



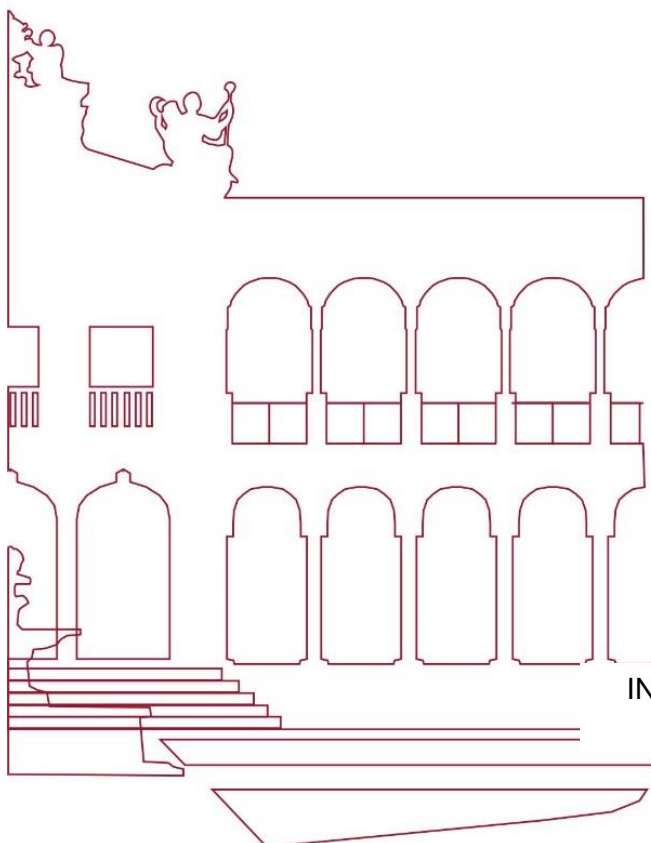
UNIVERSIDADE DE ÉVORA

Tensions and conflicts between formal and traditional sex education in Africa-sub-Sahara

Martha Nyanungo

Orientador: Luís Miguel dos Santos Sebastião

Tese apresentada à Universidade de Évora para obtenção do
Grau de Doutor em Ciências da Educação



INSTITUTO DE INVESTIGAÇÃO E FORMAÇÃO
AVANÇADA



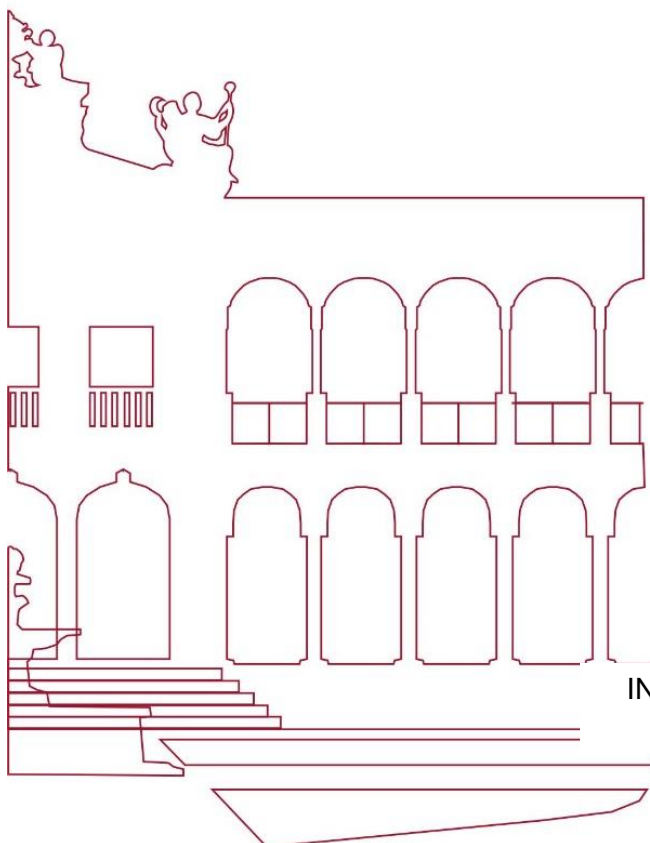
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Évora, Julho de 2018

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“We live at an awkward but exciting juncture of human history. None of us should claim too much for our own wisdom. All of us should confront our sensibilities humbly and diligently, hoping that by our faithfulness the next generation will have more to work with and a better society to live in.”

Philip Wogaman, *A Christian Method of Moral Judgement* (London: SCM Press, 1976).

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And above all, thank you, God, for giving me the strength and resources to pursue my studies.

RESUMO

Tensões e conflitos entre a educação sexual formal e a tradicional na África subsariana

Esta dissertação visa estudar a influência que a educação sócio-cultural e religiosa exercem na educação sexual formal em escolas no Zimbabwe. Para a investigação, foi levantada a seguinte questão: "A educação sexual formal ministrada em escolas está a ser sublevada pela educação sexual adquirida através de normas socioculturais, religiosas das famílias Africanas?" Entretanto, se a educação sexual não é Afro-centrada e culturalmente relevante a nível do conteúdo, ela não pode ser efetiva e as mulheres jovens continuarão expostas aos maiores desafios sexuais de hoje. Ao responder a esta e outras questões da pesquisa, achámos o método qualitativo o mais apropriado para a recolha de dados culturalmente específicos e contextualmente ricos, pois, é esse o objetivo deste estudo.

Através de entrevistas etnográficas, a intenção foi a de gravar vozes de jovens mulheres Shonas que, representam todo mosaico sócio-étnico do país. Isso permitiu-me obter informações consistentes e coerentes de como a sexualidade é definida e percebida entre os Shonas, e como a referida perceção se entrelaça com a instrução formal religiosa sobre a sexualidade. Outros instrumentos de recolha de informação para o nosso estudo incluíram análise minuciosa de livros escolares e de documentos do Ministério da Educação, Desporto e Cultura do Zimbabwe.

Entre vários resultados curiosos produzidos pela pesquisa, o de maior realce revela que a educação sexual formal ministrada nas escolas no Zimbabwe não incorpora conteúdos suficientemente relevantes para os adolescentes sexualmente ativos. A inadequação baseia-se na abordagem não realista e errônea da abstinência como o método e resolução

insuperável para os dilemas da sexualidade. Como desvantagem, a cultura e a religião também são vistas como desafios para a educação sexual efetiva nas escolas. Com base nesses resultados, o nosso estudo conclui com recomendações que devem ser levadas em consideração ao se elaborar um currículo de educação integral mais eficaz e operacional sobre educação sexual.

Palavras-chaves: Zimbabwe, cultura, escola, educação, religião, sexualidade

ABSTRACT

Tensions and conflicts between formal and traditional sex education in Africa sub-Saharan

This dissertation aims to investigate the interplay between the socio-religio-cultural aspects and formal sex education in schools in Zimbabwe. Because young women fall victim to most of the traditional, religio-cultural sexuality adversities, the research focuses on young Shona women. The study interrogates whether the formal sex education being taught in schools faces setbacks from sex education being instructed through African family socio-cultural and religious norms. Qualitative methodology was found to be the most appropriate for the production of culturally specific and contextually rich data that the research is aimed at. Collection of data was achieved through document analysis participant observation and ethnographic interviews.

Of the many intriguing findings of this research, a major finding is that curricula is detached from overarching philosophical worldviews, cultural traditions, and the general actualities of sexually active teenagers. Its inadequacy is based on the unrealistic and erroneous approach to abstinence as the unsurpassable resolution to sexuality dilemmas. The study evidences that the deep-rootedness of some traditional practices, mythologies, and taboos associated with sexuality as well as the tenacity of some forms of traditional modes of sexuality education continue to exert a powerful influence on formal sexuality education in schools. The findings further reveals that the prescriptive and fear-based teaching methods do not foster enough critical thinking to empower students to face sexuality and reproductive health challenges.

This viewpoint continues to play a significant role in shaping attitudes, beliefs, and values in relation to sexuality even in contemporary times. Based on these findings, the study concludes with recommendations for designers of sexuality education curricula to consider the convergent and divergent aspects and draw from strengths of the co-existing heritages in

order to build an integrated sexuality education pedagogy that is culturally relevant for the young women in Zimbabwe.

Key words: Zimbabwe, culture, education, religion, schools, sexuality

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND THEIR MEANINGS

<i>Shona term</i>	Meaning
<i>Amai/ mhamha-</i>	Mother
<i>Akanditemera nyora</i>	The process of administering traditional medicine by making incisions on skin and rubbing in the medicine
<i>Ambuya</i>	mother in law or grandmother
<i>Ane shave</i>	Being possessed by some alien spirit
<i>Arikubika mapoto</i>	Co-habiting
<i>Baba</i>	Father
<i>Chidhadhamuka</i>	stretch like herb used in labia minora elongation that
<i>Chigara vakwasha</i>	A bench specially designed for men.
<i>Chikwambo</i>	Alien spirit.
<i>Chikapa</i>	is a practice, often taught in initiation tutorials
<i>Chikomba</i>	Live in boyfriend.
<i>Chikoro</i>	School
<i>Chinamwari</i>	refers to the tutorials or lessons given to girls or women on matters of female sexuality
<i>China chemadzimai-</i>	Thursday services that only married women attend where they are taught about how to improve their homes and please their husbands.
<i>Chitsinha</i>	Evil spirits.
<i>Hosha-</i>	disease(s)
<i>Hunhu-</i>	moral integrity

<i>Hunhukadzi-</i>	womanhood
<i>Hure</i>	a woman of low moral standing or a prostitute
<i>Kitchen parties</i>	bachelorette parties thrown for the bride to be where older women and church elders come to offer advice to the bride on how to handle her marital duties.
<i>Kudzonzwa matinji</i>	labia minora elongation
<i>Kuenda kumwedzi</i>	literal translation is ‘going to the moon’ but the meaning is more metaphorical. It refers the menstrual cycle meaning the way it can be measured by the monthly lunar calendar hence the reference to the moon.
<i>Kuroorwa-</i>	getting married either by eloping or by the paying of the bride price.
<i>Kutizira</i>	eloping- in Shona culture it is when a girl goes to her boyfriend’s family who are then tasked to facilitate the actual marriage.
<i>Kumusha</i>	Rural home.
<i>Kupereka</i>	handing over of the bride.
<i>Kuzvarira</i>	Donating sperms on behalf of another in the case where a husband is impotent.
<i>Matinji</i>	labia minora
<i>Mukadzi</i>	meaning older female but used to denote wife
<i>Mupfuhwira</i>	love potion
<i>Mupfuta</i>	herb used in labia minora minora elongation

<i>Mupira</i>	herb used in labia minora elongation.
<i>Mutimwi</i>	A string of beads which is given at birth to both boys and girls and plays a role in female fertility rites at puberty, first pregnancy and at every birth.
<i>Murume</i>	male but usually used to name a husband
<i>Ngomwa</i>	An infertile woman
<i>Nhanga</i>	girls sleeping room.
<i>Sekuru</i>	grandfather
<i>Roora/Lobola</i>	wealth can also be used in reference to bride bride-price.
	teaching the girl or woman how to gyrate in a way that is sexually stimulating to the male partner
<i>Tete</i>	aunt might be father's sister or the husband's sister
<i>Tikomba</i>	refers to the tutorials or lessons given to girls or women
	on matters of female sexuality but it is a term used by the Shangani Tribe found in the Southern Eastern part of Zimbabwe.
<i>Tsvakirai kuno-</i>	monetary token provided by the groom's family after a girl has eloped to their as a message to that they should not be worried where their child is because she is safely with them. It is also a token that they are going to come and state their case to the in laws by paying <i>lobola</i> at an opportune time.
<i>Tsano</i>	Brother in law.
<i>Tsvimborume</i>	A man who has passed marriageable age.

<i>Munozivana here?</i>	Do you know him/her?
<i>Kusungirirwa chiguri paunofa</i>	carrying a corncob to your grave.
<i>Vamwene</i>	mother in law
<i>Vatete</i>	Aunt.
<i>Vatezvara</i>	father-in-law, (singular).
<i>Wakafurirwa netsuro</i>	The person is cursed.
<i>Zvitsinha</i>	Bad luck.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

BCU – Boys Christian Union.

CSE - Comprehensive Sexuality Education

GCU – Girls Christian Union.

G & C- Guidance and Counselling

HIV- Human Immunodeficiency Virus

LMS - London Missionary Society.

MCU – Men Christian Union.

MOEASC Ministry of Education, Art, Sport and Culture

SCT – Social Cognitive Theory

SRH – Sexual and Reproductive Health

STI – Sexually transmitted infections

NAZ - National Archives of Zimbabwe.

UNAIDS - United Nations Joint Programme on HIV-AIDS

UNESCO - United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNICEF - United Nations Children’s Education Fund

WCU – Woman Christian Fellowship, normally referred to as Ruwadzano

WHO - World Health Organisat

SEXUALITY UNVEILED

Engulfed in myths, beliefs, culture
Involved in the engulfing
Teacher, initiation advisors, pastor, parent – worse still, child
Yet all at risk
Dim may be the light
Yet clear is the message
Sexuality education – a must!
Arise, stake holders!
Break the barriers
Be active in the breaking Teacher, initiation advisor, pastor, parent – even you – child
Teach sexuality education Initiate sexuality education Preach sexuality education Impart
sexuality education
Learn sexuality education
Sexuality education – indeed a must!

*A poem written by Mrs Daphne Tembo, Teacher at Hillside Basic School,
Chipata District, Zambia*

INTRODUCTION

Preamble

Reminiscing about my teenage years as a daughter of a United Methodist church reverend, I vividly remember the silence of sexuality matters in my home. Having been brought up under Christian principles wrapped up in Shona culture flavoured with a touch of British colonization, I cannot forget how I used to get traumatized each time Marvin P. Gaye's "*Sexual Healing*" song played on radio. I recall on the deafening silence that filled car the day I was the only child in the car with my parents when the song played on the car radio. To my disappointment, my father did not change the radio station, and neither did he turn off the radio. I did not know how to block my ears, the more I tried to ignore the song, the more the lyrics overwhelmed me.

"And when I get that feeling

I want sexual healing

Sexual healing is good for me

Makes me feel so fine, it's such a rush

Helps to relieve the mind, and it's good for us

Sexual healing, baby, it's good for me

Sexual healing is something that's good for me

Well, it's good for me and it's so good to me my baby, ohh....."

