or 13 years of age (for example, in Spain) to 17 or 18 years of age (for example, in the United States of America and Australia). Sixteen years (16) of age is considered the legal age of consent in Zimbabwe (Birdthistle et al., 2010: 1076).

Having agreed on who a child is, all participants were probed to give their understanding of child sexual abuse. Learners, teachers and educational psychologists clearly showed a basic

understanding of the concept, although they differ in maturity when grasping the concept. Child sexual abuse was said to be an abuse of a sexual nature between a child and an adult. The following narrative portrays the viewpoint of one of the learners:

L1FRD: *It is a type of sexual abuse where an adult does what the child does not like.*

Interviewer*: Can you please clarify what exactly you mean when you say what the child does not like.*

L1FRD: *It is when the adult, in this case, the teacher forces the child into sexual activities like rape, and kissing. The teacher asks the child to be in love with her or him.*

The above narrative shows the immaturity of learners when it comes to the difference between love and sexual activities. If learners think of sexual activities as love, then they will most probably consent to it easier, although it does not make it acceptable. Responses from teachers and educational psychologists show a more mature grasp of the concept showing that child sexual abuse involves engagement in sexual activities between an adult and a child, without the child's consent. One of the teachers explains the concept as follows:

T7FUB: *My understanding of child sexual abuse is that it is the unlawful sexual contact between an adult and a child. In the school situation, it involves a teacher and learner of opposite or of same sex engaging in sexual activities.*

Interviewer*: Can you please elaborate on unlawful contact?*

T7FUB: *Well, sexual contact is unlawful when a child is involved in sexual activities without her or his consent. The adult is using a minor to gratify his or her sexual needs.*

Educational psychologists also defined the concept. Participant EP1 in defining the concept said: *Child sexual abuse is any infringement of rights of child in a sexual manner by someone*

*who should be responsible for the welfare of that child. A child is forced into sexual acts that he or she does not like or understand by an adult simply to gratify the adult's sexual desires.*

In line with the above definitions sexual abuse in schools is defined by de Wet and Oosthuizen (2009a:7-8) as any unwanted and unwelcome sexual activities by a child from an adult. The sexual activities are humiliating and they create an intimidating environment and are intended to induce submission by actual or threatened adverse consequences.

Having defined child sexual abuse as the ill treatment of a child below 16 years of age in a sexual manner by an older person, participants were probed to give the various types of child sexual abuse they know of. One of the educational psychologists (EP2) indicated the following concerning types of sexual abuse: *Child sexual abuse involves sexual activities like kissing, fondling private parts, rape, showing pornographic material, sexual gestures, verbal sexual comments, unwelcome cell phone messages and Whatsapp. These types of sexual activities can be categorised into those involving actual contact with the bodies of the abuser and abused such as kissing, touching breasts, actual sexual intercourse. On the other hand, non-contact sexual abuse would involve sexual acts like sexual comments, and showing pornography.*

Learners also were able to categorise sexual abuse into contact and non-contact forms as reflected in the words of participant L6MUD:

*There is sexual abuse which involves physical contact like touching, fondling body parts, caressing and penetration. Sexual abuse can also happen, when there is no touching and this can include; gestures, verbal words which are sexual, and pictures of nude people.*

Teachers' viewpoints include the following according to participant T4MRB:

*There are two main forms or types of abuse. There is abuse which involves the abuser physically getting in contact with the victim's body for example kissing, fondling breasts, or*

*having actual sexual intercourse. In another type of sexual abuse there is no direct contact with the victim's body for example, sexual messages, showing pornography, and sexual gestures.*

There was consensus from all participants that victims of sexual abuse experience both contact and non-contact forms of sexual abuse. Of the two types the most common form of child sexual abuse was mentioned as contact sexual. Responses from both rural and urban participants imply that they have adequate knowledge of what constitute child sexual abuse. The above mentioned behaviours coincide with the researcher's view of sexual abuse of learners in schools by teachers, as well as with findings from the literature review, like the findings in a study by the Africa Gender Institute of the University of Cape Town in 3 secondary schools in the Potchefstroom area by de Wet in 2008. According to the findings of the mentioned study, speaking in a derogatory way about the female body, making remarks about girls' suitability as sexual partners, making unwelcome innuendos, touching girls on buttocks and/or breasts were listed as forms of unacceptable behaviours by educators (de Wet, 2010: 58). Participants in Shumba's 2006 study on perceptions of child sexual abuse by teacher trainees in Zimbabwean schools indicated that sexual abuse of pupils in the school context involved sexual intercourse with pupils, fondling pupils' breasts, buttocks and private parts, showing pornographic materials and passing sexual comments (Shumba, 2006:127).

The researcher in this study can therefore, conclude from responses of participants and from the reviewed literature that child sexual abuse is unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature by an adult or person in a position of authority (teacher) directed at a child (learner) that is intended to fulfill the sexual needs of the adult. The dominant position of the adult allows him/her to force or coerce the child into sexual activity. The behaviours include direct abuse like fondling of private parts, genitals, breasts, buttocks, and vaginal or anal sex and

more indirect/non-contact forms like exposure of the genitals, and conversations of a sexual nature.

### 5.2.1.2 Theme 1.2: Role of teachers in child sexual abuse

There was a general feeling from participants as also confirmed by literature (Betweli, 2013: 82) that teachers are role models to students, they are respected personages responsible for the transmission of positive values and norms to their learners. However, in spite of such values and the importance attached to them and the teaching profession, there are often professional misconducts and lack of integrity amongst teachers especially in view of sexual abuse. According to the perceptions of the majority of the participants, teachers were named as possible child sexual abusers in the school situation. The words of a teacher below reflect many participants' views on teachers as sexual abusers in schools:

T2MRD: *Teachers are major culprits in sexually abusing learners. Some teachers give gifts, some send girls to their houses so that they will abuse them and others give suggestive comments such as "vanodya havo" (those who eat).*

Interviewer: *What do you mean when you say, those who eat?*

T2MRD. *I mean that lucky is the person who will have the opportunity to engage in sexual intercourse with a beautiful, well-built child.*

Similarities in responses as to who sexually abuses learners in schools were noted among all participants. Learner L7FUB had this to say: *In schools, students can be sexually abused by other students but it is mostly teachers who sexually abuse, maybe this is because they are taking advantage of their power over students.*

Educational psychologists also narrated on the possible abusers in the school as highlighted in the following excerpt by participant EP1: *Everybody in the school is a potential abuser.*

*Children themselves can sexually abuse one another but teachers mostly sexually abuse learners.*

Evidence of sexual abuse by teachers in schools has also been gathered in other countries. A single study of schools in Peru in 2007, established that 169 teachers were reported for rape and acts of indecency against students (Sweeney et al., 2013:91). These viewpoints match a study on sexual abuse of school girls carried out in Ghana at one school where out of 16 participants, 10 girls reported that they had been asked by a teacher to have sex, 5 reported that they knew of a girl in their class who was having sex with a teacher, and 3 knew of a girl who had become pregnant by a teacher (http://www.eldis.org/vfile/uwww.unicef.org). A study commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Sports and conducted between 2011 and 2012 by Winsor Consult LTD at 40 primary and 10 secondary schools in the Northern, Eastern, Western and Central regions of Uganda, indicated that 77.7% of primary school children and 82% of the secondary school population reported having been sexually abused at school. Teachers were reported to be the major perpetrators of the abuse with 67% of the children saying they were abused by teachers (http://www.unicef.org/uganda/VACis_Study_Summary_July_8th_10.31am%281%29.pdf). In a similar vein, in Zimbabwe, in a retrospective study of reported cases of child sexual abuse over an eight–year period from1990 to1997 by Nhundu and Shumba (2001:1517-1534) schools reported high rates of sexual abuse committed by teachers.

Participants were further asked to state who among male and female teachers more often sexually abuse learners according to their perception. Mixed responses were given with some participants saying both and others saying males only. A few participants did not view women as abusers. This is evident in the following statement by L3FRB*: I only know of males who sexually abuse. I have never heard of female teachers who commit such crimes. Women are kind people and would not like to hurt students by sexually abusing them.*

Literature indicates that society's gender expectations that women are innately protective and nurturing towards children is what makes it difficult for the public to accept that women are capable of such deviance (Bexson, 2011:18; Geddes, Graham and McGreal, 2012:2). Such behaviour is seen as inconsistent with society's schema of women as nurturing and caring.

The majority (90%) of the participants however, pointed out that male teachers sexually abuse more as compared to female teachers. The statement below by participant EP1 illustrates the views of most participants: *The behaviour of sexually abusing children is expected more from male teachers than female teachers. Many people do not believe that females are perpetrators of abuse. However, to a lesser extent women are capable of sexually abusing children. There are cases of such abuse by female teachers.* The same sentiments were also echoed by teachers and this is expressed in the words of participant T7FUB: *It is very common that male teachers sexually abuse students, more than female teachers. The media is awash with cases of male teachers as compared to female teachers who sexually abuse students.*

As indicated in literature studies, for instance a study by Kinyaduka and Kiwara in 2013 on the status of sexual relationships between students and teachers, it was found out that 60% of female students were approached by male teachers (Kinyaduka and Kiwara, 2013). .

While it is assumed that men are often responsible for sexually abusing children, in recent years, a number of high profile cases of female educator sexual misconduct have been uncovered in the media. In 2009 for example, Vanessa George sexually abused children at a nursery school where she worked in Plymouth in England. Her occupation was to provide a safe environment for children which she strongly violated. The case helped to dispel the myth that women are incapable of such crimes (Bexson, 2011: 5). Women are just as capable as men to sexually offend against children though to a lesser degree.

**5.2.1.3 Theme 1.3: Victims of sexual abuse**

Findings from this study revealed that all children are prone to sexual abuse in schools. However, most of the participants reported that girls are the main victims of sexual abuse in schools compared to boys. The following narratives from a learner, a teacher and educational psychologist illustrate the views of many of the participants on the issue:

L5FUD: *Girls are sexually abused more than boys because they are more vulnerable than boys. Also by nature, they are sexually attractive since they will have reached puberty.*

T4MRD: *From my recent assessment girls are more sexually victimised than boys. Statistics also reveal that girls are more sexually abused than boys.*

EP3*: Considering our male dominated society it is a danger to be a girl. Girls are more likely than boys to be at a higher risk of experiencing sexual abuse. Of course boys can also be sexually abused by both male and female teachers.*

This perception was also revealed in a study by Shakeshaft (2010:10) where it was found that female teachers frequently fell in love with male students. An example was given of a female teacher who was attracted to a male student in her class and would invite the student to her office and house and engage in sexual activities.

The findings from the empirical research also concur with findings in a study by the Child Research and Resource Centre (2009:52) in the Awutu-Senya, Effutu and Upper Manya Krobo districts of Ghana where all teachers interviewed (100%) and the majority of parents (81%) perceived girls to be more vulnerable to child sexual abuse. Female students experience more sexual victimization by teachers than male students (Tillyer et al., 2010:1074; Plan Germany, 2008:7). Studies also carried out in at least 15 countries in Sub Saharan Africa by Sweeney et al. (2013:90) backed up by media reports confirm that sexual

abuse of female learners by male teachers is wide spread. Thus, as confirmed by the qualitative inquiry it is clear that girls are primary victims of sexual abuse by male teachers in schools.

**5.2.1.4 Theme 1.4: Signs and symptoms of child sexual abuse**

According to Korn (2004:12) teachers need to recognise signs and symptoms of sexual abuse so as to be able to properly handle situations involving suspected abuse. Responding to the question on how one can tell that a child has been sexually abused, participants mentioned many signs and symptoms of child sexual abuse. The researcher quotes a teacher (T4MRB) saying:

*There are hints that help tell that a child has been sexually abused. By observation alone one can know that sexual abuse will have occurred. Some sexually abused children may walk awkwardly and sometimes withdraw from activities. These children are excessively shy avoiding eye contact, the performance in class declines and others may report the abuse.*

Another teacher (T5FUB) expressed her viewpoint of signs of sexual abuse as follows:

*When a learner is pregnant, has STIs this is evident that sexual abuse will have taken place. Enjoyment in (sic) sexual language and behaviour of some learners are also strong indicators that child sexual abuse will have happened or child is engaged in the activity.*

Learners also gave their perception on how one can tell that a learner has been sexually abused. L1FRD expressed her view as follows:

*In most cases if a learner has been sexually abused he/she is withdrawn, performance in class declines, walks in a weird way, and is sad most of the time.*

The above narratives indicate only a limited view of symptoms and signs of child sexual abuse which could be problematic in helping children. Educational psychologists are better

trained to see the necessary signs, but there are not educational psychologists in all schools to help with the identification of victims, thus sexual abuse often goes unreported.

One of the educational psychologists (EP3) categorised the various signs and symptoms into four main categories namely: emotional, physical, behavioural and educational.

EP3 *Indicators indicating that child sexual abuse will have occurred or is occurring are many.*

Interviewer**:** *Can you mention some?*

EP3: *These can be physical such as pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, emotional such as depression, and guilt, behavioural like being withdrawn, aggression, and absenteeism. There are also academic indicators such as drop in grades, and lack of concentration.*

The findings on the indicators of child sexual abuse in this study match findings by Mlyakado and Neema (2014: 283) who found that school girls' pregnancy is the salient indicator of sexual activity in schools. The above authors also established that inappropriate sexual behaviour, depression, and decline in school performance are for instance indicators of sexual abuse among secondary school learners.

From the above narratives one can deduce that most participants have a basic knowledge of what child sexual abuse is, who the most obvious perpetrators in schools are, as well as signs and symptoms of child sexual abuse, but this knowledge is not enough to safeguard learners from all sexual abuse. More knowledge and training are necessary.

## 5.2.2 CATEGORY 2: FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE BY TEACHERS

After establishing from the in-depth interviews that to a great extent, teachers, the very people who are responsible for the well-being of students, are the perpetrators of sexual

abuse, the next critical question asked to all the participants was "In your own opinion what are some of the reasons that lead teachers to sexually abuse learners?" A wide range of responses as to why teachers sexually abuse learners was given. What emerged from the responses was that abuse of power, poverty, some specific driving forces, lack of knowledge of the Code of Conduct, ignorance of the forms of sexual abuse, the abuse of modern technology, ideas about a cure for HIV and AIDs, as well as children seducing teachers, lead teachers to sexually abuse learners.

## 5.2.2.1 Theme 2.1: Abuse of power

An overwhelming number of participants stressed that the abuse of authority and positions of trust by teachers often is the cause of child sexual abuse. Learners are in a position of unequal power in their relationship with teachers. Therefore teachers can abuse their position of authority and trust by sexually abusing learners. A UNICEF study in 24 countries of West and Central Africa : Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo at the regional offices of Education in 2006, on persistent sexual abuse and exploitation of children at school, concluded that the most frequently cited situations of sexual abuse were based directly on the position of authority occupied by teachers (Maalla M'jid, 2008:17). The teacher–student relations were said to be marked by an abuse of authority based on the legitimate relation of superiority between teacher and student. Out of these countries 21 mentioned that teachers seduce students and 20 mentioned good grades in exchange for sexual relations (Maalla M'jid, 2008:17).

Participants in this research spoke openly about this misuse of positions by teachers. One of the educational psychologists (EP1) had this to say:

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*Teachers have ascribed authority. Their relationships with students are based on relationships of superiority. They use their power as a weapon to lure students who because of their socialization are taught to obey. In such a case the student will comply with whatever the teacher demands. They are easily targeted since they are socialized to obey adults.*

According to Richter, et al. (2007: 62) cultural scripts regarding respect and obedience to elders make it probable that children will not speak up against elders. Under such circumstances, the perpetrator is encouraged to continue to sexually abuse children, because of his/her position of power. Even learners were upset when they narrated how teachers use their positions of power to sexually abuse them. Participant L5FUD spoke bitterly saying:

*Some teachers use our weakness like poor performance to sexually abuse us. We will be caught in a trap since we would like to achieve good marks. Also some teachers fail to control their lust and just lure students whom they know that because of their lower positions that is, of being students will comply with the sexual advances.*

In support of the above, a report by Africa Rights (28) found cases of school teachers attempting to gain sex from learners in return for good grades or for not failing pupils in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Nigeria, Somali, South Africa, Sudan, Zambia and Zimbabwe (www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/global.../chap6.pdf). Furthermore, in a Liberian research on sexual abuse in schools, 18% of school girls and 13% of school boys reported having been asked by teachers for sex in exchange for good grades (Maalla M'jid, 2008:17).

It also emerged from the majority of participants that teachers use their authority to create one-on-one situations with learners in the guise of trying to help the learners with or getting a task done with the aim of sexually abusing them in the end. Participant T2MRD shares this view and says:

*When teachers ask students to come to their offices to help them with some extra lessons and in the end seduce the learners into sexual activities, they are abusing their power over these students. Some teachers also request students they wish to have sexual gratification with to, for example, carry books to their offices or places of residence with the intention of sexually abusing them.*

Paying special attention to some students, for example removing punishment from the student, is also an instance of how power is used by teachers to abuse students sexually. Virtually all sexual abuse of learners take place behind closed doors, in private settings in a one-on-one interaction between a teacher and a learner (Hobson, 2012:8). Shakeshaft (2002:33) asserts that a teacher may take a learner into a storage room attached to the classroom and engages the learner in sexual intercourse. Due to their power over learners, teachers create one-on-one situations with learners so as to sexually abuse them.

Learners have not learned to say 'no', because of their cultural upbringing of respect for all people older or with authority. As mentioned above learners may also confuse the notion of love and sex and because they often crave attention from somebody older, they will give in to sexual advances, because they construe it as love.

### 5.2.2.2 Theme 2.2: Poverty

This study identified poverty as one of the factors contributing to the vice of child sexual abuse in schools. Sweeney et al. (2013: 89) point to the fact that faced with economic constraints, many students choose to use their sexuality as a commodity for economic gain. An overwhelming majority of participants indicated that poor girls were more likely to engage in sexual activities than more well-off female learners. They were of the view that due to poverty, learners are targeted by teachers and learners themselves engage in sexual relations with teachers so as to alleviate their poverty by asking for money for sexual favours

Transactional sex is a fact acknowledged in feminist scholarship. Poverty is a key reason why poor students engage in transactional sex (Shefer, Clowes and Vergnani, 2012: 445). Babatunde and Ake (2015:60) aver that young women's construction of sex as a transactional activity is underpinned or motivated by economic benefits. Transactional sex among young females is a dominant practice. Despite the feeling of dissatisfaction within the context of transactional sex this will be the only option for them to ensure survival.

If parents fail to pay school fees, girl children were said to use their bodies as economic assets to meet their financial needs. This assertion is illustrated in the words of a male learner (L6MUD) who lamented: *Girls, especially from a poor background engage in sexual relationships with teachers so that they will have money to afford such things like cosmetics, and pocket money. At this stage compared to boys and due to peer pressure, girls especially would also like to be like those who can afford. The situation forces them to engage in sex so as to get what they want.*

Students thus not only engage in transactional sex to obtain better grades, but also to get money for instance for clothes and perfume. Teachers abuse/misuse the poverty of some learners to sexually abuse them in the process of taking care of their needs. One teacher (T6MUD) lamented: *Teachers sometimes take advantage of children who are in dire need of financial assistance. They prey on such students giving them money in exchange for sexual access. Girls have many needs at this stage compared to boys and hence they will comply with teachers' demands for sexual relations so that they could also afford to buy perfumes, and nice clothes.*

The issue of poverty as a leading cause of sexual abuse among learners was also noted by educational psychologists. The following comment from EP2 highlights the viewpoints of educational psychologists*: Sexual abuse of students is strongly factored by poverty. At*

*school, poverty drives poor students mainly girls to engage in sexual relations with teachers in order to meet their basic economic needs such as food, and clothing.*

The results corroborate the findings by Chinyoka who carried out a study in 2013 in the Masvingo district of Zimbabwe on psychosocial effects of poverty on academic performance of the girl child in 3 schools. The study found that teachers take advantage of poor vulnerable girl learners and ask for sexual favors in return for economic benefits. Some of these benefits come in the form of stationary and favours in class like exempting child from not doing punishment (Chinyoka, 2013:214). The Liberian 2012 research survey into school-related gender based violence carried out in the Bong, Montserrado, Grand Bassa and Grand Gedeh counties with 1858 students aged 10 to 20 years, also noted that some of the relationships between teachers and poor girls have the approval of parents who perceive them as a possible route to financial assistance for the household. One key informant in the mentioned survey said, "*The child may be sleeping with the teacher; the families are not proud, but they may see this as a good connection for the child or a good source of cash. If the family is proud it's because they think the teacher will marry their daughter*" (https://www.nrc.no/arch/_img/9180536.pdf). Data yielded has clearly shown that due to economic hardships some teenagers initiate sexual contacts with teachers for material gain. Parents are also to blame, because they often do not discourage such behaviours.

**5.2.2.3 Theme 2.3: Driving forces causing teachers to sexually abuse learners**

One of the responses participants gave to the question why teachers sexually abuse learners had to do with the teacher's background. Quite a number of participants (L5FUD, L7FUB, L8MUB, T1FRD, T2MRD, T3FRB, T5FUD, EP1 and EP3) mentioned that some driving forces related to the background of the teacher can contribute to sexual abuse of learners.

The following quotes from some participants illustrate the views of many participants:

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T8MUB: *Other teachers sexually abuse learners simply because it is in their genes. They come from families where quite a number of the family members are highly sexual, committing many sexual offences.*

The same sentiments were also echoed by educational psychologists (EP2) as illustrated in the following quote: *Some people have uncontrollable sexual urges. A male teacher for example, can be easily sexually aroused by a sexually attractive student that is, a beautiful girl with an attractive structure. The student's appearance causes the teacher to want to involve himself sexually with the student by for instance, touching her breasts, and having sex with her. Lust of the flesh causes some teachers to sexually abuse students.*

According to the participants' perception, where lust prevails, it leads teachers seek to gratify their sexual needs by engaging in sexual activities with learners. The same sentiments were also echoed by participant L7FUB who angrily made the following statement: *Some teachers are just lusty. I think they enjoy sexual activities with virgins.*

Learner participants were also aware that lack of sexual gratification with one's spouse is a driving force for sexual abuse by teachers. This is what the participant L8MUB had to say:

*Some teachers do not get enough sexual satisfaction with their wives. To compensate for the lack of sexual contentment they engage in sexual relationships with students.*

To concur with this view in his study on the etiology of sexual abuse in schools, Shumba (2011:132) interviewed education officers. The education officers revealed that most cases of sexual abuse in schools tend to involve young teachers who are married and who seem not to be satisfied with their marriages.

The literature review further supports the finding that some teachers sexually abuse learners because they were also victims of similar abuse (Kring, 2011:106). Sexual abusers mirror their own victimisation in perpetrating sexual abuse against others. Studies have found the

victim-to-victimizer relationship in the context of sexual abuse as an explanation to why abusers sexually abuse (Kring, 2011:106). One study cited by Kring looked at four facets of sexual victimization of individual perpetrators namely: the gender of the abuser, the relationship between the victim and the abuser, the modus operandi, and the severity or type of acts. Results indicated that abusers were likely to abuse the same type of person who abused them, and a person of the same gender as person who abused them. In research on perpetrators of sexual abuse, Jones and Jemott (2010:11) found that half the survey respondents thought that men who sexually abuse children had been sexually abused themselves. Jespersen, Lalumiere and Seto (2009:18) as well as Irenyi et al. (2006:8) confirm that experiences of child sexual abuse in childhood to a certain extent contribute to later offending, but not always.

The excerpt below by EP3 reflect some of the participants' views, and is an indication that victims of sexual abuse can also become abusers: *Others may sexually abuse because they were also sexually abused when they were young and would therefore feel like revenging, though not to their abuser. Some victims who grew up experiencing violence like in violent homes may become aggressive and commit such offenses as sexually abusing others.*

However, Richards (2011) carried out a study on misperceptions about child sexual offenders in Canberra and found that not all victims of sexual abuse become perpetrators and not all perpetrators have experienced abuse as children. This viewpoint by Richards (2011) is also shared by one British study which examined the future offending behaviour of boys who had been sexually abused and found that the vast majority did not go on to commit sexual offences as adults (http;//www.livingwell.org.au).

It is evident from the above excerpts and supporting literature review that lust or uncontrollable sexual urges lead teachers to sexually abuse learners. Another driving force

for sexual abuse by teachers is that the teacher may be experiencing problems in their own marriages. The fact that the teacher abuser was also sexually abused when young, that is, the victimizer-as-victim hypothesis, can also cause the teacher to sexually abuse learners, although not all studies concur with that. Most of the above discussion put the blame on the perpetrator, his/her urges and his/her background, which is an indication of the assistance the abusers need to become more acceptable in society.

**5.3.2.4 Theme 2.4: Lack of knowledge of the Code of Conduct and poor law enforcement by school authorities**

A Code of Conduct is a set of guidelines in a written document produced by professional organisations which details the set of recognised ethical norms or values and professional standards of conduct to which all members of a profession must adhere to (Poisson, 2009:16). Participants T1FRD, T4MRB, T5FUD, T8MUB, EP2 and EP3 listed the lack of enough understanding of laws governing the conduct in their profession as a cause of sexual abuse by teachers. This finding only emerged from teachers and educational psychologists, maybe because they are more knowledgeable in this area than learners.

Participant T1FRD had this to say*: It seems most teachers are not quite aware of the Code of Conduct when they sexually abuse learners. If a teacher is knowledgeable about the Code of Conduct he or she should know the professional standards that need to be upheld to ensure learners' safety,* as well as the consequences.

If teachers are aware of the Code of Conduct and adhere to moral accountability they will refrain from sexually abusing learners, according to the above perception.

 Participants also expressed the viewpoint that poor enforcement of laws often results in teachers committing sexual offences, for instance:

EP1*: There are many policies that reflect commitment by school staff to fight sexual abuse. However, some teachers disregard these policies in which they should act in loco-parentis. They are not hesitant to sexually abuse students.*

Interviewer*: Why are some teachers not hesitant to sexually abuse learners according to your viewpoint?*

EP1*: Some teachers commit sexual offences because they would have seen other sexual abuse cases not seriously dealt with. If teachers who commit such a crime are seriously dealt with by suspending them for a long time like 10 years or terminating their services, then would-be perpetrators will fear to commit similar offences.*

The excerpt above is a clear indication that poor enforcement of the laws or rules and regulations in the Code of Conduct encourages child sexual abuse since the abuser will have noted other abusers getting away with the crime. Although many child sexual abusers are discharged from the profession, many cases go unreported (Maphosa, Mutukwe, Machingambi, Wadesango and Ndofirepi, 2012:55). Some offenders are demoted, others transferred to other schools and with others no action is taken. In some cases a teacher can also give some money to a girl's family, in order for them to withdraw the case.

In line with the findings of the empirical research, a study by Fiscian (2008) of 3 government schools in Ghana to gather data on the abuse of girls in schools, showed there were several cases of teachers having affairs with girls in the school. However, the school and district authorities took little, if any, action in response (Plan Germany, 2008:52). This finding corroborates with findings made by Opobo and Wandega in 2011 in a study of the marginalised child. They found that despite a relatively robust and comprehensive legal and policy framework on child sexual abuse, enforcement of these laws against abusers was extremely low. Some law enforcement agencies connived with perpetrators to deny justice

for victims. The laws failed to play a role in deterring the perpetrator (Opobo and Wandega, 2011: 23).

In Zimbabwe, child sexual abuse is punishable by law. Existing pieces of legislation such as the sexual offences Act 2001, the Protocol on the Multisectoral Management of Sexual Abuse and Violence in Zimbabwe, and the Domestic Violence Act (2006) have been harmonised with international law in an effort to protect children against sexual abuse (Gwirayi, 2013:11). As an example, section 10 of the Sexual Offences Act indicates that an adult who has sexual intercourse with a minor is guilty of an offence and will be prosecuted, but despite these laws, sexual abuse by teachers still continues. Shumba (cited in Smith, 2008:134) in his interviews with education officers responsible for professional administration revealed that it is also strongly suspected that some school heads connive and collaborate with perpetrators who are their relatives. The heads pretend to be ignorant about the case and this situation promotes sexual abuse of learners in the school environment.