Questions silently popped out of my naive teenage mind; how on earth could anyone publicly sing a song about sex? What message was he trying to convey through the song? What exactly did he mean by *sexual healing*? How could sex heal and what illness did it heal? How could sex be something good for someone?

Just the word sex on its own was a taboo, it was not a comfortable word to hear especially in public, worse still on radio. I had no one to talk to about this devastating sense of shame at such 'inconvenience'. To add the icing on the cake, the song became a hit in the 80's and it was repeatedly played on the radio and at many social functions. The silence about sex and sexuality issues and matters by everyone around me spoke volumes about the secrecy that shrouds matters of sexuality.

Further, I recall at some point on the onset of my menstrual cycle how it was challenging for me to address the issue to my mother as I felt her apprehension and unwillingness to entertain my questions on the matter. The situation was even more complicated when we had compulsory swimming lessons at school and our physical education mistress (who was a white Scottish expatriate) did not accept any excuses for not swimming and menstruating was not a reason to stop us from swimming. This was not an issue either to the white girls in my class who eventually enlightened us on the use of tampons. I had no clue on how to use them and turned to my white classmates for explanation on how to insert them. I was also reluctant to use them because according to my black friends who in their wisdom (or lack thereof) told me I was going to lose my virginity by merely inserting the dreaded thing! Although rather comical now, this example begs the question: *"Who is teaching our young women about sexuality issues that concern them? Are young women receiving the correct information when it comes to their sexuality?"*

As I embarked on the PhD Program, I was motivated to interrogate perceptions, attitudes and knowledge towards sexuality issues that affected the young women in Zimbabwe, the country where I was brought up. On a personal level, I questioned myself on what could be done to pull down the barriers and start talking to our daughters about sex and sexuality. I can

however now talk to my mother more openly about sexual matters but perhaps this is attributed to the fact that I am now a mother myself and from a religious and cultural standpoint I am having 'legal' intercourse. Fortunately for my mother, she did not have to deal with teen pregnancies from any of her daughters, a very tangible evidence of an existing phenomenon in this present day and age. Our society dictates our expression of sexuality and consequently, I never voiced my questions or concerns, and, like most girls then, I kept my legs closed and my mouth shut.

And what did I learn about sexuality in my religious and Shona community? The overall feeling I received about sexuality was: It's was deep secret, so discrete that it was mysterious to us as young girls, it was a "Pandora box" to be opened upon getting married. Even though I spent hours sharing knowledge and curiosity with my school friends and combining with the information from the magazines that provided us with the information that we were inquisitive about and the knowledge we needed at that time. As a Christian, I inherited a tradition that was sought to separate our bodies from our minds and spirits. Volumes were said and written casting our bodies as a negative part of who we are. Looking back, I don't know whether to laugh or weep.

Thinking back at the sexuality education I received, if I actually received any, all that comes to my mind is that whatever instruction I received on the issue mainly focused on the negative consequences of young people engaging in sex. These include the possibility of contracting sexually transmitted diseases and the risk of losing one's virginity and falling pregnant out of wedlock. Sex was characterised as something inherently fraught with danger to young women who run the risk of not finding a husband. The positive or pleasurable aspects of sexualities were not brought to attention. In other words, I was constantly reminded and

told "what not to do" by all those around me who adopted a morally authoritative stance. I was shown the "correct" way to conduct myself sexually - always in light of possible shame, danger, disease and damage.

As a lecturer in the department of health sciences, carrying out research projects on sexuality education will certainly contribute to finding answers to underlying socio-cultural and religious issues on sexuality in my beloved Africa. According to the United Nations Population Fund, 2013, teenage pregnancies are a major health and demographic problem with social, psychological, medical and demographic implications. A report from the World Health Organization, 2014, confirmed that 11% of all births were due to women aged 15- 19 years and that 95% of the 36.4 million women in developing countries, became mothers before the age of 18. What intrigued me most is that the report further affirms that Sub-Saharan Africa had the highest prevalence of teenage pregnancies in the world and births to teenage mothers accounted for more than half of all the births in this region: an estimated 101 births per 1000 women aged 15 to 19 (UNPF, 2013. p.3). This concurred with the results obtained from a study carried out by Loaiza & Liang, 2013 that asserted that the majority of countries with teenage pregnancy levels above 30% occur in sub-Saharan Africa.

Furthermore, recent data from UNICEF, 2016 (p.3-4) on new HIV and AIDS infections show that adolescents and young people represent a growing share of people living with HIV worldwide. Of the 610,000 young people between the ages of 15 to 24 that were newly infected with HIV in 2016 alone, 260,000 were adolescents between the ages of 15 and 19. The reports also raises a red flag on sub-Sahara Africa and South Asia as regions with the highest numbers of HIV-positive adolescents. The report further reveals that eighty four

percent (84%) of adolescents living with HIV, live in sub-Saharan Africa (about 1.7 million of the 2.1 million).

What contributed as a driving force that intrigued me to focus my research on young women is that, looking at all these reports, it clearly shows how adolescent girls and young women are disproportionately affected by HIV in sub-Saharan Africa. All the data presented above therefore serves as an awakening call for more research on sexuality education focused on young women.

The world in which young women are growing up today is certainly very different from the world that their parents or grandparents were brought up. The young women are having more opportunities and are facing more challenges. They are spending more time in school and are having widespread access to social media, magazines, books, movies, radio and television. They are also entering adolescence earlier and healthier, and are likely to delay marriage and childbearing, thus pushing them to being sexually active before marriage.

In response to these major societal changes and myself being a lecturer, I am increasingly interested and motivated in the potential that sexuality education has, to meet the needs of young people, to emancipate and to enfranchise young women in particular. I strongly believe that sexuality education programs can empower young people by helping them delay sexual activity and improve their knowledge of contraceptive methods when they eventually become sexually active. Further research in this field will go a long way in addressing young people's sexuality issues more holistically.

Therefore, young women should be approached with more caution and strategic planning to help equip them with the knowledge and skills they need to feel comfortable and confident about their sexuality.

Research shows that those countries that have a more open and positive attitude toward sexuality have better sexual health outcomes (Loaiza & Liang, 2013). Cross-national comparisons show that, despite similar levels of sexual activity, adolescent pregnancy rates are consistently lower in many Western European countries than in other regions of the world. In Western Europe, the story is different, sex among adolescents is socially accepted, with little to no societal pressure to remain abstinent. But with that acceptance comes strong cultural norms that emphasize that young people who are having sex should take the necessary actions to protect themselves and their partners from pregnancy and STIs.

Sexuality education just like other aspects of education should help mould and expose young women to material that not only reduces their risk of sex abuse, unplanned pregnancies and disease, but also enlightens and empowers them.

The research project presented here therefore aims at exploring the relation between the social religio-cultural norms of sexuality education and the formal sexuality education taught in schools in Africa Sub-Sahara particularly in Zimbabwe. It is of my interest to make a holistic exploration on how the African socio-religio-cultural beliefs associated with the sexual life of young African women aged between 18 and 30 in Zimbabwe overlaps or interweaves with formal sex education.

The study focuses on the Shona women mainly because the Shona constitute the majority (75 percent) of the Zimbabwean population and thus significantly influential in reaching important resolutions. From this standpoint, it can be set forth to regard the Shona culture as a true representation of the whole population of Zimbabwe perspective on sex and sexuality. The study focuses on young Shona women mainly because they fall victims to most of the traditional, religio-cultural sexuality adversities like child marriages, *kutizira*- eloping,

kuzvarira- levirate marriages, *kugara nhaka*-widow inheritance, *kuripa ngozi* giving up a girl for the appeasement of an avenging spirit, amongst others. All these have also put the young women and the girl child at a high risk of sexual abuse and HIV and AIDS infection (UNICEF 2002; 2004.p. 9).

The project will allow me to confront and unclot issues that culture and religion has clothed in taboos, inhibitions and silences. It will allow me to quiz the young women and give them a voice, thus allowing me to unlearn and relearn many things that are taken for granted about the influence of culture and religion in sexualities in sub-Saharan Africa.

My overall objective is to analyze what is being taught in terms of knowledge and values, according to the norms of sex education in the African culture as compared to the content of sex education in schools.

The study is supported by the following specific objectives:

- To establish if formal sex education being taught in schools faces setbacks from sex education being instructed through African family socio-cultural and religious norms.
- Identify the knowledge conveyed, prescribed behaviors and values promoted by the African culture and African Christian religion.
- Explore the knowledge conveyed, prescribed behaviors and values promoted by the school sex education programs.
- Analyze socio-cultural barriers implicit in sex education curriculum in schools.

The study focuses on one major research problem that could help address the research question:

- Is formal sex education being taught in schools facing setbacks from sex education being instructed through African family socio-cultural and religious norms?

In the country of my study, it is against this background that schools and churches are the institutions that are regularly attended by young women.

The study therefore poses the following research questions:

- *How is the sexuality education content of schools and churches specifically designed for girls?"*
- *Do church teachings and the school curriculum, enhance young women with the ability to make informed choices about their sexuality?*
- *Is the informal sexuality teaching designed and structured to provide both knowledge and skills to these young women?*
- *Up to what extent do skills such as negotiation, decision making and self-assertion form the core aspects of the sexuality education, given the role they play in enabling young women to make informed choices about their sexuality?*
- *Are other skills like recognizing peer pressure and resisting it and asking for help and seeking advice from organizations and people that offer these services being catered for?*
- *How relevant is the content in terms of the African culture as "non-formal" sexuality education?*

To achieve these objectives and to find answers to the questioned posed, the study aims at analysing the conceptions of sexuality of women from different ethnic Shona groups and

from different religious backgrounds. The intention is to investigate what is being taught in terms of knowledge and values, according to the norms of sex education in the African culture as compared to the content of sex education in schools. The fact that research was done at “home”, it served as an advantage in the sense that it facilitated the researcher to easily connect to the relevant support networks. The researcher was also fully aware that in the event of an unanticipated predicament conforming to professional conduct, she could get in touch with the supervisor for guidance, advice and support. It is therefore of my interest to make a holistic exploration on how the socio-religio-cultural beliefs associated with the sexual life of young Shona women aged between 18 and 30 in Zimbabwe is at crossroads with formal sexuality education taught in schools.

Significance of study

A Study focused on religio-cultural perspective of sexuality versus formal sexuality education from an African Zimbabwean context is almost an unexplored area. Very little extensive academic work has been carried out so far (Kapungwe, 2003; Amanze, 2007; Muzondidya & Ndlovu, 2007; Nganda, 2007; Parker, 2009; Machingura, 2012; Moyo & Zvoushe, 2012). At this particular point, not many scholarly articles and books from different backgrounds have been published. In this respect, the contribution of this study to sexuality education is an attempt to offer a new flavour to the ongoing academic debates on sexuality teaching and other associated and related issues. The study aims at enlightening, and at providing knowledgeable thought provoking debates that will help break the obfuscation in schools, in churches, homes and in different organizations in Zimbabwe. At the moment, the churches and schools by using culture and religion as support systems, have braved through

the collusion to keep some of the aspects of sexuality under the carpet and to present abstinence until marriage as the absolute course of action.

By analysing the established African concept of sexuality and by making a follow up on the teaching of sexuality, this study will therefore identify sexuality within the wider Shona context from all corners of the society up to the present day. The assumption of this research is that sexuality teaching in Zimbabwe is not a latent sexuality phenomenon that has lain hidden for years within the rubrics of social networks and has only come out of the lime light because of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. It is an archival phenomenon that has always been predominant within the Shona culture, but closely integrated within the socially, religiously and historically acceptable systems of sexuality.

This study hopes to substantiate the historical authenticity of sexuality in Africa, particularly among the young Shona women in Zimbabwe. In order to provide a favourable environment for sexuality teaching, it is fundamental to present a scrupulous presentation of the Shona social structure and to argue on the gender divide dynamics presented by the social processes of religion and urbanisation. The study therefore intends to uncover the sexuality teaching within the African social context before and after the colonial period. The study is significant in the way that it locates sexuality teaching within African models of life skills teachings. It offers a critique on the baffling and rather contradictory nature presented by the systems employed by both the Christianity and the African culture in an attempt to enforce and maintain prescribed sexuality teaching.

The integration of sexuality within the Shona concept of sexuality is achieved in this study in a unique manner by attempting to perceive the attitude towards sexuality within the family set up, the church and the formal schools. The reason for engaging in such an elaborate

approach is to help comprehend the complexities involved in placing sexuality within the broad understanding of African (Shona) sexuality. It also provides clarity to some of the underlying issues involved. In view of the restricted written sources conjugated with the fate of the young women under study, the initial thought of this research was to use already disposable and admissible preferences by asking questions about sexuality to the expectation of the church and the Shona culture. In other words, the study integrates sexuality teaching with the basic concept of Shona sexuality, thus, the study moved from the “familiar” to “unfamiliar”, the “unvoiced”.

The two peremptory reasons for incorporating religion and culture with the universal and standard perception of African sexuality in this research were;

- (i) The strong interconnection between sexuality frameworks of social relationships that are focused on family expectations and regulations. That is, the conceptualization of sexuality is designed within the context of family jurisdiction governed by restraining regulations for both males and females.
- (ii) The initiative of this *modus operandi* allows me to formulate a rational analysis of the general parameters, the entanglements and the apprehensions involved and to also create a background for constructing an appropriate concept of sexuality in Zimbabwe.

Many Shona tend to conform to society’s expectations in terms of sexual or marriage partners to avoid disappointing their elders and consequently their ancestors. There is also fear of causing misfortune to their descendants. The aftermath of sexual relationships are believed to reflect the behaviour of the previous generations that might have repercussions for the future generations. That is, it is considered a mishap for an individual who is married to die

childless. The Shona culture attempts to ward off the calamity by tying a maize-cob on his or her back as a symbol for the children that would have been born if the deceased had served their marital duty. Failure to do this, a void which will create problems for the future generations is created. This research therefore hopes to dispute the truths that are idiosyncratic to the Shona in terms of sexuality education, because of the religio-cultural significance sexuality is believed to serve.