### 5.2.2.5 Theme 2.5: Learners lack empowerment

Another factor responsible for the sexual abuse of learners mentioned by many participants was the lack of empowerment by the learners. They expressed that low levels of awareness on different forms of sexual abuse and learners' rights regarding how other people, especially teachers, should treat them, often lead to sexual abuse. Participant T6MUD spoke with concern saying: *Some students are ignorant that they are being sexually abused. Where they experience milder forms of abuse such as a sexual joke they do not regard it as sexual abuse. They might think that sexual abuse only involves the actual sexual intercourse. Students do not have the courage to say 'no' to inappropriate proposal and physical contacts. In other words, they become victims because they are unaware of their rights.*

This view is better explained by Opobo and Wandega (2011:15) as well as Proulx (2011:34) when they state that some students are unaware that fondling by a teacher is inappropriate and may result in sexual intercourse. Gwirayi (2013:6) cites a study conducted by Gwirayi and Shumba in 2011 on children's awareness about their rights. In the study they found that most secondary school learners were not aware of their rights and have little knowledge about organisations which deal with their rights. Children' awareness of their rights as opined by Gwirayi (2013:7) denotes some form of empowerment and without that awareness children are not empowered, and therefore adults can abuse their position of power/authority without any consequences.

Learners also acknowledged that lack of empowerment about sexual abuse issues leads to learners being sexually abused. They asserted that learners are not assertive in rejecting unwelcome proposals from teachers simply because they feel obliged to respect elders as a result of their socialization. This is what L5FUD shared:

*When in a situation of sexual abuse learners do not know what to do. I think they are not fully empowered on how to recognise tactics used to lure them to engage in sexual activities. They also do not know how to refuse these advances. It's a pity that some students do not report the abuse because they have not been encouraged to do so. The abuser tells the student to keep the affair a secret and because the student has not been empowered he/she will comply.*

In line with the findings of this research, literature indicates that children are sexually violated in schools because they lack knowledge of their rights, of how to be assertive, and of where to report sexual abuse. Of the children who participated in the Child Research and Resource Centre (CRRESCENT) study (2009: 37), 87.2% did not know of any institution that supports victims of sexual abuse. These children, thus, lack adequate knowledge for self-protection.

**5.2.2.6 Theme 2.6: Abuse/misuse of modern technology**

It emerged from this study that modern technology can lead teenagers to engage in sexual activities. Despite the positive impact of informing, educating, and entertaining, modern technology was said to influence secondary school children to become sexually active. Findings of this study revealed that in the school situation learners have access to the internet through their mobile phones where they have access to a lot of sexual material through social networking cites, video games, and YouTube. In the words of participant T4 MRB:

*Nowadays most secondary school learners have mobile phones and other modern gadgets with internet facilities. They can watch sexual movies, download pornographic material. This all influences them to bad sexual conduct.*

Participant EP3 had this to say on how the misuse of modern technology can lead to children getting involved in sexual abuse: *The emergence of the Internet despite the intellectual and social benefits, has presented opportunities for sexual expression and deviance to students. From the social networking forums students can observe and access sexual material like text, images, and videos. They receive and forward sexual material. These modern technology advances make sexual exchanges much easier than before. Some can experiment sexually.*

Responses from participants revealed that in schools most learners have online access where they are exposed to sexual content and games which will most probably alter their sexual attitudes and behaviours. Similar sentiments were echoed by learners. Participant L3FRB concludes:

*Most students now have mobile cell phones where they can access the internet. From the internet they can access and download pornography.*

The findings in the above excerpts match findings in a study by Magwa (2013:15) on the impact of modern technology on the educational attainment of adolescents in the Masvingo district. It was confirmed that most teens are able to download and post sexual videos. It was also found that they often send and receive sexually suggestive messages from the Internet. Video games were said to provide youths with opportunities to be exposed to or engaged in sexual activities. According to a survey conducted by the London School of Economics in 2002, 90% of children between 8 and 16 years of age have viewed pornography on internet (Louge, 2006:2). Learners exposed to pornographic material through Internet are more likely to report permissive sexual attitudes than youth with less exposure, but they also engage in materials of a sexual nature more easily than learners not exposed. Learners should learn to manage their own use of internet resources and parents should get education as how to give their inputs in their children's abuse of their technological exposure.

**5.2.2.7 Theme 2.7:  Ideas about a cure for the HIV and AIDS virus**

Literature reiterates that there is a belief of some traditional doctors that having sexual intercourse with a virgin cleanses the perpetrator of HIV and AIDS infection (Kibarue-Mbae 2011:38; Thompson and Wilkinson 2010:48; Devasia and Kumar 2009:71, as well as Laror, 2005:10). This presumed cure for HIV and AIDS was said to be one reason why some teachers sexually abuse learners. However, this assertion was mentioned by very few participants. In the words of one female learner (L2MRD): *Some teachers who are HIV positive seek treatment from traditional healers who tell them that if they sleep with virgins they will be cured of the virus.*

However, most participants felt that this presumed cure for HIV and AIDS was just a myth as reflected in the words of T1FRD: *Some people believe abusers sexually abuse because they want to be cured of HIV and AIDS. This is only a myth.*

Interviewer: *Why do you say sexually abusing a child in order to get cured is only a myth?*

T1FRD: *When HIV and AIDS were first discovered, people had little knowledge on how one could be cured. In an effort to get cured the affected people were advised by traditional healers that having sex with a virgin would cure them of the virus. By seeing those who took this advice not getting healed most have avoided the practice. Now also, with volumes of information concerning the virus, educated people like teachers know that the virus has no cure and therefore they cannot engage in sexual intercourse with virgins in order to be cured. Rather, they seek other ways to get along with the virus mainly taking anti-retroviral drugs.*

Participant EP2 also refuted the assertion that sex with a virgin cures a person of the HIV and AIDS virus saying: *The belief that having sex with a virgin is a cure for the HIV and AIDs virus has been around since the beginning of the pandemic. HIV infected men raped children with the hope of getting treated of this virus. Now there is more accurate information on HIV and AIDS and most people are now aware that sex with a virgin is not a cure for the HIV and AIDS virus.*

With regards to the HIV and AIDS cure, literature still asserts that in some countries they are grappling with the issue of many adults sexually abusing children in order to be cured of the virus. There is a perception that children are HIV free and having sexual intercourse with them cures a person infected with the virus (Opobo and Wandega, 2011:24).

### 5.2.2.8 Theme 2.8: Learners seduce teachers

One of the major factors contributing to child sexual abuse by teachers in schools was associated with the learners themselves. Many participants made it clear that some learners are sexually abused because they seduce the teachers. Teachers were regarded as victims of sexual abuse by some learners. Several reasons were proffered to explain why learners seduce

teachers. Some of these include wanting to meet financial needs due to poverty, peer pressure, and hoping to get married.

The following quotes highlight the overall sentiments of some of the learners, teachers and educational psychologists concerning the matter. Participant T8MUB said that: *Students, mainly girls, cause teachers to sexually abuse them. They seduce male teachers by the way they dress for instance by wearing miniskirts, transparent clothing, indecent make up and also by sexual gestures they perform in front of teachers. Students seduce teachers because they would like to get special favours, some would like to get support in terms of money for pocket money or fees and others are naturally lusty.*

It was revealed that female learners especially dress and behave provocatively to seduce teachers with the aim of having their financial, and sexual needs met. Participant TIFRD made the following remark:

*In Guidance and Counseling we tell learners to have good morals, and wear decent clothes but ooh! Some students turn deaf ears and go to the extent of shortening their skirts, and engaging in too close contacts with teachers, with the aim of seducing them so that they will get some benefits like money, gifts and special favours.*

Learners were of the same opinion that some students sexually seduce teachers. However, in addition to reasons such as wanting to get special favours and pocket money, the learners mentioned another good reason not mentioned by the adult participants why students seduce. They said the seductive students especially girls would have the hope of getting married to the teacher.

Participant L3FRB explains: *Sometimes it is our fault. Some teachers are young and students think that by be-friending the teacher they can be lucky and end up getting married by the*

*teacher. Others simply want favours, and free transport. The way some girls carry themselves around and dress trigger feelings of the teachers.*

Educational psychologists were also of the opinion that teachers sexually abuse learners because they are provoked by the way some of these learners dress and act. Participant EP2 explained: *Sometimes students mainly girls invite for sexual activities from teachers by the way they dress and act. You will find some girls wearing short skirts, and revealing clothes for example during civics days and weekends (for those at boarding schools) where they are allowed to wear non formal clothes. Promiscuous behaviours are sometimes invitations for sexual activity.*

From the excerpts it is quite obvious that some learners seduce teachers by the way they dress, talk and behave with the aim of satisfying their material needs, getting special favours, gratifying their sexual appetite and getting married. Nevertheless, as rightly put by Maalla M'jid (2008:18) the suggestion that teachers may be victims of sexual abuse by learners seeking to survive should not override the offence of gross misconduct committed by teachers who give in to involvement in sexual relations. After all, teachers are supposed to be the responsible adults in the school context.

**5.2.3 CATEGORY 3: EFFECTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE ON THE ABUSED LEARNERS**

Literature shows that there are many negative effects of child sexual abuse that can take away any chance of normal childhood development. Child sexual abuse has significant detrimental consequences on children's physical, psychological, academic and behavioural development (Child Welfare, 2014:2). A myriad of the possible short and long term effects were mentioned in this study and these are discussed under four main themes namely the physical, emotional, behavioural and educational impact of child sexual abuse as shown in Figure 5.3.
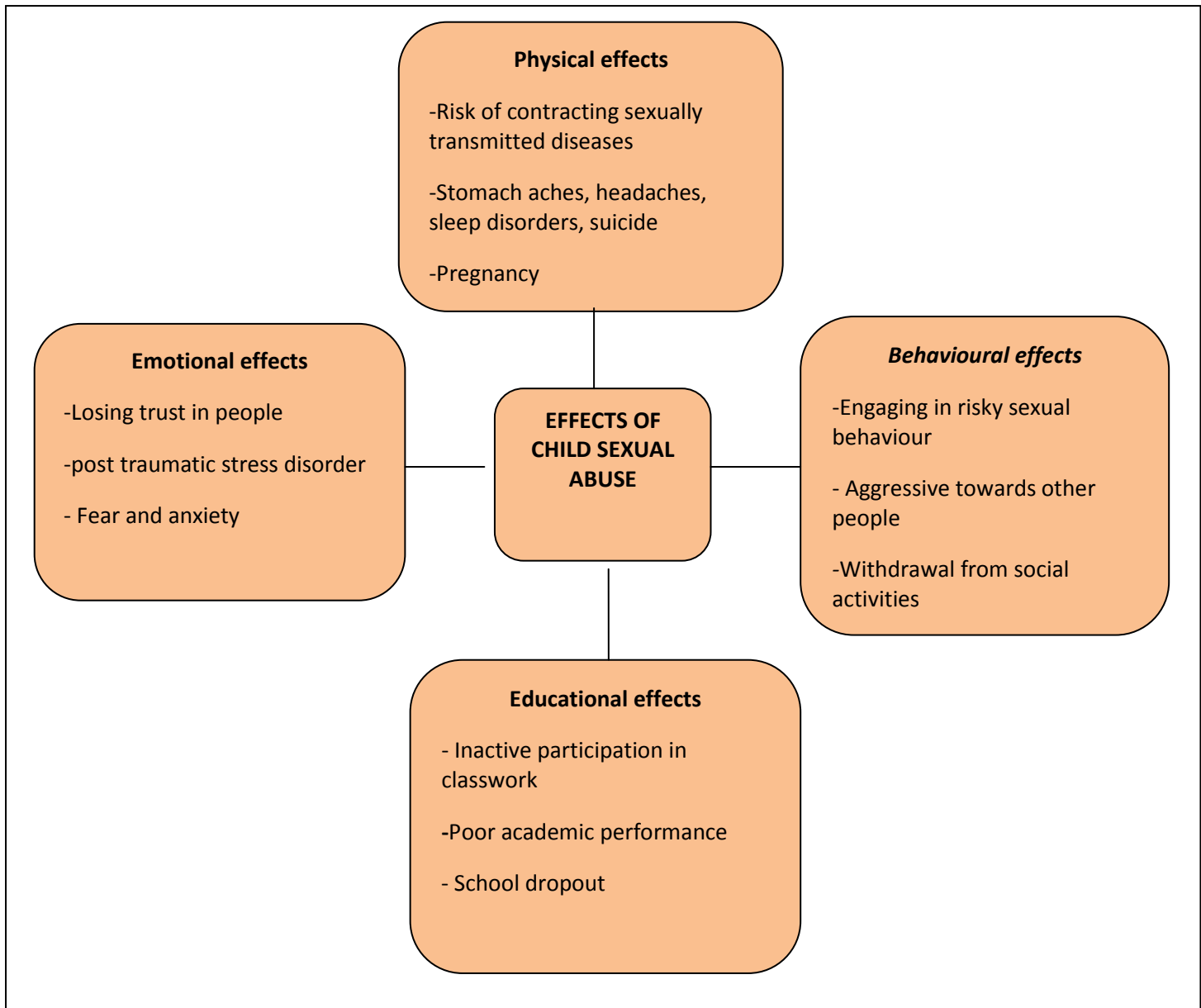
**Figure 5.3: Themes on effects of child sexual abuse on learners established by study**

## 5.2.3.1 Theme 3.1: Physical Effects

Child sexual abuse was said to have a physical impact on sexually abused learners. The majority of the participants pointed out that the sexually abused learners are at the risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections including HIV infections, when they engage in direct vaginal or anal sexual intercourse. Forced sex was also said to result in abrasions

and/or cuts which could result in even more infections. Some health problems as revealed by the study result from sexual abuse included headaches, stomach aches, lack of appetite, and sleep disorders which are physical symptoms of emotional trauma. The seriousness of the physical impact of sexual abuse on the learner victim is evident in the following statement by a male teacher (T2MRD): *One worrisome effect of sexual abuse is that the students can get sexually transmitted diseases. Getting HIV and AIDS is the end of life for the students. These girls will have little control on asking for protection from pregnancy and infections, like wearing condoms.*

These findings are similar to findings by Chinyoka (2013: 216) who carried out a study in the Masvingo district secondary schools in Zimbabwe on consequences of poverty on girl children. The study found that by engaging in sexual relations for economic gain, the girls were at risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases and HIV infection.

Most participants also mentioned becoming pregnant as one of the most negative impact of sexual abuse on learners. The words of EP2 illustrate the views of most participants. He said:

*It is very pathetic that some girls due to sexual abuse become pregnant and this will be unwanted. The pregnancy can have further problems for the learner like depression, abortion, dropping out of school, and in death during delivery.*

Learners also echoed the same sentiments as teachers and educational psychologists saying that a sexually abused child is at risk of contracting infectious diseases and becoming pregnant if the victim is a girl. Participant L3FRB expressed the following painful viewpoint: *The abuser may be HIV positive or have a sexually transmitted disease such as syphilis. When the student is sexually abused by such a person then most likely he/she may contract sexually transmitted diseases. If it is a girl she loses her virginity and at the same time can become pregnant.*

In a study on negative impacts of adolescent sexuality problems among secondary school students in Oworonshoki, Lagos by Zachariah, Ajayi, Oguntola, Izegbu and Ashiru (2007:26), 60% of the 600 students revealed that abortion was common among 12-18 year old students. It was also found that 11% of the girls had engaged in the practice more than twice and hemorrhage was the chief complication. Literature also ascertains that due to fear of being stigmatised, dismissed from school, and being neglected by family, pregnant learners opt for abortion (International Planned Parenthood Federation, (IPPF) 2012:36).

In the researcher's opinion these physical effects also lead to other effects like behavioural, emotional, and educational consequences. Physical effects go hand in hand with emotional effects, because of the trauma to the body.

### 5.2.3.2 Theme 3.2: Emotional effects

Emotions are strong feelings of any kind (Hornby, 1995:377). Participants sadly reported that sexual abuse has severe negative emotional effects on victims. It emerged from the study that it is very worrisome for learners to be sexually abused by teachers whom they trust to protect them from all forms of harm. It was pointed out that when teachers commit sexual offences on these innocent children, they damage these children psychologically and emotionally. Sexual abuse was said to be a traumatic experience for the abused. Participant EP2 had this to say about the emotional effect of child sexual abuse:

*Sexually abused children can develop emotional distress especially when people who are in positions of trust like teachers abuse them. Such children will lose trust in other teachers and other people. They will also disrespect the teachers. Feelings of guilt, shame, and helplessness are felt by these children and eventually they will suffer from depression.*

Sexually abused children suffer from many mental health problems. It is a sad scenario when children lose trust in other people. The researcher cites a quote from studies carried out by Ah

Hing (2009: 24) in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa on the impact of sexual abuse on learners illustrating the emotional effects of sexual abuse. As expressed by one student participant in his research:

*I went through these periods of PTSD-like symptoms (post-traumatic stress disorder) of re-living my experiences over and over again in my head, getting nightmares, being hyper-fearful and suffering from intense anxiety.*

Fear as reflected in the quote develops as learners will constantly think about what might become of them in future or that the abuser will continue to sexually abuse them. These findings also echo previous research conducted by Thabane (2014) in high schools of South Africa in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, North West and the Western Cape provinces on the effects of school violence on adolescent girl learners. Of the adolescent girl learners, 51% indicated experiences of emotional distress after being sexually harassed at school. Also, 49% indicated that they stayed away from school because of fear and victimisation (Thabane, 2014:512).

Participants pointed to depression as a negative consequence of sexual abuse. They pointed to the fact that mere thoughts of recalling the sexual encounter stresses the abused child and the result can be depression. Participant T3FRB spoke with emphasis saying:

*A sexually abused child is so depressed that he/she fails to mix with others, and in class the child does not fully concentrate. Some sexually abused children may think of committing suicide to get rid of these disturbing, guilt feelings of the sexual abuse.*

Participant L6MUD gave this narrative on the emotional consequences of sexual abuse on the abused student: *When a student has been sexually abused he/she will be having difficult times. The victim is always worried most of the time fearing for the consequences of this abuse on self, such as contracting diseases, pregnancy, and fearing that the abuse will*

*continue. The abused is also depressed thinking that parents and friends will regard her/him as a person of loose morals.*

The excerpt cited below illustrates the emotional effects of sexual abuse as expressed by a girl learner from Uganda (Plan Germany, 2008:33):

*Our teachers should be there to teach us and not to touch us where we don't want or to solicit love favors from us girls. We are irritated by love advances from teachers. I feel like disappearing from the world if a person who is supposed to protect me instead destroys me.*

Literature notes various emotional effects of sexual abuse. The most common emotions seem to be fear and anxiety, unhappiness and depression, shame and guilt, lack of confidence, loss of trust and poor self-esteem (Sweeney et al., 2013: 91; de Wet 2010:226; Pinheiro, 2006:63). The authors above, further state that the impact of child sexual abuse by teachers is complicated by the fact that children are victimized by the people they love and trust.

### 5.2.3.3 Theme 3.3: Behavioural effects

Results from the study also revealed that sexual abuse impacts negatively on the behaviour of the abused learners. Participants lamented that there is a behavioural change from good behaviour to nasty behaviour as the abused children vent their anger. This is reflected in the words of a female teacher (T7FUB): *Some changes can be observed in the behaviour of a sexually abused student. The victim who has experienced or is experiencing sexual abuse withdraws from social activities, is aggressive, rejects authority, is preoccupied with pornography, and absents self from lessons.*

From the Educational psychologists' viewpoint it was also evident that sexual abuse has a behavioural impact on abused learners. The following narrative portrays the viewpoint of one of the educational psychologists EP3:  A s*exually abused student may engage in risky*

*behaviours such as early sexual activity, alcohol and drug abuse, and gang involvement. The victim may also withdraw from previously enjoyed activities. There is a noticeable negative change in behaviour.*

Learners also gave their viewpoints on the behavioural impact of sexual abuse on the abused learner. One of the learners (L8MUB) explains the behaviour changes as a result of sexual abuse as follows: *When a student is abused his/her behaviour is affected badly. The abused learner will be bitter about the abuse and will end up being rude, involving self in sexual activities, isolating self from others, and attempting suicide. Others will depend on alcohol and drug abuse so as not to think about the abuse.*

Literature on child victims of sexual abuse also supports the findings of this study. Child victims are at greater risk of engaging in risky sexual behaviour. For example girls who are sexually abused in the school environment may also trivialise commercial sexual encounters for good grades, lodging or food (Antonowicz, 2010:29). The author further stresses that the victims of sexual abuse may have problems eating and sleeping, because of emotional stress.

### 5.2.3.4 Theme 3.4: Educational effects

One very disturbing finding of the study was that there is a very strong link between child sexual abuse and poor academic performance and/or failing to complete education. An overwhelming number of participants pointed out that the education of the sexually abused learners is disrupted as a result of the abuse. Participant L1FRD's comments portray some of these results:

*If a student is being or has been sexually abused, his or her pass rate drops. The student is always troubled about what others will say about him or her such as being thought of as a person of weak morals. If it is a girl, she may be pregnant and ends up dropping from school.*

Similar sentiments were shared by adult participants who expressed that as a result of experiencing sexual trauma, learners can hardly concentrate on their academic work since they will be preoccupied with what happened and what will happen next and this negatively impacts on their school performance. Fear of being further victimised, feelings of shame, guilt and depression can affect learners' participation in class. Participant T7FUB spoke at length about the negative educational impact of sexual abuse on learner victims saying: *The impact of child sexual abuse is very high on the academic performance of sexually abused students. Participation in class is low as the students will think of the consequences to come. Even those who enjoy the sexual activities, their performance will decrease since their energy and interest will be directed to the pleasure derived from the sexual activities. Some learners will avoid attending classes of the teacher abusers (sic) and some will end up not coming to school thereby affecting their educational aspirations.* Educational psychologists also pointed out the negative consequences of sexual abuse on the school performance of abused learner as reflected in the words of participant EP1: *Sexual abuse has a destructive impact on the academic performance of the abused students. A sexually abused student rarely performs at his/her prior academic level. An abused student may be continually living in fear for example, of coming in contact with the abuser during abuser's lessons and this leads him/her to absent self from these lessons or even transfer and this affects the academic performance.*

A study by Mlyakado and Neema (2014:282) with students from Dar es Salam who were in sexual relations showed that most of them had poor academic performance. The researchers proved that students' sexual relations influence academic performance adversely. Allnock and Hynes (2011:16) assert that children with histories of child sexual abuse show poorer cognitive performance and lower achievement.

A finding from a study on pregnant learners in schools reveals that pregnant learners perform badly in class. Matlala et al.(2014:4) in their study on the experience of teaching pregnant

learners in Limpopo province found that teachers stigmatise the learners and the learners themselves feel humiliated. The learners were also said to be inactive since pregnancy can be tiresome. The study found that these pregnant learners perform badly in class. In line with this, the researcher quotes one girl from Monrovia, Liberia voicing challenges faced by pregnant teenagers and young mothers:

*"People say that being pregnant as a teen or being a teenage mother is a problem by itself...*

*because you are still to be taken care of but now you are taking care of somebody else.....*

*You will now be worrying and you will not have time to play when you are in school and...*

*You will be failing because you will no longer be paying attention to your lessons and*

*Your friends will no longer want to be identified with you. Sometimes you may even think about killing yourself..."*

Source: *International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) 2012: 33.*

The researcher can conclude that child sexual abuse is a threat to the physical, emotional, behavioural and educational development of learners. It influences the victims' progress thus resulting in failure to attain their career goals. Children deserve to live fearless lives and achieve their goals thus this vice needs to be addressed.

## 5.2.4 CATEGORY 4: PREVENTION OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE BY TEACHERS IN SCHOOLS

In the light of the high prevalence of child sexual abuse by teachers and the deleterious outcomes associated with this abuse, participants in this study were asked how learners can be set free from such a menace in order to learn in a free environment. Virtually, all participants strongly felt that children need to be educated, healthy, safe and happy. Sexual abuse by teachers was said to create an unsafe environment for teaching and learning and also represents a serious concern for the teaching profession. Child sexual abuse has significant

detrimental consequences on children's physical, psychological, academic and behavioural development The following words by a female learner reflect the views of the participants on the need to prevent child sexual abuse by teachers in schools:

L7FUB: *Sexual abuse by teachers is shameful and damages the future of students. Students' goals are destroyed. They are always stressed, and can get diseases and all this calls for this harmful practice to be stopped so that students learn freely and achieve what they want.*

Participants were further asked to mention the people who are supposed to take part in the prevention of child sexual abuse by teachers in schools. The responses from participants pointed out that learners, parents and other school staff should take part in the prevention of child sexual abuse. Participant T5FUD gave a detailed account of stakeholders responsible for prevention of child sexual abuse from teachers in schools. She had this to say:

*Many stakeholders need to be involved to fight this social health problem. Firstly, the school head and all staff members need to be included in the prevention process. Next, the students themselves play a crucial role in preventing themselves from the abuse. Parents and guardians also should join in the fight against sexual abuse. Other people like police, chiefs, and pastors need to be included in sexual abuse prevention at school.*

Goldman (2005:82) believes that schools should be the first line of defense against child sexual abuse. Teachers who have knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes towards child protection can contribute to the safety of their learners. Family members have a duty to protect children against sexual abuse so that the children enjoy childhood as a time of play that is peaceful *(*Hanzi, 2006:21; Schober et al., 2012:463). Community campaigns, while supporting a comprehensive model that include educating children and youth, should promote adult and community responsibility to work towards preventing child sexual abuse. While child sexual abuse prevention has mostly been directed at educating teachers and parents,

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prevention strategies should be directed at children as well. Both the abused and non-abused children are definitely part of the prevention (Scholes et al., 2012:108).

**5.2.4.1 Theme 4.1: Role of school in prevention of child sexual abuse by teachers in schools**

All participants pointed out that the members of staff play a critical role in the prevention since these were said to be with the learners for most of their time at school. Various ways the school can prevent child sexual abuse by teachers were mentioned.

Many participants (T2MRD, T3FRB, T5FUD, T8MUB, L3FRB, L4MRB, L5FUD, L6MUD, L7FUB and all 3 educational psychologists) were of the view that schools should hold workshops with school staff, parents and learners to make them aware of issues pertaining to child sexual abuse. It was said that these educational programmes should focus on what constitutes child sexual abuse, acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, grooming tactics used by teacher abusers, indicators of child sexual abuse, effects of the abuse on victims, and reporting procedures in the event of suspected or actual sexual abuse. The following quotation by EP3 portrays these findings:

*Teachers, parents, guardians and learners need to be educated on child sexual abuse; its effects and ways to avoid it. Involvement of these people offers the greatest opportunity of keeping our students from sexual abuse. Involving other people like parents will also make them educate their children.*

The literature review supports this finding when Finkelhor (2009:179) states that educational initiatives should be aimed at children, their families, teachers and others who may be in a position to intervene. The school-based programmes should aim to impart skills on how to identify dangerous situations, identify boundary violations, ways in which abusers groom victims, how to refuse abuser's approach, how to break off interactions, and how to summon

help. The programmes also aim to promote disclosure and to reduce self-blame. de Wet (2010:209) indicates that educational awareness where learners should be educated on forms of sexual abuse as well as dealing with abuse from educators should be part of the curriculum. Educators also should be sensitised and informed regarding sexual abuse and their duty towards protection of all children.

A handful of teachers and educational psychologists pointed out that another way to curb child sexual abuse by teachers in schools was for schools to have a Code of Conduct for teachers, learners and parents. The Code of Conduct should include acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, clear instructions governing social interactions between teachers and students, procedures for reporting the abuse, penalties for misbehavior and data records of previous cases of child sexual abuse complaints and outcomes of the investigations. Participant T8MUB had this to say:

*One way for preventing teachers from sexually abusing learners is for schools to have Codes of Conducts. A Code of Conduct serves as a guiding compass in the teaching profession. It should be clear and detail penalties for sexual misconduct.*

Other ways schools can implement help to prevent sexual abuse of learners is to give more attention to training more teachers in Guidance and Counseling (all teachers, L8MUB, L3FRB), to establish a Child Protection Committee (T6MUD, T8MUB, L5FUD, EP1, EP2), and to have suggestion boxes (EP2, T3FRB, T2MRD, L3FRB). The words of a female rural teacher, T1FRD point to these participants' suggestions:

*Guidance and Counseling departments or clubs are crucial in helping students from being sexually abused. Drama and speeches are held in a bid to guide learners to resist sexual abuse. Child protection committees should be set in schools to look into such issues. Through such structures knowledge and skills regarding sexual abuse are increased.*

Gwirayi's (2013) study on fighting child sexual abuse in the Gweru district of Zimbabwe with secondary school learners found that the introduction of Guidance and Counseling classes plays an important role in protecting learners from sexual abuse. Counseling helps to sensitise learners to dangers of sexual misconduct.