Furthermore, according to the Shona culture, it is only the spirit of the deceased married person that can undertake the status of an ancestral spirit. Whether male or female, if one dies married and childless is automatically consigned to oblivion and those that die as single and childless as adults are completely unremembered. This shows that marriage and childbearing are regarded as moral obligations that are to be fulfilled upon reaching a certain age. Failure to do that, one is destined to have a maize cob tied on their back when they die, commonly known as *kusungirirwa chiguri kana wafa* – meaning undertaking the maize cob ritual. This line of action instigates a lot of fear and anxiety because one is considered as a total failure which in turn causes shame to the remaining close family members.

In this case, procreation becomes a communal moral imperative and one is obliged to get married and bear children upon reaching adulthood. This study hence aims at demystifying all such beliefs that instil fear and negatively influences the youth in making informed choices when it comes to their sexuality.

The study attempts to highlight some aspects of sexuality designed from the derived experiences evidenced in the young women's lived experiences to be taken into consideration by the stake holders and sexuality education program designers. The practical contact and the observation of facts and events show that some conventional and customary ideologies are

passing into oblivion; the Shona now constitute groups of highly mobile young people and families. Evident mixing of cultures makes Zimbabwe a multicultural, multiracial and multi-denominational society and not only comprised of indigenous people. Thus, the effects of such intermixing of cultures need to be taken into account as we define our sexuality. The cities and large towns are increasingly becoming a place where a variety of races, cultures, or individuals assimilate into a cohesive whole of different perceptions, outlook and conceptualizations. For that reason, claims such as “the Shona sexuality is solely this way”, raise concerns that this study hopes to explore and contribute to knowledge.

As there does not seem to be universal agreement on most of the issues raised on sexuality teaching, this study will enrich the academic world with distinct African (Shona) perspectives to the ongoing debate by exploring, highlighting and identifying the different arguments from this context, searching for the lucidity and rationality of the claims presented.

This study is innovative in that it attempts to offer a distinct perspective of teaching sexuality in an African context, which, so far has been explained in terms of prescribed traditional clinical approach based on fighting against HIV/AIDS. By so doing, the study hopes to broaden the horizon in which Shona sexuality can be presumed and perceived. By using religion and culture as an exploratory tool or a barometer to determine the exact dimension of the formal sexuality teaching in schools makes the study a socio-cultural pedagogically substantial concurrent investigation. It is my hope to make the study full of remarkable insights into the dissimilarities as well as the consistent interconnectedness between sexuality education taught in schools and traditional and religio-cultural sexuality perspectives. It is hoped that this work will stimulate the much needed further research around this area of study.

Purview of the study

The overall dissertation consists of five chapters. The introduction unveils the project. It elucidates the reason behind exploring on the relation between the social religio-cultural norms of sex education and the formal sex education taught in schools in Zimbabwe. Through a preamble, it justifies the reason behind embarking on the journey to research on sexuality teaching and why the study focuses on young Shona women. It is closed by explaining the significance of the study. The first chapter is a literature review on sexuality and marriage in Zimbabwe where the socio-cultural and religious aspects of sexuality are explored. A brief exploration is made to make an overview on sexuality issues in the Shona culture. In chapter two I take a plunge into the inquiry of formal sexuality education programs and the history of education in Africa. The trajectory of education in the three main periods; pre-colonial, colonial and the post-independence era is also discussed.

The Methodology is dealt with in chapter three with a presentation of the research method and design. In Chapter four, the major findings from the analysis of documents used in the study are presented. In this chapter, data from the documents from the ministry of education and other relevant documents that reveal the content of formal sexuality education in Zimbabwean schools is reviewed, analysed and discussed. This is followed by the main findings and emerging issues from our interviews in chapter five. In this chapter the voices of the young Shona women that participated in the study are echoed and analysed. The study is finally wrapped up through a conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER ONE

Sexuality and Marriage in Zimbabwe

Introduction

Zimbabwe is located in central southern Africa. It is a landlocked country bordered by Mozambique, South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Zambia. It covers an area of 390,580 square kilometres between the Zambezi River to the north and the Limpopo River to the south. Based on the latest United Nations population survey, the current population of Zimbabwe is 16,413,905 which is equivalent to 0.22% of the total world population.

The two main tribes are, the Shona and the Ndebele, of which the Shona occupy more than three quarters of the country. The Ndebele is the second largest ethnic group, making up to 18 percent of the population. There are however other ethnic groups that constitute the rest of the 12 percent of the population which are the Batonga in the Zambezi Valley, the Shangaan or Hlengwe in the low veld, and the Venda on the border with South Africa. About 2 percent of the population is of non-African ethnic origin, mainly European and Asian (Msindo 2012; Mlambo, 2014).

According to Bourdillon, 1976, the Shona people are further divided into closely knit groups of interrelated families, the so called clans and those of direct descent from an ancestor, that is, lineage groups. The lineage determines factors such political, economic, as well as religious groups. For example, the current ruling political party in Zimbabwe is a representative of a particular lineage. The welfare of the lineage determines the security, the success, the prosperity, and even survival of the general public. Procreation is therefore a religio-cultural obligation by means of which the individual contributes the perpetuation of future generations. According to the Shona, the ancestral spirits persist through the different generations. The

Shona funeral proceedings include rituals where a ceremony is performed in conjunction with the inheritance ceremony to bring back the spirit of a man or a woman who has obtained full adult status by becoming the father or mother of a family (Bourdillon, 1976).

All the national languages, with the exception of the official language, English, are Bantu, a branch of the Niger-Congo language family. Shona and Sindebele (commonly referred to as Ndebele) are the most widely spoken, and students are required to take at least one of those languages. The Ndebele in the nineteenth century were the first to use the name "Shona" to refer to the peoples they conquered; although the exact meaning of the term is unclear, it was probably derogatory. Later, white colonists extended the term to refer to all groups that spoke dialects officially recognized as Shona.

The major languages are composed of different dialects that belong to various ethnic groups which in turn view their sexuality differently. The dialects resulted from the differing missionary education policies in the nineteenth century. Sindebele is a click language of the Nguni group of Bantu languages; other members of this language group are Zulu and Xhosa, which are spoken mainly in South Africa; siSwati (Swaziland); and siTswana (Botswana). Other languages spoken in Zimbabwe are Tonga, Shangani, and Venda, which are shared with large groups of Tonga in Zambia and Shangani and Venda in South Africa (Msindo, 2007; Msindo 2012; Mlambo, 2014).

At this point, it can be disputed that the Shona are an all-inclusive or generic culture with innumerable clans and is certainly not a colossal or monolithic culture. Each clan is identified by a distinctive totem, which serves as an emblem consisting of an animal representing the symbol of a family or clan. It is consequently considered as incest to have a relationship or to get married to someone of the same totem (Mudavanhu, 2010).

Patriliney predominates in Zimbabwe where Shona, Ndebele, Shangani and Venda are examples of patrilineal societies. This means that females do not inherit any valuables, property, titles and to a certain extent even names, all these are passed on only through the male line. Females (if not close or distant male relatives) only inherit certain valuables in rare cases where there are no male heirs. A man is automatically regarded as head of the house after matrimony, where he takes over all the indigenous household powers that allow him to make all the decisions. This is done with the consent and approval of the senior and more influential family members (Rank, 2015). The women move into their husbands' home or compound where they raise children after marriage and the marriage ensures the survival of the family. It guarantees the continuation into the next generation and a woman is obliged to bare children for her husband's family. Families generally assume joint ownership of domestic sources. At every compound, there is always a senior member who leads and directs the households. In the urban areas, the patrilocal or virilocal residence are rare. Most urban families however are part of a smallholding in the rural home of the husband and wife (Msindo, 2007; Msindo 2012; Mlambo; 2014; Rank, 2015).

I am a Shona woman who had the privilege to live in different parts of both urban and rural Zimbabwe during my upbringing which therefore exposed me to different segments of the Shona and even the Ndebele culture. It is a very common feature among most Zimbabwean families that live and work in urban areas to have a home in a village out of town, in the rural areas that they refer to as (*kumusha*). Even if they do not live there all the time, that is where their roots are and as a result, individuals are identified by their rural home area. This is reflected on the national identity cards of each and every Zimbabwean where even the name of the chief appears. This in a sense shows that people are still very much connected to their rural

homes and it is very common among the Shona to have a family grave yard near their rural home. My father being a Church Reverend, my family was moved from one region of Zimbabwe to the other. As I grew up I oscillated between cities and Methodist mission centres. As a result, from the age of four till the age of ten, I lived in Bulawayo where I was obliged to learn the Ndebele language and culture, which of course was not an easy task, considering tribalism challenges involved. During my field work, as I hence interacted with the young women, I acquired a wide frame of reference of the Shona culture and their perspective towards their sexuality.

Zimbabwe's economy depends on agriculture and it is a typical Shona tradition to centre their economic activities in farming. With the demanding work in the fields, a good labour force is necessary to have a good harvest. The greater the labour force, the higher the harvest yield. This means that within each family, there has to be a good labour force, signifying that if a man wants to have big labour force, he needed to produce more children to work in the fields. And for him to have many children it meant he had to have more than one wife. Procreation is therefore very important in ensuring that there were enough farm labourers. Through procreation, the members of the lineage also increases and since the more, the merrier, a woman's contribution to the growth of the lineage is therefore fundamental to her worth within the family. This explains why some sectors of the Shona culture is permissive to polygamy due to the fact that by acquiring many wives there is potential to have a bigger family with a greater number of children.

For an appropriate discussion and understanding of the present day perspective of sexuality within the Shona culture, it is indispensable for us to become aware of the nature and significance of the the traditional sexual concepts and the religio-cultural beliefs and values

that substantiate them. In agreement with Mudavanhu (2010), under these circumstances, if one is not very clear on how the Shona conceptualize their sexuality, it will be challenging to have a good grasp and to perceive the sexuality issues in Zimbabwe.

As we shall see later in this work, sexuality in the Shona context is a community and joint affair. The girl child's sexuality issues are taken care of by the aunts (known as *vana tete*) from the paternal side of the family. Consequently, if her behaviour is unbecoming, the common say among the Shona is that the girl's aunts did not do their job well. The girl child's mother plays a role in supervising the work of the aunts, and if she is not satisfied by her daughter's behaviour, she asks her daughter to visit her aunts. This is done to ensure that the girl is instructed and prepared for marriage by females from her own lineage and not her mother's lineal descent. This even goes as far as controlling and making regular checks on her virginity status. On the other hand, the boy child's sexual well-being is taken care of by the uncles (referred to as *sekurus*). These uncles and aunts act as support systems for behaviour and their sexuality issues. In other words, these family members are in full control of the sexuality issues for both the girl and the boy child (Mudavanhu, 2010)

As discussed above, sexuality amongst the Shona is a family affair. It is the family that has the power to enforce the rules and regulations, to exact obedience and even to judge. The place of sexual relationships amongst the Shona is determined by the long established traditional approach. Before a young man or woman is married, he/she is not in full control of her sexuality due to the prohibitive rules governed by their family members. All this can be drawn up to three main dimensions to the challenge. Just to mention a few prohibitive rules, we can highlight and draw up three dimensions at this point;

- (i) that sexual intercourse is strictly acceptable within the marriage context;

- (ii) Sexual relationships should be only between male and female, homosexuality is unheard of;
- (iii) The anticipated outcome of sexual relationships is for the building of a family.

Analysing the perspective of sexuality in Zimbabwe on a panoramic view, one can deduce that it is embroiled in a heterogeneous, multifarious and complex social history. It is compelling to be cognisant enough to have an appreciation and understanding of the historical dimensions that relate to sexuality because history itself reveals the conflicting complexity and paradoxical levels of personal, cultural, and even social meaning. Moreover, the complicatedness of the issue is that it is influenced by a wide spectrum of taboos, anxiety, angst, prejudice, expectations, and superstitions and to some extent, hypocrisy.

The Shona culture denies the use of the term sexuality and reinforces religious beliefs and injunctions to suppress girls and women from free expression of their sexuality just like in many other African communities (Gordon, 1998; Riphenburg, 1997; SADCC-WIDSAA, 1997). Being a Zimbabwean woman who was brought up in a patriarchal Shona culture, a culture that is not very different from many other African cultures in using sexuality as a tool to create and sustain gender hierarchy enshrouded in secrecy and taboos.

Women in Zimbabwe continue to be discriminated according to customary laws, despite the fact that the men and women are considered equal according to the Zimbabwean constitution. Such laws govern conditions such as inheritance laws and bride price practices. For example, the eventual ruling from an inheritance dispute in the Supreme Court in 1999 led to a serious setback for women's rights. According to the court ruling, women cannot be considered equal to men before the law apropos of the African cultural norms. From there on,

precedence is therefore given to customary law over the constitution on the basis of a clause in the constitution that allows for certain exceptions (Gordon, 1998).

Contemporary scholarship in Africa has tried to focus on the rights of women. The hostility of the African culture towards women has been perfectly accordant issue with feminists' studies. Efforts have been made to try and correct the misconception about culture and gender issues (Familusi, 2012).

1.1 African concept of sexuality

In order to make heads or tails out of the Shona concept of sexuality it is necessary to first appreciate or comprehend the perspective of the world of the Shona. The basic objective of this chapter is to therefore delineate the Shona traditional sexuality concept that underlies within the people's attitudes to sexuality. The aim is to briefly examine the concept of sexuality from the African view point. To adequately achieve this, the philosophy under which the native Shona seem to function will be discussed in this chapter. The section intends to explore on how people perceive, interpret, comprehend and even assess life and the world around them. It is important to understand how the indigenous Shona evaluate life both momentarily and on long-term basis, thus providing them with a prerogative for their accomplishment and inspiration to their demeanour.

However, one would admit that a people's world-view encompasses not only the multitudinousness of convictions, attitudes, perceptions and expectations that they are part of, but also the fundamental assumptions or deductive reasoning which binds them. Therefore, by making a careful analysis of the social context of their lives, one is able to obtain relevant understanding of their world-view. The cognizance and appreciation of their world-view is the correct formula to comprehend their social, ethical and religio-cultural values. This study

attempts to show the intricate and heterogeneous nature of African sexuality and the numerous challenging aspects that come with it. My argument at this point is that it appears that there is a systematic and consistent internal set up of sexuality among Africans to which everyone is presumed to cohere (Ikenga-Metuh, 1987).

According to African worldviews, all beings belong to two distinct worlds, the perceptible or visible and the imperceptible or invisible world. All materialistic stuff or objects surrounding humans on earth are considered to belong to the visible world. The invisible world on the other hand, is believed to consist of the heavenly realm. Generally African world-views recognize God as the Supreme Being, the creator and source of all life-forces. He created human beings and all other living and non-living objects and he maintains order and consonance in the cosmos by his ingenious creativity. In the hierarchy of beings, men occupy the central position. The divine status, spiritual forces including the ancestral spirits have superior powers that fulfil the role to reward or penalize humans. These spirits are seen as God's emblematic representatives. "Both the beings above men and those below him are appreciated to the degree that they help men not only to achieve his self-fulfilment, but to watch, protect and regulate men so that the integration and harmony of the ontological order is maintained."(Ikenga-Metuh, 1987, pp. 80).

Conceptualization of sexuality has been highly contested and debated upon by researchers. Evolutionary psychologists and socio-biologists have alleged to have been able to trace the roots of human sexuality and have claimed to have brought solid scientific basis to the understanding of the desires of the human body. Other social scientists including anthropologists and historians have contributed to the conceptualization of sexuality with different interpretations in different cultures and different times (Aniekwu, 2006).

The roots of knowledge on sexuality in Africa sub-Sahara has been enshrouded by innumerable stereotypical myths concerning sexualities of the third world countries. The concept is draped in ancestral myths, social paradoxicalities and it is also overshadowed by diversified meanings and intricate taboos, making it less of a bodily product and more of a product of the mind. Such perceptions led American anthropologist Carole Vance (1991), a feminist sociologist to conclude that the most important human sexual organ was located between the ears. The power of sexuality lies in its dangers and pleasures. Sexuality can cause both physical and mental pain, drawing forth fear and hate through violence, abuse, rape and discrimination. These can result in diseases like HIV/AIDS that can lead to death.

Sexuality being embroiled in love, ecstatic or exultant happiness that result in the pleasure of human engagement and intimacy, it gives sexuality its abstruseness and a position of dominion in human behaviour. A challenge to traditional anthropological models has been offered by the social construction theory, leading to the recent development of innovative work to sexuality. The appearance of AIDS has contributed to the burst in the support for research on sexuality and has in turn altered the strong competition between the constructionist paradigms and the cultural influence. With an increased number of governmental and non-governmental organizations funding HIV/AIDS programs, cultural influence and anthropological studies in sexuality are therefore threatened by essentialist biomedical contexts models (Vance, 1991).

Several authors allege that historically, the conceptualization of sexuality in sub-Saharan Africa was based upon the schemes derived from colonial legacies and reflection (Osha, 2004; Undie & Benaya, 2008; Tamale, 2011b). According to Tamale (2011a), approaches to the conceptualization of African sexualities have been strongly influenced and

defined by issues such as colonialism, globalization, patriarchy, gender, class, religion, and culture. The phenomenon of African sexuality cannot therefore be isolated from the various historical links that connect Africa to the rest of humankind. This has been evidenced by the way that many studies on African sexualities have handled this issue.

Clearly, the origin of the existing knowledge on the various aspects of sexuality are much more challenging to unravel than one can initially imagine. The desire to unravel the 'African sexuality' and to help understand sub-Saharan African society was revealed by Caldwell and colleagues (1989) when they postulated the 'African sexuality' theory, cited in many scholarly articles. Their assertion raised an argument that morality and religion are divergent and superficially relevant to sexual relations. They based their assumptions on female chastity characterized by a relatively higher level of commercial exchange and lack of moral culpability. Drawing on their own research and extensively on the anthropological and dispersed literature, the authors argue that the moral and religious constraints of the West had no direct influence on the sexual activity in sub-Saharan Africa. The Caldwell article is considered to be a helpful point of departure for the conceptualization of sexuality in sub-Saharan Africa. Responses to this article however show that it was not well-received, its theoretical gaps and its inadequacies were highlighted by authors like Le Blanc, et al. 1991; Ahlberg, 1994; Anfred, 2004; Wight, et al. 2006; Tamale, 2011b. This critical approach grants us a worthwhile starting point for theory building around the subject of sexuality in sub-Saharan Africa.

1.2 A socio-cultural analysis of African sexuality

The assumption that sexuality assumes contextual definitions is becoming problematic in a world that is steadily transforming into global village where all nations live in an

interdependent manner closely connected by modern telecommunications economically, socially and politically. Thus, advocating for social and religio-cultural approach to sexuality teaching is becoming increasingly challenging at a point in time where people differently conceptualize living together harmoniously, like it is in the case of Africa. The impact of such mingling of cultures is hard to overlook. Again, even though culture relies heavily on the past and often uses references from yesterday to justify the present, it is also a harsh reality that culture is not stagnant. This study therefore aims at tackling the advocacy for sexuality models as a true representation of these challenging times. It is also a fact that for us to understand and make sense of the world around us, we depend mainly on the concepts which are available to us. Africans are therefore in a position to impose some sort of coherent meaning on the world by making sense of reality through the use of these concepts to communicate their experience of the environment around them.

Considering the heterogeneous nature of Africa in socio-economic status, ethnicity, religion and race, it is important to acknowledge that there is a lot of diversified ways of experiencing African sexualities. It is a well-known fact that the issues on sexuality in Africa sub-Sahara are wrapped in taboos, myths, privacies and concealing silence as revealed by many researchers (Ikpe, 2004; Nganda, 2007; Amanze, 2010; Chinyanganya, T.L., and Muguti, J. 2012; Koech, Maithya, & Muange, 2013; Omobola, 2013).

According to Tamale (2011b), it is not possible to research on African sexualities without making reference to gender. Being products of culture and society, they both play a critical role in maintaining power relations in the African societies. Sexuality should therefore be inserted as an integral part of the interpreted goal and conceptualization of gender systems in Africa.

Human physical, emotional, psychic and emotional sensations including ethics and communication creativity form the wide spectrum through which sexuality is explored. African sexuality has a multi-layered structure that cannot be oversimplified through essentializing its discourses. Attempts that have tried to standardize global ideas about African sexualities have often obliterated the complex and diverse nature of sexual relations. There is therefore a need for abundant vibrant movements in Africa that reinforce research that challenges the theoretical colonial approaches that have left ineradicable substantial imprints on African sexualities.

African gender identity and gender role issues in sub-Saharan Africa constitute one of the important aspects of sexuality that has had formulated theories and an extended account of legendary material and historical events. As a matter of fact, cultural norms in sub-Saharan Africa are shrouded in gender inequalities. There are specific roles for men and women in marriage that define their sexual attitudes towards each other. These roles are significantly defined both structurally and culturally reinforcing male sexual dominance and female subordination (SARDC-WIDSAA, 2008; Chauraya, 2012; Koech, 2013).

In general, African men have all the authority when it comes to sex and it is culturally permissible for them to engage in sexual relationships with other women without the concern of their wives. Women on the other hand, have no or little authority when it comes to sex, their cultural duty is to be loyal sex providers to their husbands. Men have the right to demand sex whenever it suits them and women are supposed to always provide sex when it is demanded or required by their partners. Women are therefore unable to negotiate safe sex for fear of mistrust or abuse from their husbands or sexual partners (Amaro, 1995; Jewkes et al. 2003; Harrison, 2006; Jewkes & Morrell, 2010).

The gender dichotomy of 'good woman' and 'bad woman' consequently plays a very important role in the African culture. Research further reveals that in some parts of Africa, males are actually "expected to exert control over sexuality and reproduction, while females are expected to take a more subservient role" (Kabiru & Orpinas, 2008, p.2). Females who utilize their sexual freedom are often labelled as promiscuous and are blamed for the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. Males are not blamed for their irresponsible sexual behaviour because of their superior cultural status. Such gender inequalities have given rise to sexual authoritarianism and subjugation towards women when it comes to making choices about their sexuality and sexual relations. This is evidenced by virginity testing for girls, female genital manipulation and mutilation, widowhood rites and wife inheritance still practiced in African communities. Such cultural practices and policies on sexuality tend to control female sexuality rather seeking for an understanding of the 'naturalness' of human sexuality, this is one of the reasons why this study focuses on young women in Africa (SARDC-WIDSAA, 2008; Chauraya, 2012).

The religious dimension of African marriages is anchored on the predecessors who are considered to be distinctly attentive to lineage coherence. The ancestors on an African perspective are the guardians of the fertility and the descendants. When the bride wealth is paid in form of cattle in the Shona culture, and when the cattle herd of a son-in-law is driven into the in-law's cattle byre, the ancestors are called on to announce the arrival of the cattle as the reception of daughter in-law. This wealth is then reattributed through child bearing as a contribution to that lineage. Her fruitfulness is regarded as a sign of appreciation, patronage and blessings from the ancestors. This religious significance of *lobola* is not just a state of affairs

of the bygones of yesteryear because even to the present date, such practice of is quite prevalent.

As mentioned above, marriage is a traditional social institution that epitomizes the setting of acceptable sexual relationships. In congruence with Mudavanhu (2010), marriage is the only prescribed and acceptable institute of sexual relations with its weight on procreation and lineage. Promiscuity or sex out of wedlock, or the commonly known as casual sex, is associated with lack of morals (*hunhu*) in the eyes of the Shona elders particularly. For example, a descent well-groomed young woman is not expected to easily accept any marriage proposal from a young man without him insisting. The girl has to show reluctance as delaying tactics. The longer the delay, the more decent she is considered and thus reflecting her high moral standards.

It is indeed socially and culturally encouraged and expected of the young woman to show reluctance because they are trained not to easily give in to sexual advances. This refusal to easily accept any advances made by the young man towards her persists until marriage. Hugging, kissing and even holding hands are not culturally acceptable, consequently screaming or even crying are culturally motivated and accepted defence strategies and tactics. The young woman is hence expected to exhibit as much resistance as possible in order to demonstrate her wholeness and impress her husband to be. This can be an irony that promotes the establishment of men's authoritative manner towards women. Paradoxically, the young woman is also expected to continue with her reluctance and resistance towards sexual advances even on the first day in her matrimonial bed. On her first sexual encounter with her husband, she is not expected to show her sexual desires, worse still her fantasies, if any.

In the case that the young woman is interested in the young man's proposal, she shows her acceptance by issuing him a love token to symbolize her positive response. Upon receiving the token, the young man equally does not verbally communicate with the young woman, his acceptance of the token signifies a mission accomplished. In the rural areas, the token is usually nothing of great value, it can be a piece of cloth or an African sculpture. But in the urban settlements, the tokens tend to be modernized and can be something worth quite a few dollars. But whatever the token is, the young man is expected to treasure it and keep it safe.

As echoed by Mudavanhu (2010), after the acknowledgement of the marriage proposal, a ceremonial promulgation is held to arrange for marriage negotiations. To initiate these negotiations, the aunt receives cash from the groom through the marriage negotiator for her to purchase a new set of beads (*mutimwi*) for the bride. During this process, a ceremony is held to hand over the beads to the bride. In the course of the ceremony, the aunts and the elderly women converge to give a full set of instructions concerning her wifely responsibilities and duties. She is also taught how to utilize the beads as a sex toy on her matrimonial bed.

In the Shona culture, different beads are used for different purposes. For example, in some rural settlements, both boys and girls receive a string of beads known as *mutimwi* at birth as a ritual to symbolize their fertility. They are expected to keep them because they play an important role in fertility rites at puberty. Boys are expected to stop wearing their *mutimwi* when they reach puberty. This is done only after undergoing a traditional fertility test in which they are made to masturbate and drip drop their semen into a container filled with water. The sinking of the semen to the bottom of the container symbolizes the boy's fertility vigour. Floating and failure of the semen to reach the bottom of the recipient, was regarded as a sign

of weakness and infertility. In such cases, traditional herbs were then used to improve the boy's fertility (Bourdillon, 1976; Mudavanhu, 2010).

The wearing of the beads is of a compulsory nature. In accordance with Mudavanhu's research, the young women are expected to keep their beads for the rest of their marital lives. Refusal to wear or to use the beads is culturally unacceptable. He who does not wear the beads eventually runs the risk of inadequate genital development and thus putting their fertility at risk. As reiterated in this study, sex talks between mothers and daughters is culturally proscribed and restricted to the other elderly members of the family. Therefore, upon reaching puberty, the girl is expected to take her beads (*mutimwi*) to her paternal aunt (*vatete*) who then welcomes this development and proudly communicates the girl's maturity to her mother. This explains why even up to the present date, some parents are still reluctant to talk about sexuality issues with their children because, culturally, it is none of their business.

Soon after the matrimony, both the bride and the groom feel under pressure to fulfil all the cultural expectations. For example, the first few sexual encounters should result in a successful pregnancy. The positive results of pregnancy are signalled through a ritual known as *musingiro* where the young woman places her beads on the door step of her parents' home as confirmation of her pregnancy. As an act of acknowledgement of her daughter's sexual maturity, the young woman's mother steps over the set of beads. According to Bourdillon (1976), the pregnancy ritual removes the taboo and breaks the silence between mother and daughter who can freely and openly discuss sexuality matters. Towards the final stages of pregnancy, the young woman is then handed over to her mother's home in order for her to receive all the

necessary instructions to prepare her for child birth. In fact, the birth of the first child, according to the Shona, should always take place in her mother's house to allow her mother's ancestors to watch over her (Mudavanhu, 2010).

It is a taboo and a serious offence to the ancestral spirits to practise any form of incest, be it consanguinity or clan related. The violation is ruled out as a crime that can result in heavy penalization of the couple involved. The seriousness of the matter of such a criminal offence is that it is regarded as infringement of the ritual ancestral powers that can lead to the following repercussions;

- a) Spoiling the soils by reducing their fertility and eventually affecting the crop yields.
- b) Causing shame and disgrace to the whole family or clan
- c) Causing mysterious deaths and misfortune to the families involved

Such an offence therefore attracts a penalty that morally costs both families of the perpetrators. As a result, it is very common practice for the families involved to be silent on the issue of incest and rape as a protective measure. Clandestine rituals are commonly held to cleanse and purify the any misfortunes that can eventually affect the families involved. With the fear of perturbing the social fabric, the culture of secrecy and concealment often results in causing disastrous and dehumanizing effects to the victims. This is a typical nature of the inarticulate and silent approach on sexuality issues. This in turn makes it a challenging task for researchers to infiltrate and unravel the Shona world-view (Mudavanhu, 2010).