In suggesting ways of preventing sexual abuse, Finkelhor (2009:123) asserts that there is a need for pre-service and in-service teacher education where teachers study and discuss child sexual abuse. The author further states that the training improves all teachers' competence and skills to recognise child abuse and to educate children about child sexual abuse prevention strategies. Professional development in the area of child sexual abuse is seriously lacking and evidence suggests a critical need for training. Training should include background information about child sexual abuse, identifying sexual abuse, handling of disclosures, and positive attitudes towards the reporting duty (Scholes et al., 2012:106).

In line with the literature review, teachers and educational psychologists in this study mentioned that to fight child sexual abuse by teachers, there is need for both pre-service and in-service training for teachers. It was revealed that professional training helps educators acquire knowledge to facilitate in protecting students from child sexual abuse. This strategy was also mentioned by participant T4MRB who said: *Teachers need some in-service training on child sexual abuse issues such as what it constitutes, signs and symptoms, and how to assist children from the abuse (sic). Most teacher training colleges offer very little training in child protection issues. Teacher training colleges should include Child Abuse as a subject in their curriculum.*

The study's findings also match results of the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) survey. The survey gathered that prevention training should include

information on appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, scenarios depicting questionable interactions between teachers and students by school personnel (Child Welfare, 2014:22).

Shumba (2011) made similar findings in his study on student teachers' perceptions of the nature, extent and causes of child abuse in Zimbabwean secondary schools. Participants suggested schools should have a suggestion box for reporting child abuse like sexual abuse. Such a suggestion box could scare away would-be-perpetrators in the school (Shumba, 2011: 178).

Suggestion boxes were also said to help in preventing child sexual abuse in schools. Participant T3FRB explained: *To prevent sexual abuse of learners by teachers the schools should also have suggestion boxes where any grievances concerning child sexual abuse are placed. These suggestion boxes should be opened by at least 3 people. If one person opens some of the information might be destroyed.*

**5.2.4.2 Theme 4.2: Role of educational psychologists in prevention of child sexual abuse by teachers in schools**

Educational psychologists provide a unique contribution to the educational system. They are highly trained in areas of child development, learning, consultation, assessment, counseling and human relations (www.casponline.org/pdfs/pdfs/General%20Ed.%20Paper%20Final%201).

The Educational psychologists were asked to state their role in child sexual abuse prevention in schools. The three psychologists were quite clear on how they work with schools to prevent the abuse. Participant EP1 shared the same perception with the other two saying:

*We train children [in] life skills like being assertive, reporting so as to be able to handle sexual abuse. Educational psychologists have a duty of staff developing teachers, sensitizing them on Ministry policies and how to handle child sexual abuse. Another role of educational psychologists is helping schools network with other organizations such as Red Cross which helps children deal with sexual issues.*

Teachers were also asked about the role of educational psychologists. ParticipantT4MRB had this to say about the role of educational psychologists in preventing sexual abuse by teachers at school: *Educational psychologists play a key role in preventing sexual abuse at school. It should be understood that educational psychologists are concerned with the practice of psychology with learners of all ages. They provide a range of psychological assessment, intervention and health promotion of the sexually abused children. Educational psychologists in a bid to help to prevent sexual abuse in schools they hold workshops with school staff, parents and students to conscientise them on for instance tactics abusers use, effects of the abuse, and possible ways of prevention of the abuse.*

With the breadth and depth of knowledge school psychologists possess they are key assets in providing staff development on child sexual abuse. Educational psychologists play a role in preventing child sexual abuse by teachers in schools. They can hold workshops on sexual abuse with the learners.

**5.2.4.3 Theme 4.3: Role of learners in prevention of sexual abuse by teachers in schools**

It emerged from this study that learners can protect themselves from sexual abuse by teachers. One way to stop sexual abuse by teachers mentioned by participants was for the

learners to report the abuse. Participants noted that many learners fail to report sexual abuse by teachers due to fear of being blamed, being afraid of the consequences, lack of confidence, fear of threats, and not knowing where to report. All the study participants articulated that reporting is crucial in preventing child sexual abuse. In the school situation it was said that learners should be conscientised on reporting systems in the school for example, learners experiencing sexual abuse can report to any member of the Child Protection Committee. The quote below highlights the finding that reporting is crucial in aiding prevention of sexual abuse from teachers. Participant T2MRD gave this advice:

*If students are encouraged to report any sexual encounters with teachers, this will help prevent abuse because other teacher abusers may also fear to be reported. Also some students who might be hesitant to report might also have the courage to report as their peers would have done.*

Similar to these findings, Finkelhor (2009:643) explains that disclosures can improve children's situation by ending abuse and mobilising assistance. Literature also supports that a professional relationship between teachers and learners helps prevent sexual abuse by teachers. Learners should avoid close relationships with teachers (Magwa 2014:18; Mitchell 2010).

Learners were asked on how they can be protected from sexual abuse by teachers. They strongly emphasised that learners can to a great extent avoid sexual abuse from teachers by all expressing the view that reporting abuse in its early stages helps prevent the abuse. Participants (L1FRD, L2MRD, L3FRB, L5FUD, L6MUD and L7FUB) openly stressed that if learners, especially girls conduct themselves well by dressing and behaving decently, they can avoid sexual abuse from teachers. Sharing this view, L3FRB went on to say:

*Besides reporting sexual abuse learners can further prevent (sic) themselves from being sexually abused by avoiding isolated situations where they will be alone with teachers such as being asked to come and receive extra tuition in the office. Students should avoid making teachers their friends and wear decent clothing in order for them not to be sexually abused.*

To concur with these views, existing literature asserts that girls should not view their bodies as economic assets, dress or behave provocatively with the intention of providing sex in return for favouritism (http://www.childtrafficking.com/Docs/plan_08_break_silence_0109.pdf).

It is evident from the excerpts and literature review that in order to successfully prevent sexual abuse in schools, not only adults like school personnel, parents or guardians, and other professionals, should be involved, children themselves should be educated on how they can protect themselves from sexual abuse in schools. Children can reach their full potential when they are free from such abuse.

## 5.3 SUMMARY

The evidence presented in this study clearly confirms that child sexual abuse meted against learners by teachers exists in schools. This study has established child sexual abuse in the school context as any sexual activity between a teacher who is in a position of trust and a learner. This type of abuse is rampant in schools. Sexual abuse can include contact and non-contact sexual behaviours. Findings suggest that learners are vulnerable to child sexual abuse by teachers in schools. It was established that male teachers sexually abuse learners more as compared to female teachers. Being female is considered a major risk factor for child sexual abuse as girls are about two times more likely to be victims than males (Betweli, 2013:82).

Child sexual abuse is not an accident; it is clearly a deliberate and selfish act (Klein, 2010:22). There are many circumstances that result in learners being sexually abused by teachers such as being tricked, and yielding to sex in exchange for good marks. Girls' low economic power is another cause of sexual abuse. They enter, for instance, into sexual relationships in exchange for tuition money (Proulx, 2011:33). Some [abusive] teachers repeat behaviours learned during their own victimisation - thereby sexually abusing learners. The evidence presented in this study clearly confirms that child sexual abuse against learners by teachers exists in schools.

Being sexually abused by a teacher who is regarded as an authority figure betrays learners' trust (Klein, 2010:23). Sexual abuse by a trusted leader, who has the important opportunity to shape the development of learners in a positive way, has a profound impact on their overall development. Child sexual abuse is associated with depression, anxiety, poor school performance, suicidal ideation among other adverse outcomes. Other harsh consequences include: pregnancy which is a high risk among teenagers, and contracting STIs, as well as HIV and AIDS. As echoed by Mlyakado and Neema (2014:283) teens who abstain from sex during high school are substantially less likely to be expelled from school, less likely to drop out of school and more likely to attend and graduate from college.

Adult education is the corner stone of any child sexual abuse prevention plan. Training is essential to ensure that school personnel have knowledge of causes, signs and symptoms, how to handle cases of abuse, and a good understanding of schools reporting systems. While parents and other professionals have a role to play, the teachers' role in prevention is critical as children spend a considerable amount of their time at school. The study also established that learners themselves also play a crucial role in prevention. Learners need to be empowered so that they can protect themselves from abuse. As also echoed by Ruto (2009:189) this comprehensive approach should be multi-focused reaching victims, the

perpetrators as well as interrogating specific practices that are protective of children. The next chapter is the final chapter focusing on summary and conclusion of the empirical study. Recommendations based on the findings are given.

# CHAPTER 6

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Child sexual abuse is one of the greatest social problems of the 21st century. Child sexual abuse is a human rights violation affecting all age groups within childhood globally (Heiberg, 2005:9). Without exception every child is at risk of being sexually abused. Learning institutions have gained notoriety as venues of sexual abuse by teachers. Sound pedagogic relationships do not prevail in schools. Abuse of learners by teachers is common throughout the world (de Wet, 2010:33; Shumba, 2009:19). Several cases of teachers who sexually abuse learners were cited in the above literature study. Numerous studies conducted in many countries were cited to reveal the prevalence of child sexual abuse in schools (Richter et al., 2004:38; Heiberg, 2005:38).

The researcher was motivated to get a deeper understanding of views of learners, teachers and educational psychologists on child sexual abuse by teachers so that their views would be incorporated into relevant strategies and interventions to protect learners from this vice. To the knowledge of the researcher few studies if any, have been carried out in Zimbabwe to research perceptions of school stakeholders on child sexual abuse by teachers. The systems theory was used to inform the study. The systems theory can be used in schools to guide decision making in the prevention of child sexual abuse in schools as a whole with the input of all stakeholders (Lunenberg and Ornstein, 2011:21).

Findings from the literature review and the empirical study will be summarised, with final conclusions as to the importance of the study as well as guidelines to curb the vice.

Recommendations for further research on child sexual abuse are also provided, as well as the limitations of this study.

**6.2 SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS**

During the empirical study, several findings were made with regard to child sexual abuse by teachers in schools. In this section, findings from the empirical investigation and literature review will be discussed in relation to the categories from which various themes flow.

**6.2.1 Nature of child sexual abuse in schools**

This study established that sexual relationships between teachers and learners exist in many schools. Participants displayed an understanding of what child sexual abuse is. There was a general agreement that this abuse involves any unwanted and unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature when a child is involved in fulfilling the sexual desires of a teacher. Out of the many perceptions given on the concept of child sexual abuse, the explanation by EP1 summarises how the concept was defined by most of the participants: *Child sexual abuse is any infringement of rights of child in a sexual manner by someone who should be responsible for the welfare of that child. A child is forced to get involved into sexual acts that he or she does not like or understand by an adult simply to gratify the adult's sexual desires.* From the literature reviewed it emerged that child sexual abuse is a form of abuse involving sexual activity between an adult and a child intended to sexually arouse the adult (Alexander et al., 2012:44). According to the study findings, child sexual abuse manifests itself in contact and non-contact forms. Teachers, learners and educational psychologists categorised sexual abuse into two main types. The first type is where the abuser makes physical contact with the child for example, kissing, and penetrative sex. Non-contact sexual activities were another type of sexual abuse mentioned, where the abuser does not come in contact with child's body, but

includes showing pornography, sending sexual messages, and sexual jokes. Similar findings in respect of conceptualisation of child sexual abuse were reported by de Wet (2010: 58), de Wet and Oosthuizen (2009a:7-8), as well as Shumba (2006:1).

From the perceptions of the study participants on potential abusers in the school situation, it emerged that teachers sexually abuse learners. All participants mentioned that learners experience sexual abuse at the hands of their teachers. This is a sad scenario since teachers should act in loco-parentis. The abuse of learners by teachers in schools is a social problem locally in Zimbabwe, but also globally (Shumba, 2009:19). This study aimed to investigate sexual abuse of learners by teachers. Almost all participants were of the view that male teachers are the major culprits in this abuse. The main reasons causing teachers to sexually abuse are highlighted in sections 5.3.2.1 and 5.3.2.3. These are for instance abuse of authority, uncontrollable sexual urges, and that they were also victims of sexual abuse when young. The words of a female learner (L3FRB) clearly reflect the perceptions of other participants with regard to the role of teachers in learner sexual abuse: *Teachers as the people with power compared to peers find it easier to sexually abuse students. Sexual abuse of students in schools is mostly committed by teachers.*

Empirical data also revealed that male teachers mostly target female learners as their victims of sexual abuse. The perception of girls being mostly victims of sexual abuse as compared to boys was raised by a majority of the participants. The narrative by participant T2MRD illustrates the views of some of the participants: *Girls are more vulnerable to sexual abuse mainly because m*en *assume that women are subordinated to them and must serve their sexual needs. Girls also feel that they are the weaker sex and hence are not powerful enough to resist. Lastly, God made girls sexually attractive and this can lead men to sexually abuse them.* The implication is that patriarchal ideology and the process of socialisation have the effect of constructing a notion of childhood that renders especially the girl child vulnerable to

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sexual abuse. Literature reviews and studies carried out elsewhere confirm that sexual abuse of female learners by male teachers is wide spread (Sweeney et al., 2013.90; Child Research and Resource Centre 2009:52; Richter et al., 2007:62; Best, 2003:148).

According to the participants, there are indicators that tell that a child has been sexually abused. The indicators mentioned include physical factors such as pregnancy and contracting sexually transmitted diseases; emotional factors such as depression; and behavioral indicators such as engaging in risky sexual activities and drug abuse; and academic consequences where performance declines. The excerpt from T5FUD reflects the perceptions of most participants on indicators of sexual abuse on learners when she said: *Sexually abused children rarely disclose their abuse and such a scenario does not offer opportunity for the abuse to be prevented. However, there are some warning signs which can alert adults, in this case teachers, that a student has been sexually abused such as the student having contracted syphilis this may be seen by the awkward walking and becoming pregnant. The sexually abused child is likely to be always depressed, withdrawn, and grades in class drop.* By being aware of these indicators as established by the study, prevention can take place. In the school situation, when a teacher notices these indicators, the teacher can consult a school counselor or school head that will be able to intervene. The sexually abused learner through the counselor's intervention can disclose the abuse and steps will be taken to deal with the abuser and also alerting other learners on how not to become victims. The literature suggested that there are many indicators which can reveal that a child has been sexually abused of which only some are mentioned by the stakeholders in the empirical research (Mlyakado and Neema, 2014: 283; Deb and Mukherje, 2009:32; Sanderson, 2005:230; Jump, 2002:98; Faller, 1997: 22).