As far as male fertility is concerned, the cultural approach is a different story altogether. It is a big blow and a disgraceful situation that degrades the man concerned. After several attempts of victimizing the woman for not being positively receptive to her husband's seeds, the family eventually acknowledges that the fertility problem could be on the man's side. To

avoid shame without even apologizing to the woman for the harassment caused by her failure to fall pregnant, clandestine arrangements are made behind closed doors with one of the chosen brothers of the bridegroom or a close family member to substitute him in the matrimonial bed. This is done behind the bride groom's back by the family elders who organize at that time to take him to a distant traditional healer where he is supposedly kept on fertility treatment to for a couple of days. This is a highly confidential under cover move that is only known to a very few family elders.

After the traditional healing procedure, the husband is assured that he is in a position to impregnate his wife. This deceptive prank is repeated several times until a good number of children are born to the couple. It is remarkably amazing how this is all done without the woman's consent since she has no voice over such issues. She is obliged to comply with the whole procedure to guarantee her survival in the family and to fulfil the number one duty of a married woman, in this case producing as many children as possible for her husband's family. This comes to show that success of a marriage among the Shona is defined by the foundation of a solid commitment between the husband and the wife that produces a worthwhile and beneficial outcome.

Embracing fertility on the woman's side is almost an impossible task in the Shona culture, considering that procreation is the main focus of marriage. A childless woman is tormented and also endures a lot of harassment. Her failure to bear children means she is of no value to her husband's family, and she is left with no other option besides being replaced through divorce or polygamy. A childless woman is looked upon with despise and mockery for failing to contribute to the continuation of the family genealogy and for not guaranteeing her husband future spiritual powers.

The continuation of one's lineage is so important to the Shona in such a way that if a husband dies before bearing children, the deceased is easily replaced by one of his brothers or close cousin (bearing in mind that in the word cousin does not exist in the Shona context, a female cousin is simply considered as a sister and equally a male cousin as a brother). Such family arrangements help to ensure that the widow serves her purpose even after the death of her husband. The children born from this arrangement are entitled to inherit the deceased's estate because they are considered to still belong to the deceased. Even the widow herself is not considered as a married to the late husband's brother because he is only regarded as a caregiver and not as a husband. Such sexual relationships are morally accepted within the Shona culture because of their purposeful nature.

It is worth repeating that the marriage is sealed by the birth of a surviving offspring, because the main goal of the marriage will have been accomplished through preservation of life. The three important features in African marriages are:

- (i) It is meant to re-represent the ancestral life force.
- (ii) It has to ensure the continuation of the life of the clan in this world by increasing its vital force through the new members.
- (iii) It has to make a harmonized link between the living, the living and the dead, and the unborn (Bourdillon, 1976, p. 64-65)

“Hence, any sexual relationship that does not achieve the above objectives is more often than not frowned at by society. In the traditional Shona society, social pressure on those who delay marriage takes various forms, such as the ridicule of men, who are called *tsvimborume* (childless single males who tend to be forgotten after death and will be buried with a dead rat or a hoe handle). Unmarried women are faced with mockery and sarcasm by referring to them

as *tsikombi* (older woman generally above the age of 30 with a delayed marriage issue)” (Mudavanhu, 2010, p. 69).

The peer pressure on men is provoked by his female family members who sarcastically force him to find a wife by refraining from their usual domestic duties like cooking or cleaning up for him. Such withdrawal in this case is usually unbearable to men because the gender division of labour makes it disgraceful for a man to prepare his own meals or do his own laundry. Women also face the same social pressure and stigma to such an extent that a woman who remains single loses her dignity and is not respected by her community. It is sad to note that some professional and highly competent women have been prejudiced by this in their work places by not being granted promotions to the extent of not even being allowed to occupy senior positions. Such women are socially stigmatized and is considered to have been anathematized.

Staying unmarried is regarded as a social failure in the sense that an unmarried person is considered as ungrateful and inconsiderate to his or her parents and the family at large who invested, nurtured and provided for him or her. This goes to show that it is an obligation and a cultural responsibility to contribute towards the family lineage.

Cohabiting between an unmarried couples is an example of a sexual relationship that is considered unacceptable among the Shona because it is believed to primarily fulfil sexual gratification. In some cases, relationships that involve an affair between a married man and a single woman are done in a discreet manner with no commitment. In the case that a child is born in such relationships, the child bears the mother’s name and not that of that of the father, since there is no marriage bond.

The second example is of a polygamous nature known as *barika*. This involves a relationship between a man and more than one wife. These are socially acceptable and justified types of relationships. Due to the socio-economical changes in Zimbabwe, the prestige of polygamous marriages is slowly diminishing. With the prevailing economic challenges and the urban migration where life is expensive, it is a disadvantage for a man to have more than one wife. Of course, this was a great advantage in the past, because there was a probability to produce more male children and also large families provided good productive unit for agricultural labour. Up to the present date, the preservation of the family name by the male child is highly significant to the Shona approach to sexuality. The boy child is of course of more family value than a girl child.

The third and last example is that of the levirate marriages or widow inheritance (*kugara nhaka*). This is a situation where a husband death is immediately replaced by a brother or cousin. As mentioned earlier the deceased will have left behind a young widow who is still at a child bearing age who can still contribute to the growth of the family. Although such practices still prevail in Zimbabwe, they are now not an act of imposition to neither the widow nor the deceased's brother/cousin. They are now being carried out with the widow's consent according to the rule of law. The HIV/AIDS epidemic and the economic obligations have turned levirate marriages unpopular and unattractive to the Shona.

According to my grandmother, "*Mukadzi asina murume akafanana nebadza risina mupini. Haana basa raanoita. Angave akashata sei, anotowana anomuroora chete, haachembereri pamusha asina mwana, anofanira kubereka vana*", meaning, 'a woman who is not married in the Shona culture has practically no value in society. There is no plausible excuse for a woman not to get married and bear children. Hence the saying, 'a pretty woman

becomes ugly and an ugly woman becomes even uglier in the eyes of the society by not having a husband and children.’ Even the patriarchs of the Shona culture express the same view, “*Kusimba kwemukadzi kunooneka nekuzvara, vana komana vakawanda kupinda vasikana, ndiko kusimba kwake*”. This is to say, ‘the strength of a woman is reflected in her fertility, the more male children she has, the stronger she is’.

Generally, such masculinities in Shona societies stem from the patriarchal mentality. It is this patriarchal attitude that has inevitably pinned down the survival efforts of women. Apart from such masculinities that consider the male child as more important, there are proverbs, riddles and wise sayings that reinforce these gender inequalities. This is also encouraged by statements such as “*haikona kuita semunhu kadzi*”- stop behaving weakly like a woman, “*haikona kutya semunhu kadzi*”-‘do not be as coward as a woman.’ This certainly belittles the status of women in Shona society. To be manly means to be strong, brave and more rationale. And being a woman meant being frail, weak and emotional. With all such denigrating statements, one wonders how many man would handle menstrual cramps and labour pains during child birth. Shona women realize that they experience marginalization in a sexist binary logic in which men have a superior mind as compared to those of women. Thus, Shona women are grieved that negative elements are projected on them while similar acts done by men are rationalized or tolerated for a desired good (Mudavanhu, 2010).

From this perspective, women are meant to be dependent on men, they are not meant to be able to survive on their own. The impact of the pervasive beliefs in evil spirits, acting through witches who cause all misfortunes, falls predominantly on women. They find themselves blamed for the family misfortunes and are subjected to aggressive and unsympathetic mental and physical abuse. But the painful truth behind all this is that Shona

women are powerful and menacing, that is why their lives must be strictly restricted to being the subordinate servants of 'African men in all aspects of life, like sexuality, reproduction and family life (Mudavanhu, 2010)..

Sexuality teaching among the Shona, as mentioned above is wrapped up in a lot of silence, concealment, customary stereotypes. All these tend to emotionally influence people by disposing them towards conventional moral and ethics. With the recent socio-cultural and economic developments in Zimbabwe, the traditional social network have suffered considerable disruptions that have dispersed family members by making it a challenge to abide by such rituals. Consequently, some rituals have fallen into abeyance and are slowly being replaced by other prevailing traditional customs.

1.3 Marriage in the Shona culture

There are four main types of marital unions recognized under the Zimbabwean laws (Chiriseri, 2011):

- Traditional customary marriage.
- The religious marriage,
- Civil marriage,
- Mutual consent union (cohabitation)

1.3.1 Traditional customary marriages

Customary marriages are potentially polygamous and legal for indigenous black Zimbabweans only and are usually dissolved only by death. It should be noted however that divorce is very rare under the customary law. Family elders try by all means to reconcile and mend the differences between the two parties.

A study carried out by Mawere and Mawere (2010) reveals that despite the influence of modernity and education that is believed to make people less culture bound, traditional customary marriages still prevail in Zimbabwe. The results from the study suggest that both working and non-working class of Zimbabweans in both urban and rural settlements valued and strongly supported traditional marriages, considering them as sacred.

In the Shona culture, as discussed earlier, the aunts (*vana tete*) and uncles (*vana sekuru*) of the community socially, psychologically and even religiously prepare young boys and girls adequately to enable them to face all the stages of growth until adulthood. A series of experiences serve as guidance for the entrance into adulthood. The whole community expects the youth to avoid causing shame and disgrace to themselves and their respective families. In order to establish their sexual identity, the initiation rites were/are used as a platform to empower the young boys and girls as they approach adulthood. According to Ntombana (2015), the adolescents are expected to bravely embrace this transition into adulthood by showing their willingness and readiness to participate in the activities designed for them in the initiation rites program. These include circumcision for the boys and the pulling of labia minora for the girls. This was an opportunity for them to receive the necessary training that was of fundamental importance to the expectations of the community at large.

There are many traditional customary marriages in the Shona culture just like in many other African societies. Although there are variations between different ethnic groups, they all involve a series of rituals and negotiations that are sealed by transactions in general. Although the respondents in the study arguably evidenced that this type of marriage was prone to abuse women's rights by certain in-laws and husbands due to overcharges in the "bride wealth". (*lobola*). Registered traditional customary marriages are hence valued because of the

following advantages; (1) they guarantee traditional respect and cultural dignity to women, (2) they build social capital and affinity between the families, (3) contraction and spread of sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies are avoided because they strongly prohibited pre-marital sex, and (4) they reduced the number of lifetime sexual partners, factor associated with reduced risk for HIV infection (Ansell, 2001; Mawere & Mawere, 2010).

1.3.2 Religious marriages

Considering the fact that over seventy percent of Zimbabweans are Christians that belong to the mainstream denominations such as Roman Catholic, Methodist and Anglican churches. Pentecostal churches are however increasingly growing especially among the younger generations. All churches have the competence to solemnize religious marriages within their church structures. All the ordained church ministers or priests can conduct a church marriage in the same capacity as a marriage officer in the court of law.

These marriages can be monogamous or polygamous depending on the denomination and divorce can only be settled by an order of the High Court or any other superior court. Although there is common grounds between the religious and civil marriages, preparation of the youth for marriage shares common grounds with the cultural proceedings. This can be explained the position adopted by the missionaries when they arrived in Zimbabwe.

The physical burden that the youth go through during the rituals of the initiation rites was condemned by the missionaries and they had no control over it because they were performed in protected villages that were far from the mission schools or mission centers (Ntombana, 2015). This as a resulted in the introduction of church youth training centers that coincided with the cultural set up for youth training. My approach to religion is of the, the United Methodist church that I am more familiar with whose strategy to youth confirmation

was purposefully designed to replace the traditional Shona rituals. The church confirmation of the youth marked the entrance into adulthood just like is/was done by the initiation rites. This was followed by the preparing the youth to participate in the sacrament of Holy Communion. Through this, the church youth is geared to be responsible adults to serve their church and their community. The catechetical proceedings in the United Methodist Church prepare the youth to be full members of the church. It is not surprising that all these efforts by the Church to train and prepare the youth for adulthood did not succeed in completely abolishing the initiation rites because the initiation rites are still being practiced in some areas in Zimbabwe (Mudavanhu, 2010).

The Christian education curriculum for girls in the Methodist Church was intentionally designed to meet specific requirements. The girls are prepared and groomed through the Girls' Christian Union (GCU), whose a program aims at equipping the girls with the necessary tools to satisfy both the church and the society's expectations. That is, to behave responsibly, choosing the right husband who fears God, and to abstain from sex till marriage. The church also has a special program that caters for newlyweds through a curriculum that includes a series of prayers for their health and for their marriages to be successful. They are also taught to have a good deportment and to carry themselves as responsible ladies. Short courses are given during the women's clubs to teach the young women to sewing, flower arrangements or a bit of gardening, cleanliness with the moto that states "cleanliness is next to Godliness" (Mudavanhu, 2010). As a United Methodist reverend's daughter, I personally witnessed all this as my mother and the church's women club (*ruwadzano*) prepared the young women from our church for marriage.

The nature of these lessons is meant to prepare the girls for a successful marriage, to be responsible housewives and mothers. In order to achieve this aim, the educational syllabus is designed to utilize material from both the Shona culture and the Bible. Although there is no virginity testing in church, the traditional marriage rituals take care of that issue. There is nevertheless a lot of pressure for the young Christian women because they are expected to wear a crown on their wedding day as proof of their purity as virgins. There is a lot of gossip and murmuring among the church women's meetings if there was suspicion or a general feeling that the bride wore a crown without being a virgin. The same pressure does not however apply to their male counterparts (Mudavanhu, 2010, p. 153).

As far as the men are concerned, Mudavanhu (2010) 's study, demonstrates how the Methodist church organizes different male youth groups. Her research highlights on how the boys are encouraged to be members of the Boys' Christian Union (BCU) that is divided into two groups – junior BCU (ages 6 to 12) and senior BCU (ages 13 to 25). The program designed for the junior BCU focuses on encouraging the young boys to be gender sensitive and to act responsibly with the aim to be responsible husbands and fathers someday. The senior BCU is mainly designed to cater for the entrance into adulthood. The program includes preparing them for a successful courtship and eventually fruitful marriage that follows Christian principles of living. The representative senior male figure referred to as (*baba*) monitors the boys 'and young men's behaviour by playing the role of a supervisor and a counsellor (p. 151-152).

As far as the young men are concerned, the intended results are easily achieved. However, statistical evidence proves that most of the boys get married traditionally but for some reason very few make it to the Christian wedding (Bhebhe, 1979 & Kileff, 1987). The church does not differ much from the typical traditional expectations that focus on marriage

and child bearing. Both the GCU and the BCU programs centralize in grooming the youth to value the marriage institution. One may wonder if this approach to Christian education is bulldozing the youth to the altar. One is filled with curiosity at this point and questions whether the environment conducive enough for those members of the church youth who are sexually active and those whose sexual orientation is considered inappropriate by the Church.

Analyzing how the Church and the Shona culture prepare the young women and men for adulthood and eventually for marriage, one can note that they have common intentions to achieve similar goals. The main purpose being to groom them into being responsible adults that serve their community and their church. The moral education of the Church and the Shona culture are very compatible in their approach, any deviation from these teachings called for disciplinary measures in both cases. Another observation that can be made at this point is that they both create conducive environments for sexuality education teachings, where they have social structures that separate girls from boys. Sexuality teaching for girls in the Shona culture is carried out in structures called *nhanga* equivalent to GCU in the Church set up and for the boys the structures for sexuality teaching are called *gota* the equivalent to the Church BCU.

1.3.3 Civil marriages

Civil marriages are carried out in the civil court or at any public place or building that is determined by the couple. They are conducted by a person with legal powers like a designated marriage officer a magistrate or even a church pastor.

These marriages are strictly monogamous and are famously referred to as Chapter 37 marriage act due to the previous parliamentary act. The designation however still prevails in Zimbabwe although the marriage act is now officially known as Chapter 5:11. This marriage act is followed by the majority of Zimbabweans and women now insist on getting this

marriage act even after the payment of *lobola* in the customary marriage or even after the religious marriage. It is an act that protects women from being taken advantage of by Shona customary regulations that do not respect women's rights in general. With such a marriage act, a man cannot marry a second wife for it is considered as a crime that can lead to his arrest.

Zimbabweans in general, however, still respect and value the cultural practice of the payment of *lobola* before entering the civil marriage. This is done to satisfy the family cultural expectations and to receive the necessary blessings from their parents and their ancestors. This does invalidate civil marriage without the payment of *lobola*, any Zimbabwean couple can be legally married without the family's consent especially in situations where the family disapproves of the choice of the bride or the groom.

The civil marriage act certificate is of tremendous importance and value due to the following reasons;

- Social security spousal benefits
- Resolution of family feud and strife in divorce cases
- To pursue legal proceedings against adultery
- Resolution of inheritance issues in the case of the death of a spouse
- Prohibition of the marriage of girls below the age of 16.

Besides the above mentioned positive benefits, it should not be ignored that the remaining spouse is liable for all the debts left behind by their spouse.

1.3.4 Mutual consent union (cohabitation)

These are commonly known as arranged marriages or unregistered customary marriages. They are rare due to their lack of legal benefits. Families on both sides are heavily involved in marriage negotiations, which include deciding on the bride price (*lobola*), also referred to as "bride wealth". It is the property in cash or kind, which the prospective husband's

family undertakes to give to the head of a prospective wife's family in consideration of a customary marriage. Traditionally and historically, this property was in cattle but over time it has moved to being mostly in cash especially in urban settlements. In rural settlements however, the traditional practice of offering cattle is still prevalent. The primary purpose of *lobola* is to build relations between the respective families as marriage is seen as more than a union between two individuals. With the recent development in technology, although not very common, some families now use foreign currency, electronic transfers and credit cards as a form of payment (Ansell, 2001; Mawere & Mawere, 2010).

In both the Shona and Ndebele cultures in Zimbabwe, *lobola* takes place in a number of stages. Through family negotiations referred to as "*dare*", the amount to be paid at each stage is determined and this depends on various factors. For example, if the groom is saving up in preparation for a wedding ceremony, the *lobola* might be concluded in two short stages - the first stage, called "*vuramuromo*", the stage where the groom puts money in a woven basket and is given a chance to state his intentions to marry, and the that is when the amount to be paid is then negotiated. A date is then set, agreeable to both parties, to meet again. The second stage is when the groom's family present themselves on the agreed date, the bride's family is requested to present the full bride price. Full payment take ten or even twenty years, thus maintaining the bond between families and lineages due to the persistence of the debt.

The price and ceremony for meeting the in-laws is called "*Mbonano*" which grants the entry of the groom's family into the bride's home. This is followed by "*Guzvi*", a second price that serves as a greeting gesture to the in-laws. This is symbolized by the traditional greeting (respectful clapping ways that differ between men and women). Subsequent gifts of cash or food are then placed into a special bowl that is used for the occasion. This is either bought or

borrowed and has a price and ceremonial reference known as "*Kubvisa ndiro*". The other price included is the "*Matsvakirai kuno*" the price paid by the groom's witnesses to be granted the permission to explain how the groom got to know the bride. Literally speaking, "Who told you that we have a daughter?"

Other gifts offered are the ones for the mother of the bride and these include "*Mbereko*", for carrying the bride in a pouch or sling when she was a baby, and "*Mafukidzadumbu*" for "covering of the belly"; this is alternately translated as "carrying the baby in the womb" or "tucking the baby in with a blanket (when she wakes in the night)". Among the various stages of the *lobola* ceremony, the groom-to-be has to provide clothing items for the mother of the bride. These are called "*Nhumbi dzaamai*" and will traditionally include a blanket alongside a standard outfit. The clothing gifts for the father are called "*Nhumbi dzababa*" and will often be a suit and shoes of choice to later wear for the wedding ceremony (if the couple has one).

There is also a special gift required to be given to the father of the bride called "*Matekenyandebvu*", to acknowledge him for "the way the bride played with her father's beard" as she sat on his lap, or the way he put up with the playful antics of his daughter as a baby.

The new groom is also required to pay for "*Munongedzi wedanga*", a stick used for driving the cattle into the corral. If the cattle are cash equivalents, the stick will also be its cash equivalent. Normally this is given in the form of a walking stick. Adhering to the stated requirements of the new in-laws is a show of respect from the new son-in-law. It is often advisable to do exactly as stated or better, to ensure smooth relations between the newly united families. The final stage includes a party financed by the newly acquired groom.

After the gifts are presented, the groom greets the in-laws as a new member of the family (no longer a prospective groom or stranger) with the special traditional clapping greeting and is permitted to be a part of the household. In some traditional circumstances, the younger siblings of the new bride see the groom as an alternate husband and he may be responsible for their welfare. In the event of death of the bride the older daughter in this case, the younger sisters could also be offered as alternate wives. In a similar fashion to ancient (Mosaic) Jewish tradition, this tradition has since been washed away by urbanization, migration and even HIV/AIDS. Once welcomed to the family, the groom now named by an animal totem depending on the origin of his ethnic group. He is respectfully referred to as '*mukwasha*' which means son-in-law. Other titles could be '*babamukuru*' or '*babamunini*' depending on the relationships in the family (if he marries an older sister, he becomes "*babamukuru*" to the younger siblings and if he is married to a younger sister, he is "*babamudikii*" to those sisters who are older than his wife).

In certain Shona groups, even after the main ceremony, *lobola* still needs to be paid in small amounts after the birth of a child or after 20 years, this is a continuous acknowledgement to the wife's family. After marriage, the wife and her children automatically belong to the husband and are naturally affiliated with his kin. Polygyny is still widespread, although it is declining as land constraints and lower incomes are encouraging smaller households.

The (mis)interpretation of *lobola* in the early colonial era was a straightforward equation representing the sale of daughters for cattle. It was regarded by the European colonizers as commercial transaction that degraded women as mere movable personal property. It was also perceived as an exchange of cattle for children, that is, through payment of cattle, the bride is expected to bear as many children as possible. From the colonialist perspective, *lobola* was

regarded as transferring rights over women's reproductive or child bearing rights, sexual rights and productive capacities. Since women had no say in the *lobola* negotiations, it resulted in them having fewer options in the construction of their sexuality, that is, gender and sexual identities. Women were therefore regarded as partners of a relationship, they were simply conduits.

This colonial way of looking at *lobola* resulted in transformations amongst the Shona culture. This is evidenced by the Legal Age of Majority Act in Zimbabwe that now permit marriages without payment of *lobola* amongst young people in Zimbabwe. This Act is however often ignored by many families due to the fact of its cultural significance. It is regarded as the only viable means of uniting families and women are regarded as objects that create and seal relationships between families. Although this cultural practice is perceived as worth discarding and harmful to women by younger generations, caution must be exercised in pursuit for the liberation of women. It is important up to a certain extent to retain cultural values and not destroy them under the guise of modernization and civilization (Thelejane, 1983; Meekers, 1993).

According to the Zimbabwean cultural context, sexual intercourse with an unmarried girl is an offence against parental rights of control over the sexuality and eventually the marriage of their daughter. As remedy to this offence, the perpetrator is required to pay damages caused or should simply marry the girl especially if this offence results in pregnancy even in the case of rape (Mupa, 2012; Rubin, 1984).

The reason behind awarding damages is to compensate the girl's family for the loss of their daughter's virginity that will eventually lead to the reduction of the amount of *lobola* which the family will eventually receive upon marriage of their daughter. The payment of the

damage involves the whole family because they are all injured by the girl's loss of virginity as the payment of *lobola* is benefitted by both the nuclear family and the extended family. Damage payment is still preferred by families of girls who are victims of rape, especially between the ages of 12 and 18 since there seem to be no minimum age for customary marriage. The problem with the payment of damages is the close affinity to the payment of *lobola*. The payment of *lobola* is said to give men sexual rights over their wives, so families who pay damages may feel they are entitled to marry the injured girl. The other 'traditional' remedy for rape of an unmarried woman, in addition to damages discussed above, is marriage between her and the man who raped her (Banda, 2012 & Mupa, 2012).

The results obtained by the research carried out by Banda, 2012, show that a number of young girls who were cited as victims of statutory rape had been married off to the young men that had committed this offence. The taking of a girl's virginity is traditionally seen as the fulfilment of marriage. The girls in question are merely handed over to the man's family without consulting them as to their impending marriage. In Zimbabwe, marriage is therefore perceived as an appropriate remedy for rape, and continues despite the fact that it is forbidden by formal State law. Banda describes that the remedy of marriage is both for protection and exploitation purposes. This is because families are motivated by the desire to protect their daughter in traditional terms, and by economic gain and the desire to be rid of the burden of supporting.

Ansell (2001) 's study on the association of *lobola* with domestic violence and female subordination revealed that ethnographic accounts in Ghana, West Africa, suggest that violence is considered justified if women use family planning methods or refuse sex after bride wealth has been exchanged. Such scenario is also observed among the Maasai of Kenya

and in most ethnic groups in Nigeria where separation/divorce is taken very seriously because of to avoid repay the bride price in the case of separation. Families therefore get as far as obliging a woman to stay with her husband no matter how unhappy her marriage is.

In the Shona culture, marriage is still seen as of key importance to women, and without it a woman has no foundation in the society. To belong to a family and to establish identity, marriage is therefore fundamental. From the day she is born, a woman is not considered a full member of her family, it is assumed that one day she will marry and leave that family to join her husband's family. It has been reported that in some cases, due to poverty, some families find themselves forcing their daughter(s) into these marriages with the hope of being looked after by their son in-law, thus automatically a guaranteed 'pension fund'.

According to the findings of the summarized report of the 2015 Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey (ZDHS), implemented by the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT), the average household in Zimbabwe has 4.76 persons. The family unit in the rural area is composed of the husband, the wife or wives, children, and members of the extended family. The households in urban areas are smaller, with a tendency toward a nuclear family of the husband, the wife, and children. In polygamous families, each wife has her own house although they share of a field. Households usually are defined in terms of a domestic unit of the wife, the children, and other dependents; therefore, a polygamous family and a wider extended family living together may consist of two or more households.

Under customary marriages, all property rights during marriage or after divorce or death belong to the man. Custody of the estate and guardianship of children are determined by male relatives of the husband. Women are only entitled to property that is traditionally associated with their domestic role, such as kitchen utensils. In the contemporary urban life, one of the

implications of patriarchal residence that has been passed on from generation to generation is that immovable property is still regarded as the man's property. Although changes in the law recognize a woman's contribution, it is an uphill struggle for a woman to claim rights to the property in the face of family opposition. Although the wills override the customary law, they are very rare. In civil marriages however, marriages ended by divorce or death, wives and widows have the right to a share of the husband's estate, although the same challenges are observed.

Mothers are responsible for the nurturing and socialization of infants and a close female relative takes over in case of temporary absence of the mother. In customary practice the husband's family automatically becomes responsible of orphans in the case of the death of both parents. Mothers spend a lot of time in the company of their infants carrying them on their backs as they carry out the household chores in the kitchen and in the fields. Socialization takes place mostly in the household through the mother and the extended family, and other children nearly always are around to play with an infant. In addition to the strong caring bond between mother and child, other adults and older children therefore develop bonds with the infants and automatically assume responsibility in the absence of the mother.

In general, infants or children are rarely lonely, they are constantly surrounded by relatives that lay the foundation for their behaviour. Hence their future adult life depends on cooperation within the family. Children learn to respect their elders, a quality that is which is considered very important. From the age of about seven or eight, girls start to help in the house, and in rural areas boys of that age begin to learn to herd livestock. Children are encouraged to take on adult tasks and play typical gender roles from an early age.

1.4 Historical overview of Shona women

Considering that our study focuses on young women, it is of fundamental importance to venture into the historical background of the Shona women. In order to appreciate the status of women in the Shona culture, it is vital to briefly discuss to studies of Shona women in general. Although no substantial literature has been produced on this issue, enabling this study to locate itself within this body of literature. A few authors have focused on the religio-cultural dimension where they show the religious and cultural marginalization of Shona women in history (Bhebhe, 1979; Mutema, 1996; Skidmore-Hess, 2002; Kileff, 1987). They have adumbrated on the justifications that lie behind the marginalization of the Shona women in Zimbabwe. They have traced the different roles that Shona women have occupied over the years. These include being peasants, traders and wives. This study is important in that it describes the status of Shona women in the pre and post-colonial period and their status upon the arrival of the Christian missionaries.