### 6.2.2 Contributing factors of child sexual abuse

The reasons for committing sexual abuses are discussed in Chapter 2 section 2.4. The findings from the empirical study illuminated an array of factors that cause teachers to sexually abuse learners.

Sexual abuse of learners by teachers takes place within a relationship of trust, where the teacher actually has the responsibility to care for the learners and to provide a safe place for learning. The teacher has authority and sometimes abuses this power (de Wet, 2010:293). Teachers engage in transactional sex with learners for example, by exchanging good grades for sex. Poor learners, especially girls, exchange sex with teachers to get money for school fees and other luxuries. This was also revealed in studies by Chinyoka (2013:214) and Sweeney et al. (2013: 89).

It was clear from the empirical findings and literature that personality traits, childhood experiences, and family background of teachers can result in teachers sexually abusing learners. Due to inherited genes some teachers by nature have high sexual appetites and as such are prone to sexually abuse whenever they find the opportunity if they have not learned to control these urges. Experiences of child sexual abuse in childhood to a certain extent contribute to later offending. The following narrative by a learner participant (L1FRD) portrays the viewpoints of the participants on how the teacher's family background causes the teacher to sexually abuse learners: *Some teachers are just lusty, may be as a result of genes they inherited from their parents. Such teachers fail to recognize the boundaries between students and themselves that is, because of the high sexual desires they just engage in sex with learners whom they should regard as their own children. Some teachers may also be having tough times with their wives and will seek solace by engaging in sexual activities with some students.* Kring (2011:106) demonstrates that sexual abusers mirrored their own

victimization in perpetrating sexual abuse against others. Child sexual abuse is directly linked with violence in the family (Opobo and Wandega, 2011:21; Gorman, 2012:9). Married teachers with marital problems compensate for the lack of love from their spouses by sexually abusing learners.

Among the various factors contributing to sexual abuse of learners raised by participants was also the issue of lack of knowledge of the Code of Conduct and poor law enforcement by school authorities. Participants stressed that little understanding of the laws and policies governing the conduct of teachers lead teachers to sexually abuse learners. The words of participant T8MUB voice the concerns of teachers and educational psychologists regarding the lack of knowledge of the Code of Conduct and poor law enforcement by school authorities when he said: *Sexual abuse by teachers thrives in schools because some teachers are not quite familiar with the Code of Conduct which spells out the expected behaviour of teachers in avoiding sexual encounters with students. Enforcement of laws on teachers who sexually abuse learners is low. Teachers committing sexual offences can be given light sentences such as being transferred to another school, suspended from work for a short period, and sometimes nothing being done to them. Such a scenario causes other teachers to commit similar offences since no harsh measures like dismissing the abuser from his profession or suspending abuser for a long period like 15years or more are implemented.* Similarly, Opobo and Wandega (2011:23) and Plan Germany (2008:52) found that low enforcement of policies on child sexual abuse fail to deter perpetrators.

The findings of the empirical study confirmed that if learners are not empowered they become easy targets of sexual abuse. Learners need to be familiar with the different forms of sexual abuse, grooming tactics used by abusers, and must learn to be assertive in refusing sexual advances (Opobo and Wandega, 2011:15; Proulx, 2011:3), and to avoid seducing teachers through their behaviour and clothing.

### 6.2.3 Effects of child sexual abuse

The third category was concerned with the consequences of teacher sexual abuse on the learner. In essence, the empirical study found that sexual abuse by teachers is an egregious behaviour, that is, outstandingly bad and shocking behaviour, because schools are entrusted with educating the nation's children. Sexual abuse infringes on the human rights of children. The consequences of sexual abuse in schools are severe (de Wet, 2010:166; Mlyakado and Neema, 2014:283). The empirical study and literature established that the abuse has an emotional impact on the abused learner such as feelings of fear, shame, guilt, and possible depression. These emotional consequences can lead to physical consequences like loss of appetite, and sleep disorders. Other physical health consequences are for instance pregnancy, the spread of sexually transmitted infections and HIV and AIDS infections.

Many of the participants narrated that as a result of the emotional and physical consequences of sexual abuse, the learning of the sexually abused child is greatly affected. The learner fails to concentrate in class, may change subjects or school and the academic performance declines. The child may also as a result drop out of school and is robbed of equal educational opportunities with peers. The researcher cites a quote by a girl student in Malawi highlighting how sexual abuse harms school children: *The teacher can send a girl to leave her exercise books in the office and the teacher follows her to make a proposal for sex, and because she fears to answer no, she says I will answer tomorrow. She then stops coming to school because of fear... If the girl comes to school then the teacher can become angry and threaten that she will fail... If the girl accepts the teacher's proposal she can become pregnant and drop out of school.*

(Policy Paper 17, 2015:3).

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The findings of this study and the excerpt above match with literature reviewed in Chapter 2 section 2.6 where it was confirmed that global research indicates that poor academic performance is common amongst children who are sexually abused (Woolfolk, 2010:77; Allnock and Hynes, 2011:16; Bromberg and Johnson, 2001:346).

The researcher established by means of this research that child sexual abuse by teachers negatively affects the behaviour of the abused learner. Many behavioural changes were associated with a learner who has been sexually abused. Some of these participants' perceptions are reflected in the words of participant L6MUD who narrated the behavioural changes that can happen as a result of sexual abuse as follows: *Sexual abuse alters the behaviour of the abused student in a very bad way. A sexually abused person becomes sexually active to the extent of sexually seducing other students and teachers of the opposite sex. Being withdrawn, not wanting to mix with others is a characteristic of a sexually abused student.* Thus, due to the anger, shame, and guilt felt by the abused learner over the abuse, the learner might end up engaging in risky behaviours like prostitution, drug and alcohol abuse, and truancy. In addition, the learner may decide to withdraw from social interactions. Literature also supports the fact that due to experiences of sexual abuse children engage in risky behaviours (Mlyakado and Neema, 2014:282; Antonowic, 2010: 29). Thus, child sexual abuse is tantamount to loss of child innocence, a loss of personal safety, a loss of the right to make decisions, a loss of the truth, and a loss of educational opportunities (Spice, 2006:273-274). From the empirical study as well as literature it became apparent that the consequences of child sexual abuse are diverse and numerous. Being sexually abused impacts upon the life-world of a child on an educational, psychological and physical health level (Mullen and Fleming, 2005: 9; Allnock and Hynes, 2011:16; Hall and Hall, 2011:3).

### 6.2.4 Possible prevention measures

In the light of the deleterious outcomes associated with child sexual abuse by teachers, all participants as well as literature in this study expressed that this vice need to be stopped. Participant EP3 shared with other participants the view that child sexual abuse has a negative long lasting impact on learners and should be prevented when he said: *It is deeply distressing when students are sexually abused. Child sexual abuse is a health problem, with negative consequences such as physical problems, mental problems, behavioural and social problems. These problems hinder students from achieving their maximum potential and other students' future is totally destroyed for instance, when a student commits suicide as a result of the abuse. With such a scenario it is imperative that schools should make all the efforts to prevent this deadly vice.* The literature survey revealed that child sexual abuse, because of its negative impacts on victims needs to be prevented (Hunt and Walsh, 2011:64; Antonowicz, 2010:40; Finkelhor, 2009:172; Beaulieu, 2008:9).

Participants asserted that schools are able to play a key role in preventing such abuse. Schools can provide educational programmes on child sexual abuse for teachers, parents, and learners on such issues like what it is, acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, grooming tactics, impact, and reporting. Previous research provides strong evidence to support that school-based prevention can be helpful in preventing child sexual abuse (Sweeney et al., 2013:93; de Wet, 2010:209).

It emerged from the empirical study as well as literature reviewed that one way to curb sexual abuse by teachers was for schools to provide proper and clear policies for staff to follow with regards to educator-learner relationships. Schools should implement the policy consistently to ensure that child sexual abuse is effectively dealt with. Teacher perpetrators should be harshly dealt with by for example, school heads instituting disciplinary processes

for offending teachers. Parents and school heads should avoid being bribed in order to withdraw complaints. The teachers and educational psychologists when they expressed the need for school authorities to have clear policies they were making reference to the schools to have Codes of Conduct. Participant T8MUB narrated: *One way for preventing teachers from sexually abusing learners is for schools to have Codes of Conduct. A code of conduct serves as a guiding compass in the teaching profession. It should be clear and detail penalties for sexual misconduct.* Literature in Chapter 3 section 3.3.5 points out to the fact that schools can prevent child sexual abuse by having educational programmes, having both pre-service and in-service training for teachers, and having clear policies for stakeholders in schools.

Educational psychologists who are trained in areas of child development, learning, consultation, assessment, counseling and human relations narrated that they have a role to play in the prevention of sexual abuse in schools. They can teach children life skills to enable them to protect themselves from abuse. Educational psychologists can also develop staff by teaching then on handling child sexual abuse.

The findings also revealed that learners have a role in preventing sexual abuse. The learners can report the abuse, avoid one-on-one situations with teachers, as well as avoid seductive behaviour and dressing. Being assertive is one weapon the learners can use to protect themselves from abuse. They should know their rights. Similar findings were reported by Magwa (2014:18) and Finkelhor (2009:643). Child sexual abuse is a serious infringement of children' rights and schools can prevent its occurrence.

## 6.3 POSSIBLE PREVENTATIVE GUIDELINES FOR VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS

From the above comments, it seems as if stakeholders have a good idea of what child sexual abuse entails and what the consequences may be, but their knowledge of signs and symptoms and how to deal with the abuse is not adequate. They also have ideas on how to prevent child sexual abuse, but also that is not sufficient to include all stakeholders in the curbing of the vice.

Child sexual abuse by teachers as revealed by the study is prevalent in schools. Based on the findings of the study it has been clearly established that child sexual abuse by teachers is an occurrence which infringes on the rights of the child. Attaining learning for all children is one major goal of education which can be achieved in the absence of child sexual abuse. It has been established that learners need an environment free from sexual abuse to reach their maximum potential. Sexual abuse of learners is one of the critical morally unacceptable problems of the contemporary times that need to be urgently addressed. Genuine and long lasting solutions to this problem need to be made. Schools are there to develop and enrich human potential. Thus, deliberate and coordinated effort on the part of involved stakeholders makes it possible to protect learners from this abuse. A number of recommendations for various stakeholders aimed at protecting the learners, producing a safe environment in schools will be given. A systems approach is used where all stakeholders have a role to play in the whole of the school environment to alleviate the problem. The focus is on Zimbabwean schools and their educational system, but many of the recommendations can be applied globally in trying to curb child sexual abuse.

**The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education**

- The Ministry should enforce and implement a revised national Teachers' Code of Conduct that prohibits all forms of sexual abuse such as those involving physical contact (e.g kissing, sexual intercourse) and non-contact forms (e.g sexual messages, pornography) including prohibiting relationships between teachers and learners.

- The revised Code of Conduct should have strict disciplinary measures against teachers who sexually abuse children, such as terminating the services of the teacher for good rather than being punished for some years and coming back, so that teachers adhere to it. Heads of schools should be trained to apply measures consequently.

- The measures in the National Code of Conduct should be included in every school's own Code of Conduct. Teachers, learners and parents must have access to the Code of Conduct. Maybe parents can receive a copy when their child is enrolled at a particular school. Teachers should receive the specific Code of Conduct of the school they are teaching at.

- The Department of Education should ensure that training of teachers on child sexual abuse is accessible to all. Training should focus on matters such as identifying abuse within the school and actions to be taken, educator-learner relationships, and implications of the abuse on the teacher's career. Teachers can use scenarios and role play to teach learners how to approach the issue of sexual abuse in general. The scripts or scenarios should be provided to teachers at their own training for appropriate teaching of a very contentious issue.

- A sexuality education curriculum should be implemented in schools as a matter of urgency, with adequate and age relevant information about sex and sexuality for the all learners. They should be informed of their rights. The natural development of the physical body, as well as desires and urges should be included, *but* with the teaching of values and morals (spiritual development) which will help in keeping them safe.

- Syllabi on subjects like Health Science should be broadened to incorporate necessary aspects of sexuality education. Life Orientation or Guidance and Counseling classes also need to include issues like sexual abuse.

**Schools**

- Schools should have clear policies and procedures in a Code of Conduct in accordance with national guidelines on what constitutes teacher sexual abuse, acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, and prohibition of tutoring in teachers' homes or offices as these situations present opportunities for teachers to sexually abuse learners. There should be a policy of open door/no curtains if individual attention is needed.

- In-service training for teachers on sexual abuse should be organised in schools by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. Teachers should learn how to approach the subject in a sensitive way, because it is contentious and children are not used to adults discussing it directly with them.

- Learners should not just get information from for instance the guidance and counseling classes - programmes with specific scenarios and times to practice skills should be implemented. Learners especially need to learn assertiveness skills – if they cannot say 'no' to a perpetrator, it becomes problematic and the abuser will take advantage of the child. The girls especially need to know how to dress and how to behave not to become a victim. Leaners also need to learn how and where to report sexual abuse. They need to know that something will be done when they report such an offense and they also need to know that they will be kept safe after reporting.

- School administrators, school heads and teachers should also organise workshops for parents to give them alternatives on how to address the problem of not having money

to pay school fees; they need to learn how to care for children of all ages; parents need information on the developmental phases of their children and behaviour associated therewith. Parents also need to know the signs and symptoms of child sexual abuse. They need to learn how to communicate with their children in order for the children to trust them with sensitive material like sexual abuse. Parents need to know how to handle such problems and whom to report to.

- Suggestion boxes where children can give suggestions, and also boxes where children can give anonymous names of possible abusers and incidents should be available at school. It should however, be treated with caution, because it will not always be the truth, but at least it is a way for children who are too ashamed to get the problem in the open.

**Teachers**

- It is recommended that teachers should familiarise themselves with basic information concerning sexual abuse, such as recognising signs so that they detect the abuse and thereby take preventive measures early.

- Teachers should make an effort to know learners in their classes so that they can notice any behavioural changes, since behavioural problems are an indication that children are trying to cope with a problem.

- Schools should hold workshops to educate staff on sexual abuse issues. Included in such training should be developmental phases of all ages like physical, emotional and cognitive development, and especially sexual development; not to take advantage of children's natural curiousness, and how to treat children who make sexual advances. Teachers thus, need to know how to protect themselves, but also the children in their

care. In workshops teachers need to be exposed to possible explosive scenarios in real life and how to handle these.