Colonialism, Christianity and urbanization transformed the status of Shona women along the years. Barnes, in an article reviewed by Skidmore-Hess (2002) examined the participation of women in the Zimbabwe liberation war of the 1970s. The article also attracted the attention of scholars like Kileff (1987) who then described the marginalization of women in the liberation army. Such studies of Shona women in Zimbabwe assisted in informing my thesis as regards to the changing role of women in Shona history.

The studies went on to highlight the fact that due to patriarchy, women were not allowed to participate in the public sphere, unless they hold a subordinate role, where they were expected to be subservient. “Therefore Shona women, many of whom are affected by culture, failed to

stand up and be heard at various levels of society due to societal and cultural expectations” (Mangena, Chitando & Muwati, 2016, p. 38). This was a general tendency in Africa where women were actively involved in the struggles for independence. Winnie Madhikizela Mandela is a living testimony of this negative patriarchal attitude towards women freedom fighters.

One cannot however ignore or deny the positive role that traditional religion and culture have played to ennoble those women who have made great strides in the society as a whole. A crucial observation is that some African traditional religions like Shona and the Chewa of Malawi have always recognized the leadership potential of women in their religio-political spheres. A clear example is the legendary Mbuya Nehanda who played the role of a great leader by being both a spirit medium and a guide to the liberation struggle for the independence of Zimbabwe. Therefore, one can conclude that traditional religion and culture have had tremendous effect on the role and status that women have amongst the Shona of Zimbabwe. Many scholars converge on the idea that religion has a significant role and influence on the image and status of women in culture and society (Banana, 1991; Bhebhe, 1979; Mutema, 1996 and Peadon, 1970).

CHAPTER TWO

Formal Sexuality Education

Introduction

The first approach to formal education in colonial Africa was through mission schools where the missionaries implanted an authentic subsystem of a completely foreign education system whose aim was to promote colonization to the indigenous elite through the spread of Christianity. Colonial education was based on Western models that closely reflected the Western culture without taking into account the African realities of the students. In this case, Africans were made to accept an education system that was systematically subduing their African cultural values that the traditional education had sought to promote and preserve (Gelfand, 1973).

In the case of Zimbabwe, the religious missionary education system played an important role in neutralizing the moral values that were taught in the traditional educational systems. They succeeded in reducing the amount of time that the boys and girls spent with their aunts and uncles by keeping them in the hostels and dormitories of mission boarding schools. This of course gave them very limited time and space to socialize with their elders thus slowly losing constant contact with the realities of the Shona culture.

In general, African countries inherited an education system that was inadequately adapted to the needs of their community. At independence, most African countries were determined to turn the tables and change the situation. The 1961 conference organized by UNESCO in Addis Ababa aimed at reforming the education system of the countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Their purpose was to achieve a more viable socioeconomic development and to

liberate and revive their culture. Primary school education was reformed to allow its content to reflect the African context, allowing it to respond to the needs of the community. In 21 countries, national languages replaced the colonial English, French and Portuguese languages as their languages of instruction. This was meant to transform the school environment to a more pragmatic and attractive approach to education (Woolman, 2001).

As a result, the African education has been interwoven with quest for national development alongside with modernization. The implementation of education programs and policies have been centralized on reflecting the interests of the ruling elites. However, results have not met the expectations of the educational systems in many African countries (Woolman, 2001).

According to the perspective of many African intellectuals who were engaged in critical evaluation of the educational system before and after independence, contemporary education was most effective when integrated with values and strengths of traditional culture. The same point of view is shown in the critical theory reflected in Woolman's rediscovery of the roots of the African identity that was embodied in the spirit of nationalism. This critique of colonial education played a significant role as it focused in re-examining the traditional African education, and exploring other educational alternatives for liberation and achievement of an authentic African national identity. (Ajayi, 1996). Although this critique offers insights for postcolonial social and educational reform or reconstruction, the existence of traditional African education still provides a source of instruction and socialization for many youth who did or do not have access to formal education. Although there is a wide variation in the indigenous and traditional forms of education due to the heterogeneous nature of culture in the sub-Saharan Africa, there is common characteristic elements observed in most societies.

Informal traditional education is a life-long process that occurs in the context of the whole community or culture group where cultivation of the individual's communal responsibility is cultivated. The African religion served as a foundation for morality in human relationships within the traditional education system. This involved progression through age and sex groupings that are correlated with the acquisition of experience, seniority and wisdom. The place of the individual in the society was determined by the needs on the community and the way that one contributed to its well-being. The idea was to produce socially centred individuals who would put community interests before personal interests (Mungazi, 1996). This was reinforced through participation in traditional communal cooperative work, ancestor spirit worship, singing, dancing or even story-telling. Not forgetting of course the rigid pre-defined and specific gender roles for males and females. Non formal education in the African traditional context is believed to give the child his rightful identity, it provided him with a strong sense of security and belonging and above all, the sense of accomplishment. It was a process of participation in the life and work of one's clan or community.

2.1 Historical Perspective of Education

On a historical perspective, basic education has always been a central concern of the African leaders who acknowledged its importance in the process of socioeconomic development. The breakdown in the established systems and the difficulties that today confront many sub-Saharan countries are an evidence of the educational history of these countries. The educational history in these countries can therefore be divided in three main eras:

- The pre-colonial period;
- The colonial period;

- The period after independence (post-independence).

In the colonial period, education was not for the whole African community, it only concentrated on a small proportion of the indigenous population, meaning, it failed to serve its purpose according to the African culture. The very first schools were established by the missionaries in Africa. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the schools portrayed an unquestionable subsystem of the Western models of education. Their main purpose for this type of education was for the expatriate teachers to instruct and groom the indigenous elite in a way to promote their colonial culture using Christianity as an instrument or a tool for civilization. Thus, education did not take the African reality into account, the African cultural content was deliberately devaluated and made devoid. In the name of civilization, Africans were made to embrace a system of education that was rendering useless the very values that their traditional education had attempted to advocate and preserve (Woolman, 2001; Mann, 2012).

Although school enrolments remained stable in a few countries, in some of the countries however, satisfactory advancement seems to be failing. The decline in school enrolments in this case serves as evidence that can seriously threaten the progress that has been achieved since independence. Literature also shows that the quality of education has also significantly declined in many of these countries. There are many issues involved, in some cases, education is no longer considered as top priority by some governments. Regardless of the fact that the budget allocated to education continue to diminish, other fundamental problems that challenge the quality of education include equity and access. The deficient means of communication and the shortages in the supplying of teachers, school books and equipment are still being faced

in sub-Saharan Africa. Thus, making the goal for achieving education for all is far from being reached in many African countries (Woolman, 2001; Mann, 2012).

It is important to point out the fundamental factors that contribute to the critical state of basic education in Africa. There is low demand for education in the rural areas specifically among the young girls due to the influence of strong traditional beliefs. The increase in unemployment rate among the school leavers is a very discouraging factor to both the parents and the younger generations as they do not regard schooling as a worthwhile investment. The recent structural economic adjustments in some African countries have led these countries into a financial crisis that has negatively affected the education system. The devastating effects of prolonged civil wars in some African countries have also had a negative impact on the education system (Shizha & Kariwo 2011; Mann, 2012).

African schools are characterized by powerful central authority of the ministries and administration system accompanied by poor quality management at almost every level. With this type of management, the realities faced and experienced in the classrooms at different levels are not reflected due to lack of up-to-date and accurate information from more remote schools.

Most government budgets also do not effectively meet the demands for the teachers' salaries which are in many cases very low and characterized by long delays. As a result, there is a tendency lack of motivation among teachers. The governments are also overburdened by the growth of universities that strongly depend on foreign aid. All these factors have as a whole contributed to the decline and, in many cases, disintegration of education systems (Mann, 2012; Shizha, 2013).

One other challenging factor that the education system faces in Africa is the friction that exists between the school and the community. The lack of coherence between the school and the community at large reduces the learning outcomes due to lack of conformity between the school culture and the community culture. The rural community regards the school as an external entity that does not acknowledge traditional values but instead represents foreign concerns and values. Parents (who in many cases are regarded as uneducated) fail to identify themselves with the school and as a result have no sense of responsibility towards the school (Woolman, 2001; Mann, 2012).

The relevance of the school curriculum was questionable to the community needs, its goals seemed way out of reach for many and its content was too comprehensive, covering a wide range of knowledge that was not in correspondence with reality of the local community needs. The shortage of contextualized school textbooks that reflect the reality of the students is also a serious problem faced by some schools. There is a strong need to improve the teaching methodologies and programs, making them more effective by discouraging teachers from emphasizing rote methods of acquiring knowledge. Very few countries provide systematic training and instructional guides to assist teachers in successful classroom activities in order to overcome these challenges. The current situation of the education system in Africa needs to address all these aspects if the multidimensional crisis is to be overcome (Woolman, 2001; Shizha, 2013).

This empirical analysis serves as evidence to show the existing remanences left by the colonial system of education thirty five years after independence. It is important to mention at this point that this cannot be generalized, the rate of success differs in each country according to the colonial principles of the different colonizers. The French and Portuguese

education systems were less successful as compared to the British system. The former completely relied on missionary work whereas the later was based on a partnership between the missionary work and the government. Despite the racial segregation associated with the British system, their education policies were more successful at satisfying the African demand for secondary and higher education (Travão 2012, Shizha; 2013).

The process of curriculum change in Africa, in other words, curriculum overhaul from being Eurocentric to being a complete Afrocentric curriculum has not occurred. The process has proven to be very demanding time-wise and financially due to its dependency on foreign funding in most of the cases. The process of studying, developing, testing and implementation of the curriculum courses, the syllabi, contextualized textbooks and other materials is on its own time consuming. There is fundamental need to balance the foreign knowledge and the indigenous knowledge when training the teachers and the curriculum developers. Generally, the Africanized curricula are mostly found at primary school level where even indigenous languages are promoted (Shizha & Kariwo, 2011).

If the curriculum is heavily wedged by indigenization policies wrapped up in cultural perspectives, the following question are then raised:

- Up to what extent should they know about their own culture and their nation?
- How much foundation and knowledge of the outside world do they need?
- How much regional and international knowledge do they need to know?

However, the issue of multiculturalism and curriculum development is not only for the African nations

According to Shizha (2013), the cultural diversity in the United States, for example, is an issue that is being argued and debated upon in terms of curricula. Questions that are frequently asked are:

- How much world literature should be in the curriculum?
- Do students from a Puerto Rican background in the United States need a different approach from students of Polish background or students from a Lebanese or Hispanic background?
- Is the poor performance from some groups due the fact that the curricula are very different from the cultural and knowledge background of their home?

As a product of human activity, the education curriculum is negotiated and its pros and cons are also extensively discussed. That is, all the characteristics, influences and challenges that are faced in education in Africa in general, are also the characteristics and difficulties of sexuality education. But, since sexuality education deals with moral ethics, taboos and myths, it has its own inherent shortcomings and challenges. If that is the case, how is the sex education curriculum being addressed in both the former and the informal sector? Is our education sector addressing the realities of sexually active teenagers?

According to Nganda (2007), “sexuality education is described as the process of acquiring information, forming attitudes, beliefs and values about identity, relationships and intimacy. It encompasses sexual development, reproductive health, interpersonal relationships, affection, intimacy, body image and gender roles. Sexuality education should address the biological, socio-cultural, psychological and spiritual dimensions of sexuality. This would include developing self-esteem and negotiating and other communication skills, especially for the empowerment of the girl child” (p. 56).

In spite of gender-neutral laws and policies in most sub-Saharan countries, women and girls are often denied equal enjoyment of their human rights by virtue of an inferior status attributed to them by religion and culture. The existing controversy between the African cultural and religious norms and the international human rights law as regards to women and girl's rights to reproductive health is a challenge that African countries still face. The education programs therefore need to be made more appropriate for the Africans through advocating for the contextualization of education in schools. If that is the case, should it also apply to the proponents of sex education in schools? How are sexuality aspects of gender identity related to sex addressed or contextualized? According to the African culture, the women's sexuality is looked down upon. Sex for women is pre-dominantly about pleasing a man, partner or a husband, it focuses on the need to satisfy the male needs and desires ignoring and repressing the female needs and desires (Rubin, 1984 & Banda, 2012,).

The Eurocentric arguments centred on developed countries do not quite apply to African countries due to the religious framework and the conservative cultural norms that faced affect sub-Saharan Africa. Taking a practical example of Zimbabwe, there is a cultural attitude that sex involved some degree of force by the man especially when it is the woman's first sexual encounter. Culturally, virgins are not expected to be relaxed during their first sexual experience if they are to maintain their self-worth. According to the Attorney general of Zimbabwe, culture expects the women to say 'no' even if they mean 'yes'. The African men are therefore accustomed to such cultural behaviour by women, to the extent that is some rape cases, men allege that they interpreted the woman's denial 'no' to be a sharp and clear 'yes', particularly where a relationship already exists. Referring to the speech delivered by the

Attorney General of Zimbabwe, Banda (2012), expresses how the cultural norms allow men to put their sexual pleasures first before responsibility and respect towards women.

2. 2 Socio-cultural construction of identities

The research assumes that the young women's sexualities are formed by the socio-cultural and religious norms, values, attitudes and beliefs in Zimbabwe. The epistemological underpinning of this study equally recognizes the fundamental role of the influence of religio-cultural norms as a process embedded in the social system of the sexuality of the young women. This study therefore adopts a social constructionist epistemology. Making reference to Bruner (1987), influenced by Vigotsky, he accentuated on the role of the teacher, language and instruction. In his work, Bruner encouraged the enlightening of learners through reflection and through dialogue, thus basing on the Socratic tradition of learning. He took the initiative for curriculum change supported by active student learning where students construct new concepts based on their contemporary knowledge. Bruner provided three principles of constructivist learning, that is;

- i) going beyond information giving
- ii) spiral organization and
- iii) readiness

Furthermore, according to Vygotsky (1987), there are two moments that appear in a child's cultural development, first, on the social level, i.e. culturally mediated (interpsychological) and, later on, on the individual level child, i.e. instructional scaffolding (intrapsychological). These moments should also effectively appear in a child's sexuality

educational development where instruction must be concerned with experiences and contexts conducive to student learning.

If knowledge is what people know, it is therefore important in a philosophical point of view to examine how this knowledge was acquired. The sexuality knowledge and issues that the young women in this study have, needs to be well explored. It is important to take a closer on the role that the society plays in the construction of their sexuality.