- Sexually naïve learners are prone to victimization and readily fall into an abuser's trap of secrecy. It is recommended that the school should cultivate a safe environment and culture to ensure that learners are safe. Open discussions about sexual abuse in the curricula should be encouraged. Learners should be taught inappropriate adult behaviours, how to respond when threatened, and interpersonal skills that are indispensable for safe relationships. Learners' confidence that solutions to their problems can be found increases through open communication.

- Teachers are responsible for the transmission of positive values and norms to learners. During Guidance and Counseling classes teachers can teach children a decent dress code and normative behaviour so that they will avoid seducing teachers with their dressing and behaviour.

**School heads**

- The head of the school is a key factor in how effective the school is. Child sexual abuse in the school situation can be a sign of ineffectiveness of the school head. The study recommends that school heads should be aware of their responsibility to protect learners from sexual abuse.

- School heads need to be provided with appropriate leadership skills and strategies for dealing with incidents of child sexual abuse. They should get appropriate training.

- School heads should avoid being bribed in order to withdraw complaints. They should report sexual abuse since judicial proceedings and sentencing of abusers help prevent child sexual abuse.

- Schools should implement the policy consistently to ensure that child sexual abuse is effectively dealt with. In most countries it is law that all sexual abuse should

immediately be reported to the appropriate officials. School heads thus need to know the exact procedure for reporting incidences.

- School heads should see to the inclusion of a proper Code of Conduct in the school policy. They should see to it that it will be distributed amongst teachers, parents and children. All these stakeholders should be able to contribute to a specific school's Code of Conduct.

- School heads should also see to the proper selection of new staff members at their schools – they should look into references before appointing a person.

**Parents**

- The study strongly recommends active parent involvement in child sexual abuse prevention through educational awareness programmes. In the programme, aspects such as knowing what child sexual abuse is, factors leading to the abuse, effects of the abuse, and how they as parents can protect their children from such an abuse should be included. Specialist people from for instance Social Services and educational psychologists can be invited to come and educate the parents on this vice. Parents should be involved in the prevention process so that they can use the knowledge to effectively to teach their children preventive measures.

- Child sexual abuse is strongly factored by poverty. Poor families should not encourage their children to get in sexual relationships with teachers in order to meet their economic needs. They should get information of alternatives to pay school money like applying for bursaries, or pay fees in monthly installments. Parents and school staff must have a good relation such that parents could talk to the class teacher or school head about problems that seem unsolvable.

- Parents who are able to communicate with their children about the social and moral consequences of being sexually active before completing their education are less likely to have their children engage in sexual activities. Parents need to teach children about healthy boundaries, avoiding inappropriate close contacts with teachers and other adults, and taking action to prevent child sexual abuse.

- Parents should always remain vigilant and pay particular attention to what their children tell them as teachers are potential abusers.

**Learners**

- It is strongly recommended that learners must also become agents of change to eradicate sexual abuse by teachers in schools. Efforts must be made by the school to empower the learners to be assertive in saying 'NO' to sexual abuse, get away from an abusive situation, and to be able to report any sexual abuse by for example using the suggestion boxes. Other ways of reporting must be discussed and learners need to know that they will not get into trouble by reporting ill behaviour of a teacher.

- Learners should learn to distinguish between love and sexual advances. If they think of sexual activities as love they will most probably consent to it easier. They can be taught this during workshops organised by schools with for example educational psychologists.

- Learners need to avoid being in private situations with teachers. Teachers who have access to students before or after school in one–on-one contact with learners are likely to sexually abuse the learners. To avoid falling into this trap learners and teachers should ensure that two or more learners for example bring books to the teacher's office.

- It was established that some teachers are lured into sexual activities by the way some learners behave and dress. Learners need to be encouraged by for example Guidance and Counseling teachers, not to dress and behave provocatively.

- Learners need a chance to practice skills to safeguard themselves in real life scenarios.

**School guidance and counseling services and educational psychologists**

- The level of school guidance and counseling services need to be raised. Strengthening guidance and counseling resources available to learners and ensuring that learners are aware of and can access such support is critical in the prevention of sexual abuse of learners by teachers. Teachers also need to be able to get assistance from these sources.

- There is need for educational psychologists to train staff about teacher sexual misconduct highlighting such issues as unacceptable behaviour, as well as physical, emotional and behavioural indicators of sexual abuse and how to handle the problem.

- They need to hold workshops with both learners and teachers on sexual abuse issues like identifying inappropriate behaviour, negative consequences, and reporting. Workshops should be on a level appropriate for the different ages of learners, in order for each group to receive correct information for their age group.

- Educational psychologists should have the skills and intervention methods to assist learners on individual level if they experienced abuse of some kind. They must also be prepared to help parents deal with such an issue.

## 6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- This study covered only one educational province of Zimbabwe. This is a small area since there are ten educational provinces in Zimbabwe. Further research needs to be embarked on in other provinces of the country in an effort to envisage how best to prevent sexual abuse of learners by teachers.

- The study focused on perceptions of learners, teachers and educational psychologists. There is need to conduct research which captures perceptions of parents, school heads, educational officers, and other staff in the school. Further exploration on sexual abuse by peers and other staff in the school can be carried out.

- The need also exists for more qualitative studies on primary school learners since they are also victims of teacher sexual abuse.

- Research is needed concerning the development, and evaluation of child sexual abuse prevention programmes based on the findings considered in this study.

- Further research with larger sample sizes is required to assess the effectiveness for a school based programme for prevention of child sexual abuse.

## 6.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As is true of all empirical studies, there are some limitations to the study that are important to note. This qualitative phenomenological study carried minimal limitations that may not be a threat to the credibility of this empirical study but worth mentioning.

Due to the limitation in respect to time and finances this study was confined to the educational district of Masvingo. The selection of participants was carefully and purposefully done to ensure that the findings were authentic. Caution should be used in generalising findings to the whole of Zimbabwe due to lack of a representative sampling. Findings of this study may be generalised to schools in the Masvingo district. The issue of lack of wide generalisability is a common feature in most qualitative researches (Macmillan and Schumacher, 2010).

Only one instrument, namely interviewing was used in the study. Despite the fact that its findings were found to be credible, more insights might have been obtained by using another instrument as well.

Sex and sexuality education are sensitive issues in the African culture. Some teachers felt uncomfortable discussing such issues since they were considered as the perpetrators of sexual abuse.

## 6.6 CONCLUSION

It was clearly established that child sexual abuse is prevalent in schools. Child sexual abuse was defined as a serious problem in schools where children are engaged in sexual activity in order to fulfill the sexual desires of the adult, who is the teacher in this case. Incidents of sexual abuse by teachers include a range of behaviours such as rape, sexual comments and touching, kissing, sharing pornography, transactional sex for marks, as well as favouritism.

Many factors contribute to child sexual abuse by teachers such as learner poverty, poor enforcement of the laws and policies, unscientific ideas on the cure for HIV and AIDS, and abuse/misuse of modern technology. Learners themselves, especially girls, contribute to their own abuse through their seductive dressing and behaviour.

Child sexual abuse has a far-reaching and negative impact on learner's ability to learn and stay at school. It violates human rights of children including their right to personal safety and bodily integrity. Findings indicate that child sexual abuse impacts negatively on the emotional health, physical health, and academic achievement of the abused learner.

Child sexual abuse is a negative experience that no child should have to go through. It is a complex phenomenon that deprives children of their childhood, human rights and dignity.

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The problem has been described as a preventable health problem (Shakeshaft, 2013:13). The school and all its stakeholders can play a critical role in fighting against this scourge in schools by having strong policies on child sexual abuse, creating a safe and nurturing environment for learners, training teachers on sexual abuse, and involving both parents and learners in educational prevention programmes.

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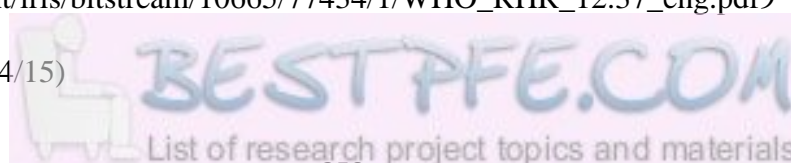
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# APPENDICES

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Appendix 2: Letter from Chairperson, Department of Educational Foundations, Great

     Zimbabwe University

Appendix 3: Application letter seeking permission to carry out research study in    Masvingo

     district

Appendix 4: Letter granting permission to do research in Masvingo district from the

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**Appendix 1: UNISA Ethics Clearance Certificate**

# UNISA | college of education

## Research Ethics Clearance Certificate

This is to certify that the application for ethical clearance submitted by

**S Magwa [50691813]**

for a D Ed study entitled

**Child sexual abuse by teachers in Secondary Schools in the Masvingo District, Zimbabwe: Perceptions of selected stakeholders**

has met the ethical requirements as specified by the University of South Africa College of Education Research Ethics Committee. This certificate is valid for two years from the date of issue.

Prof VI McKay
Acting Executive Dean : CEDU

Dr M Claassens
CEDU REC (Chairperson)
mcdtc@netactive.co.za

Reference number: 2014 OCTOBER /50691813/MC      22 OCTOBER 2014

**Appendix 2: Letter from Chairperson Department of Educational Foundations, Great Zimbabwe University**

**Department of educational foundations**
P O Box 1235
MASVINGO
Tel: 039-253507
Fax: 039-253504

*Off Old Great Zimbabwe Road*
*MASVINGO*
*E mail: hr@gzu.ac.zw*

## GREAT ZIMBABWE UNIVERSITY

29 October 2014

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

Mrs Simuforosa Magwa is a bonafide senior lecturer at Great Zimbabwe University currently studying for a Doctor of Education degree with the University of South Africa (UNISA). She is specialising in Psychology of Education and is currently doing her thesis on the following topic:

**Child sexual abuse by teachers in Secondary Schools in the Masvingo District, Zimbabwe: Perceptions of selected stakeholders.**

May you kindly assist her in her research activities. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

Nenji S
Chairperson: Department of Educational Foundations.

GREAT ZIMBABWE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL
FOUNDATIONS

2014 -10- 2 9

P O BOX 1235, MASVINGO
TEL (039) 253507   FAX (039) 253504

**Appendix 3: Application letter seeking permission to carry out the research study in Masvingo district**

Great Zimbabwe University
P.O Box 1235
Masvingo

30 October 2014

The Permanent Secretary
The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
P.O. Box CY121 Causeway
Harare

Dear Sir/ Madam

**APPLICATION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN MASVINGO DISTRICT: UNISA- Doctor of Education (D.Ed) Psychology of Education, Student Number: 5069-181-3**

Child sexual abuse in schools is on the increase and I believe that measures be taken to help prevent this social vice hence the reason for embarking on this research. I am a Doctor of Education (D Ed) degree student specializing in Psychology of Education at the University of South Africa (UNISA). I kindly seek your permission to undertake research in four secondary schools of Masvingo District for my Doctoral studies.
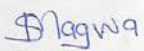**My Topic is entitled: Child sexual abuse by teachers in Secondary Schools in the Masvingo District, Zimbabwe: Perceptions of selected stakeholders.**

The study will involve learners, teachers and educational psychologists. The schools to be included in the study are Ndarama High School (Urban day), Victoria High School (urban boarding), Zimuto High School (rural boarding) and Mazambara High School ( rural day). If permission is granted the parent's or guardian's consent, learners' assent, teachers and educational psychologists' consent will be obtained before embarking on the research.

Individual semi-structured interviews will be conducted. The research project will be conducted under the supervision of Professor E Venter and with ethical approval of the University of South Africa. The information obtained will be treated with confidentiality. The participant's name and school will not appear at any point of information collecting or in the final report. Participant's participation is voluntary and they have the right to withdraw at any point of the study, for any reason, and without penalty

I hope the information I will obtain will help to reduce sexual abuse of learners in schools.

Yours Faithfully

Magwa

Mrs Simuforosa Magwa

D.Ed Student (UNISA- College of Education)

**Appendix 4: Letter granting permission to do research in Masvingo district from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education –Harare**

Mrs Simuforosa Magwa
Great Zimbabwe University
P.O. Box 1235
Masvingo

**RE:    PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN MASVINGO PROVINCE: MASVINGO DISTRICT: NDARAMA; VICTORIA; ZIMUTO AND MAZAMBARA HIGH SCHOOLS**

Reference is made to your application to carry out a research in the above mentioned schools in Masvingo Province on the research title:

**"CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE BY TEACHERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE MASVINGO DISTRICT, ZIMBABWE: PERCEPTIONS OF SELECTED STAKEHOLDERS"**

Permission is hereby granted. However, you are required to liaise with the Provincial Education Director Masvingo, who is responsible for the schools which you want to involve in your research.

You are required to provide a copy of your final report to the Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education by January 2016.

M. T. Madzinga (Mrs)
**Acting Director**: Policy Planning, Research and Development
**For: SECRETARY FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**
cc:     PED – Masvingo Province

**Appendix 5: Letter granting permission to do research in Masvingo district from Provincial Education Director- Masvingo**

ALL communications should be addressed to
"The Provincial Education Director for Primary and Secondary Education"
Telephone: 263585/264331
Fax: 039-263261

ZIMBABWE

Reference: Simuforosa Magwa
Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
P O Box 89
**Masvingo**

31 October 2014

**The Head**

Ndarama High School
Victoria High School
Zimuto High School
Mazambara High School

**RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT AN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AT THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS MENTIONED ABOVE IN MASVINGO DISTRICT: SIMUFOROSA MAGWA: GREAT ZIMBABWE UNIVERSITY**

The above matter refers.

Mrs Simuforosa Magwa, a student at Great Zimbabwe University has been granted permission to carry out research on the above mentioned Secondary Schools in Masvingo District on,

**"CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE BY TEACHERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE MASVINGO DISTRICT, ZIMBABWE: PERCEPTIONS OF SELECTED STAKEHOLDERS".**

Please assist her wherever possible.

Z.M. Chitiga
**PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR: MASVINGO**

MINISTRY OF PRIMARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION
PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR
MASVINGO
3 1 OCT 2014
P.O. BOX 89, MASVINGO
ZIMBABWE
TEL : 039 - 264331
FAX : 039 - 263261

**Appendix 6: Consent form for parents /guardians of learner participants (English)**

*This consent form is directed to parents or guardians. Read this consent form carefully before you decide to fill it in (Complete it).This consent form may contain words that you do not understand - feel free to ask.*

**Research topic**:

Child Sexual Abuse by Teachers in Secondary Schools in the Masvingo District, Zimbabwe: Perceptions of Selected Stakeholders

**Name of Researcher**: Mrs Simuforosa Magwa

(PHD –student In Psychology of Education)

**Student number**: 5069-181-3. University of South Africa (UNISA)

**E-mail**: magwasf@gmail.com

**Cell:** +263 773 475 823

My name is Mrs Simuforosa Magwa, and I work as a lecturer in educational psychology at the Great Zimbabwe University. I am a student at the University of South Africa (UNISA). I hereby humbly ask for permission to include your child in my research by allowing him/her to participate in an interview related to the above topic. I will ask your child for his/her agreement as well before I can start with the research. The research will take place under the supervision of my supervisor Professor E Venter with the ethical approval of the University of South Africa (UNISA).

**Purpose of study**

The study aims to gain insight into the perceptions of learners, teachers and educational psychologists on child sexual abuse by teachers in secondary schools. The findings will be able to offer some insights into how this abuse can be prevented in schools.

**Process**

Participation of your child in the study will involve an interview with an estimated length of one hour. The interview will be tape recorded for later analysis. There will be no immediate and direct benefits for your child or you, but your child's participation is likely to help me to get to know perceptions of learners on child sexual abuse in schools so that mitigation measures can be proposed. The study poses no risk to its participants. If your child happens to reveal being sexually abused by a teacher or that another learner is being sexually abused by another teacher the case will be reported to the school head and no harm will happen to your child for reporting

The information that I will collect from this research will be kept confidential. Any information about your child will have a code in place of his/her name and school. Participation remains voluntary. Your child has the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty.

**Sharing of research findings**

At the end of my study I intend to share my findings with the participants, parents and school heads at an arranged meeting. A written report will also be given to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary schools. I will also publish the results in order that other interested people may learn from my research.

**Consent**

I have been asked to give consent for my child to participate in this research study which will involve him/her in participating in an interview. I have read the foregoing information, asked for necessary clarifications and I am satisfied that my child can choose to participate. I give consent for my child to participate in this study.

Name of parent or guardian          -------------------------------------------------

Relationship to child/Designation     -------------------------------------------------

Signature of parent or guardian      -------------------------------------------------

Cell/Phone number                    -------------------------------------------------

**Appendix 7: Consent form for parents /guardians of learner participants (Shona)**

**Gwaro rechibvumirano chokuita tsvakurudzo rinobata vabereki**

*Verengai gwaro  rino rose musati mapindura .*

**Zita romutsvakurudzi** : Amai Simuforosa Magwa

**Basa**: Mudzidzisi – Great Zimbabwe University

**E-mail**: magwasf@gmail.com

**Nhamba yerunharembozha**: +263 773 475 817

**Nhamba yomudzidzi**: 5069-181-3. University of South Africa (UNISA)

**Musoro wetsvakurudzo**: Muwonero  wekubatwa chibharo chevadzidzi  mudhunhu reMasvingo muZimbabwe

Zita rangu ndi Amai Simuforosa Magwa. Ndinoshanda somudzidzisi pa Great Zimbabwe University.Ndiri mudzidzi paUniversity ye South  Africa (UNISA). Ndinokumbira nenzira yakatsananguka  bvumo yokuti ndishandise mwana wenyu ape mhinduro panhaurirano dzenyaya iri pamusoro kwekubatwa chibharo chevana muzvikoro.Tsvkurudzo iyi ndinoitungamiriwa na Professor  E  Venter uye nemitemo yokuita tsvakurudzo muvanhu yeUniversity of South Africa.

**Chinangwa chetsvakurudzo**

Tsvakurudzo ino yakananga kutsvaga muuno wevadzidzi,vadzidzisi nevana maererano nokubatiwa chibharo kwevana muzvikoro (child sexual abuse). Mhinduro dzichapiwa dzichabatsira kuti nzira dzekuderedza dambudziko iri dziwanikwe.

**Nzira**

Mutsvakurudzo iyi pachava nenhaurirano nomwana wenyu inokwana awa rimwe.Nhaurirano iyi ichatorwa netepurekodha.Hapana chinobatika kana mari yandinovimbisa kwamuri kana kumwana wenyu.Ruzivo rwuchawanikwa ndirwo rwuchabatsira kuderedza dambudziko rokubatwa chibharo kwevadzidzi muzvikoro nevadzidzisi.Hapana njodzi inotarisirwa pakuitwa kwetsvakurudzo iyi. Kana mwana wenyu akabudisa kuti ari kubatwa chibharo kana kuti mumwe mudzidzi ari kubatwa chibharo nomudzidzisi, mukuru wechikoro achaudzwa uye hapana chinoitika kumwana wenyu pakubudisa nyaya yokubatwa chibaro uku. Ndinovimbisa tsindidzo yeumboo  ichapiwa mutsvakurudzo ino. Ndinovimbisa kubudisa zvandinenge ndawana nemazitasiri(mazita asiri chaiwo). Mwana wenyu ane kodzero yokusapindura imwe mibvunzo kana kubuda mutsvakurudzo iyi pasina zvaangaitwa.

**Kutaurirana zvinenge zvabuda**

Mushure metsvakurudzo vese vakapinda munhaurirano dziri maringe netsvakurudzo iyi, vabereki nevatungamiriri vezvikoro vanozoudzwa zvakabuda mutsvakurudzo iyi pamusangano uchaitwa.Ve Ministry of primary and Secondary Education vachanyorerwa bepa rezvinenge zvabuda. Ndichabudisa zvinenge zvabuda publish…muthesis

**Kuzvipira**

Mushure mokutsanangurwa zvose zviri maerarano netsvakurudzo iyi ndinobvumira mwana wangu kuti apinde munhaurira yetsvakurudzo iyi kana achinge akachengetedzwa nokudzivirirwa pane zvichaitwa zvose.

Zita romubereki/muchengeti anomirira mwana :   ---------------------------------------------

Ukama nomwana :                                ---------------------------------------------

Nhamba yerunharembozha:                        ---------------------------------------------

Chisaimwa:                                     ---------------------------------------------

(Mashizha matatu akasainiwa anoenda kumutsvakurudzi, muridzi wemwana nemwana)

**Appendix 8: Learner participants' assent form**

*This consent form is directed to learners. Read this consent form carefully before you decide to fill it in. This consent form may contain words that you do not understand - feel free to ask.*

**Name of Researcher/ Student**: Simuforosa Magwa (Doctoral student in Psychology of Education)

**Student Number** : 50691813 University of South Africa (UNISA)

**email** : magwasf@gmail.com

**Cell phone Number** : +263773475817

**Topic**

Child Sexual Abuse by Teachers in Secondary Schools in the Masvingo District, Zimbabwe: Perceptions of Selected Stakeholders

**Introduction**

I am Mrs Simuforosa Magwa, working as a lecturer in Educational Psychology at the Great Zimbabwe University. I am currently studying towards my doctoral degree at the University of South Africa (UNISA). As part of my studies I am doing a study on perceptions of child sexual abuse in schools in fulfilment of the requirements of a doctoral degree in Psychology of Education.

I am going to give you information and invite you to be part of this research. You can choose whether or not you want to participate. You do not have to decide immediately. There may be some words you do not understand that you may want me to explain. Please ask me and I will explain.

**Purpose of research**

The study wants to find out more about sexual abuse of learners in schools. You can help fight this scourge by telling what you know about it as this will hopefully lead to its prevention.

**Participant selection**

Both girls and boys are victims of sexual abuse in schools so that is why I have thought it important to include you in the sample so that your views could be heard with regards to sexual abuse of learners in schools.

**Process**

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. The choice to participate is yours. You may choose not to participate and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time and you will not be penalised. If you accept to take part, this research will involve your participation in an interview which will take about one hour to one and half hours. During the interview if you do not wish to respond you may say so. There will be no one else present during the interview except for the interviewer. The interview will be tape recorded with your permission and the recorded information will be kept confidential. No one will be identified by name on the tape and they will be destroyed after the study. No risks or discomforts are anticipated in the study. If you happen to reveal being sexually abused by a teacher or that another learner is being sexually abused by another teacher the case will be reported to the school head and no harm will happen to you for reporting the sexual abuse. Your participation is likely to help with more information that might lead to the prevention of abuse of learners by teachers in schools.

In order to protect your identity only pseudo names (not real names) shall appear. It is very important that you first talk to your parents or guardians of your intention to participate in this study so that you may be granted permission, only then can you sign the form.

**Sharing of results**

The knowledge I will get from this research will be availed to the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture for sharing with the participants, other significant stakeholders and the local community. The results will be published in my thesis so that other interested people may learn from the research.

**Documentation for assent**

I have read this information and I have had my questions answered and I know that I can ask questions later if I have them. I am aware that I am at liberty to withdraw as I wish during any stage of the research process. I agree to take part in the research study.

Learner's name       : ------------------------------------------

Signature of learner   : --------------------------------------------

Date                : --------------------------------------------

Details of Guardian/Person giving consent

Name             : ------------------------------------

Relationship to Child  : ------------------------------------

Cell/Phone number    : ------------------------------------

3 signed copies to researcher, learner and guardian.

**Appendix 9: Consent form for teachers and educational psychologists**

*This consent form is directed to teachers and educational psychologists. Read this consent form carefully before you decide to fill it in. This consent form may contain words that you do not understand - feel free to ask.*

**Name of Researcher/ Student**: Simuforosa Magwa (Doctoral student in Psychology of Education)

**Student Number**                    : 50691813. University of South Africa (UNISA)

**E-mail**                               : magwasf@gmail.com

**Cell-phone Number**              : +263773475817

**Topic**

Child Sexual Abuse by Teachers in Secondary Schools in the Masvingo District, Zimbabwe: Perceptions of Selected Stakeholders

**Introduction**

I am Mrs Simuforosa Magwa, working as a lecturer in Educational Psychology at the Great Zimbabwe University. I am carrying out a study on sexual abuse of learners in schools in fulfilment of the requirements of a doctoral degree in Psychology of Education. You are hereby invited to take part in this research.

**Purpose of Research**

Sexual abuse of learners in schools is more prevalent than statistics indicate. The purpose of this research is to get to know the views stakeholders in the school namely teachers, learners and educational psychologists on the nature, causes, effects, reasons for disclosure and non-disclosure of sexual abuse and how sexual abuse of learners by teachers can be prevented. You can help fight this scourge by telling what you know about it, as this will hopefully lead to its prevention.

**Process**

You are being asked to take part in this research because I feel that your experience as an educationist or educational psychologists can contribute much to an understanding of child sexual abuse in schools. I am hoping to get rich data to augment that given by learners.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to participate and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time and you will not be penalised. If you accept to take part, this research will involve your participation in an interview which will take about one hour to one and half hours. There will be no one else present except for the interviewer. The interview will be tape recorded with your permission and the recorded information will be kept confidential. No one will be identified by name on the tape and they will be destroyed after the study. No risks or discomforts are anticipated in the study. However you are free to let the researcher know of any discomfort you may experience. Your participation is likely to help increase knowledge about sexual abuse of learners by teachers in schools leading to interventions which would help prevent learners from sexual abuse. The findings are likely to inform and influence policy. All data collected from you will be kept confidential. Though direct quotes from you will be used in the thesis, your name and other identifying information will be kept anonymous. Pseudonyms (any information about you will have a number or code instead of your name) will be used.

**Sharing of results**

At the end of my study I intend to share my findings with the participants, parents and school heads at an arranged meeting. A written report will also be given to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary schools. I will also publish the results in order that other interested people may learn about sexual abuse of learners in educational settings from my research.

**Documentation of consent**

I have read the foregoing information and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give my consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study. Thank you.

Name of participant      : -------------------------------------------

Signature of participant     : -------------------------------------------

Date                          : -------------------------------------------

## Appendix 10: Interview schedule for learners

### I. Opening

### A. Establishing rapport

My name is Mrs Simuforosa Magwa. In our last meeting I explained to you that we were to meet so that you will talk to me about your perceptions of child sexual abuse by teachers in schools. Like I stressed in the assent letter your name will be kept confidential. You are kindly asked to be honest in giving your views. You should not feel forced to say something you are uncomfortable with. If you wish to withdraw from the research you are free to do so and will not be penalised. When you do not understand anything, feel free to ask for clarification.

### B. Purpose

This semi structured interview seeks to elicit information from you pertaining to child sexual abuse in schools by teachers. The information you provide will be used in my research. I hope to use this information to help prevent this abuse in schools.

### C. Time line

The interview should take about one hour. Are you available to talk at this time?

### Body (Prompts)

•        What would you say is child sexual abuse? (Explain to me what child sexual abuse is? What kinds of child abuse do you think exist?

•        In your opinion what are the various factors that lead to the abuse of learners by teachers?  Explain in detail.

•        What do you think would the effect of sexual abuse be on a child?

•        Explain the different ways in which child sexual can be stopped in schools


### 3. Closing

I appreciate the time you have devoted to this interview. If you need to talk more about this issue please free to get in touch with me.

### THANK YOU VERY MUCH!!!

**Appendix 11: Interview schedule for teachers/educational psychologists**

1**. Opening**

**A. Establishing rapport**

Thank you for coming to this discussion. I am Mrs Simuforosa Magwa a lecturer in Educational Psychology at the Great Zimbabwe University. I am currently enrolled as a D.Ed. student with University of South Africa (UNISA). I am glad that you agree to assist with my research endeavours by sharing with me your perceptions on sexual abuse of learners by educationists. You are kindly asked to be honest in giving your views. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential. You should not feel forced to say something that you are uncomfortable with. If you wish to withdraw from the research you are free and you will not be penalised. If you do not understand anything ask for clarification.

**B. Purpose**

In Zimbabwe, like in many countries sexual abuse of learners in schools remains high. This semi structured interview seeks to elicit information pertaining to child sexual abuse by teachers in schools. The information you provide will be used in my research. I hope to use this information to help prevent this abuse in schools.

**C. Time line**

The interview should take about one hour to one hour thirty minutes. Are you available to talk at this time?

**D. Transition**

For how long have you worked as a teacher/educational psychologist? Which post do you hold?

**Body – Prompts**

• Can you explain in your own words your understanding of the term child sexual abuse?

• Discuss the contributing factors of sexual abuse in schools.

• From your point of view what do you think are the some consequences of sexual abuse of children?

• How can we stop child sexual abuse?

**3. Closing**

I appreciate the time you have devoted to this interview. If you need to talk more about this issue please feel free to get in touch with me.

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH!!!**