The pedagogizing of children sexuality found its way to Africa through the colonizers as a benevolent contribution to sex education where it advocated for reproductive health hygiene. The intention was to get rid of the undesirable African traditional sex education that clashed with the colonial sexual and reproductive agenda, in this manner taming and civilizing the primitive African sexuality. The intention of this study is to analyse how the remnants of that traditions that were dragged along through generations are still influencing the modern philanthropic young Africans' sexual and reproductive health programs in schools. The curriculum for many schools was designed to educate the African natives, 'proper' sexual conduct, morality and ethical behaviour within the colonial social alliance. African social values had to be abandoned in order to adapt to European value standards, consequently, defining new societal order that devalued the African cultural sexual morality (Manguvo, A. & Nyanungo, M. "in press").

The social constructivist interpretation of sex education issues is thought-provoking when considered in similar standing to Foucault's theories on sexuality when he expressed how the colonial powers, denomination and struggle have affected the contemporary sexual and reproductive health programs (Foucault, 1978). African sexual education taught "informally" according to their cultural norms was wrong and improper. This was based on

the comparison made between the Victorian bourgeois woman and the crude and primitive African woman. As stressed by the missionary doctors, it was immoral and led to disastrous consequences that could end up in disease and death. The domestication of the African sexuality was to cleanse the Africans from such sexual attitudes through institutionalizing sexuality within the formal educational systems in the colonial countries.

In this case, for example, from a social constructivist stand point one could ask, could it be because the sex education programs in African schools were designed in the West, they do not merge with the social context or realities that young women in Africa are facing? Where is their knowledge about sexualities in sub-Saharan Africa derived from? Sexuality is a mysterious, complicated, intimate personal part of us that connotes vast social, psychological and even political implications. It involves traditions and attitudes of past generations that respond to modern needs.

If sexual standards can be changed as the society or the environment changes, does this mean that the basic rules change as well? Do we inherit sexual attitudes or they are influenced by social, economic and political necessities? Philosophy deals with the principles for human life, in this case, morals, character and behaviour. The philosophy of sex education therefore has the responsibility by necessity to promote self-determination and responsibility at community or family level due to the fact that attitudes can be revised or changed.

Knowledge and behaviour are constructed through the interaction of each individual with the people around them and it can be understood through its history and its context. According to Andrews, (2012), it has therefore an epistemological not an ontological perspective. As coherently stated by Kuhn (1970) in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, “knowledge is intrinsically the common property of a group or else nothing at all” (p.210).

Gender and sexuality issues in sub-Saharan Africa are not socially constructed through what individuals believe, but rather what social groups, in this case ethnic groups and knowledge communities believe. This means that the ideas and the knowledge that the young African women have, are given meaning by their social context that is epistemologically important in this sense. This is compatible with the studies of the Russian psychologist Vygotsky (1978), who showed that knowing developed in a social context from the very earliest stages.

It is a well-known fact in the history of mankind that the knowledge we have today was passed on from one generation to the other through symbols of language and the arts. The knowledge that the societies needed to survive was embodied in the traditions of the previous generations. African societies have obtained knowledge on sexuality issues from their colonial masters through religious practices but there is certainly a considerable amount of knowledge that was acquired from their indigenous forefathers. The need to fully understand the process of knowledge creation will therefore help respond the question of this study.

Culture as a function of social interaction, it is characterized by its intersubjective matrix of symbolic systems viewed from two different perspectives. From a psychological developmental and from an anthropological point of view. Psychologically, culture involves the functioning of the mind as the centre of thought, emotion, and behaviour and consciously or unconsciously adjusting or mediating the one's responses to the social and physical environment. For this, both social and technical institutions and tools are required. The social institutions being responsible for the emotional and the critical reflection of art, culture and nature and the technological institutions cater for life processes, interactions and adaptations.

Learning begins as an initiation into one's culture represented in this case by the primary caregivers which are in most cases, the child's parents. Prior to European colonization, in the

early years of childhood, the African child's education was largely in the hands of the biological mother, and the community later assumed the greater role as adolescence approached. The African child was educated to know, internalize and practice roles appropriate to sex and age. Thus, language training was received from the mother, and the extended family. The peer group, or age-set also became significant as the youth approached the stage of circumcision. At this stage folk literature comprising of myths, legends, folksongs and folktales, proverbs, dances, etc. were all in line to prepare the youth for adulthood. Thus, before the coming of the Europeans to Africa, the African indigenous process of learning was tailor made to suit and satisfy the needs of the society (Marah, 2006).

As stated by Humphrey, Undie & Dunne (2008), education is a wide ranging concept that involves both formal and informal social processes with multiple social actors in a variety of social contexts throughout life, yet in the dominant discourses of development, education is often shorthand for formal education, and schooling in particular" (p.12). Similarly, sex education can be carried both formally and non-formally as continuing social learning form of education.

Education is therefore a process of acculturation and re-acculturation of different knowledge communities that are dynamic and constantly overlapping with other cultures, subcultures and organizations with particular social functions. Berger and Luckmann (1991), make reference to primary and secondary acculturation. The earliest period of childhood where a child learns to communicate, expressing thoughts or feelings, conveying information to speech is referred to as the primary acculturation. This leads to a child's sense of personal, cultural and particularly ethnic identity. Secondary acculturation occurs through growth and

development, one learns the formalized body of cultural tools of a particular society, resulting in being equipped to participate in formal activities of their society.

Recognizing that education is a social process that seeks to develop each individual to achieve personal growth in terms of knowledge, attitudes and skills Foucault (1978), referring to sex education in schools as *scientia sexualis*, writes that the school structural organization and the curriculum were centred on controlling children sexuality. This was to ensure full protection of the children sexuality from diverging from accepted norm of behaviour such as homosexuality, thus promoting the need to pedagogize children sexual behaviours. Thus, educational systems in sub-Saharan Africa have been highly influenced and shaped by historical social rankings interweaved with processes of colonial, religious and developmental powers.

From a philosophical point of view, efforts should be made at establishing differences between sex education and enculturation, between sex education versus teaching in schools and versus indoctrination. It should also establish the relation between education and maintenance of the class cultures of society, differences between classes and different cultural groups. Philosophy needs to justify why different sex education programs differ in content and aims , the issue of whose rights should be dominant between children, parents, socio-cultural and ethnic groups. Whether or not children have a right to sex education provided by the government, should this education respect the beliefs and customs of all groups? Philosophically, proper direction should be provided to sex education with critical, comprehensive and synthetic sex educational facts and values due to the complexity in the relation between sex education and social reform (Harvey 1988, p.43).

Philosophical processes can help find ways to give solutions to sex education problems through philosophical methods, with a philosophical attitude that then lead to philosophical conclusions and comprehensive results.

The problem of sex education from a philosophical point of view can include:

- Interpretation of human nature focusing on science and values, the world and the universe giving a broad picture through biological, anthropological, psychological, economic, political sciences.
- Interpretation of aims and ideas of sex education
- Relationship of various components of system of sex education (economic, political order, social progress and cultural reconstruction) by providing criteria for critical evaluation
- Sex education values

The most basic problem of philosophy of sex education is that concerning aims: What are the proper aims and guiding ideals of sex education? What are the proper criteria for evaluating sex educational efforts, institutions, practices, and products? Many aims have been proposed by philosophers and other educational theorists include the cultivation of curiosity and the disposition to inquire; the fostering of creativity; the production of knowledge and of knowledgeable students; the enhancement of understanding; the promotion of moral thinking, feeling, and action; the enlargement of the imagination; the fostering of growth, development, and self-realization; the fulfilment of potential; the cultivation of liberally educated persons; the overcoming of provincialism and close-mindedness; the development of sound judgment; the cultivation of docility and obedience to authority; the fostering of autonomy; the maximization of freedom, happiness, or self-esteem; the development of care, concern, and

related attitudes and dispositions; the fostering of feelings of community, social solidarity, citizenship, and civic-mindedness; the production of good citizens; the “civilizing” of students; the protection of students from the deleterious effects of civilization; the development of piety, religious faith, and spiritual fulfillment; the fostering of ideological purity; the cultivation of political awareness and action; the integration or balancing of the needs and interests of the individual student and the larger society; and the fostering of skills and dispositions constitutive of rationality or critical thinking (Harvey, 1988 p. 191).

The list of problems, issues, and tasks presented above is necessarily partial, and for most of them the proposed solutions can be or not widely agreed upon. This is in part a function of the inherent openness of philosophical inquiry. Nevertheless, some proposed resolutions are better than others, and philosophical argumentation and analysis have helped to reveal that difference. This is true of philosophy in general and of philosophy of education in particular. All educational activities, from classroom practice to curriculum decisions to the setting of policies at the school, district, state, and government levels, inevitably rest upon philosophical assumptions, claims, and positions. Consequently, thoughtful and defensible educational practice depends upon philosophical awareness and understanding. To that extent, the philosophy of education is essential to the proper guidance of educational practice. Knowledge of philosophy of sex education would benefit not only teachers, administrators, and policy makers at all levels but also students, parents, and citizens generally. Societies that value sex education and desire that it be conducted in a thoughtful and informed way ignore the philosophy of education at their peril. Its relevance, reach, and potential impact make it perhaps the most fundamental and wide-ranging area of applied philosophy (Harvey, 1988).

One assumption concerns triadic reciprocity, or the view that personal, behavioural, and environmental factors influence one another in a bidirectional, reciprocal fashion. That is, a person's on-going functioning is a product of a continuous interaction between cognitive, behavioural, and contextual factors. For instance, learning is affected by students' own thoughts and self-beliefs and their interpretation of the classroom context. The theory has found its applicability in various sexual behaviours for primary pregnancy prevention and problem solving skills. It has also found its role in secondary prevention programs such as female condom use promotion programs in sexually transmitted disease clinics (Sharma & Romas, 2008).

2.3 Sexuality education in schools

Literature shows that children now spend a significant number of hours of their day in schools in many African countries. From the moment an African child is born, all members of the family and the community at large feel responsible and entitled for the child's upbringing until the adult age. Each ethnic group becomes in charge of the child's traditional education where social aspects such as art, religion recreation are integrated. Schooling and education, or the learning of skills, socio- cultural values and norms were not separated from other spheres of life (Marah, 2006). The school can therefore be an appropriate structure that meets all the favourable conditions for the implementation of sex education programs.

However, evidence from many studies suggest that school-based sex education in Africa Sub-Sahara, as currently conceptualized and practiced, mainly promotes knowledge and skills relating to the prevention of pregnancy and HIV and AIDS. Several studies have shown that these Western-based AIDS prevention programs have not been very effective to the students, schools, or communities in Africa (Dyk and Alta, 2001; Kapungwe, 2003; Helleve, et al.,

2009; Moyo & Zvoushe, 2012). Limitations of the extensive social science research that are being put into practice on the continent highlight the need to strengthen programs that advocate a fuller understanding of sexuality and its conceptualization and application in various societies in sub-Saharan Africa (Undie & Benaya, 2008).

Considering the negative consequences of sexually transmitted diseases which include, among other things, HIV and AIDS, teenage pregnancies, rape and other forms of violent sexual behaviour, a more practical approach in the way in which the African culture views sex and human sexuality is therefore fundamental. Nganda (2007) indicated that the importance of sexuality education lies in the fact that it “addresses the biological, social-cultural, psychological and spiritual dimensions of sexuality from the cognitive domain (information), affective domain (feelings, values and attitudes), and the behavioural domain (communication and decision-making skills). And such education enables the young person to know themselves and hence relate comfortably with others” (p.53)

In 2005 the Commission for Africa noted that “Tackling HIV and AIDS requires a holistic response that recognizes the wider cultural and social context” (UNESCO 2002, p. 197). HIV/AIDS has had a very strong impact that has led to adverse consequences that have affected a wide range of beliefs and values towards sexuality issues within the African societies. Increasingly the centrality of culture is being recognized as important to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support. With culture having both positive and negative influences on health behaviour, international donors and policy makers are beginning to acknowledge the need for cultural approaches to the AIDS crisis (Nguyen, 2008).

The high HIV incidence in Africa Sub-Saharan resulted in the inclusion of HIV and AIDS awareness program in schools. Findings from the 2004 Global HIV & AIDS Readiness Survey

which focused on the education sector, found that HIV and AIDS were part of the primary school curriculum in 19 out of 20 African countries with a high prevalence of HIV, and that life skills programs had been established at the primary school level in 17 of the 20 countries (UNESCO 2004 p.41, 61). The implementation of such programs is however not very successful due to the fact that not all youth who attend school receive life skills education. For example, HIV/AIDS curricula were mandatory at the primary school level in only 10 of the 18 Sub-Saharan African countries that were included in a detailed assessment conducted by the International Bureau of Education (p.37).

Even in places where teaching of the subject is mandatory, there was lack of adequate information about the implementation and quality of the programs. The proportion of young people attending the courses, the qualification and preparedness of the teachers, that is, it is not known of how many of the teachers who teach the subject are adequately trained and equipped to cover the subject. In the four focus countries, only about 50% of 15–19- year-olds received school-based sex education. About 33% of the 15–19- year-olds in Ghana and Uganda reported that such talks or classes are not offered at their schools. In Burkina Faso, the main challenge was that most 15–19-year-olds (64% of females and 53% of males) have never attended school (UNESCO, 2004).

Although sexuality is the essence of our existence and fundamental to the socioeconomic development issues confronted in sub-Saharan Africa, limited demonstrable interest from scholars focusing on sexuality studies has been shown to be still lagging in the region (Undie & Benaya, 2008; Parker, 2009). This has been evidenced by the lack of professional research capacity to tackle the proliferation of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In this

case, sex education plays a vital role in the African society as it is the central facet that directly influences and reflects on all the other facets of any society.

In order to clarify the issue on the AIDS-pandemic in Africa, a number of scientists and AIDS awareness organizations use a combination of various aspects that include behaviouristic, medical and socio-economical discourse. Explanatory measures to control high risk sexual behaviour in sub-Saharan Africa focus on protective measures supported by awareness measures. Since cultural issues do not feature as the focal point to find a solution to the problem, there is a need for researchers to address the cultural issues behind the widespread of HIV/AIDS in the region. Scholars need to dig deeper and investigate on whether the AIDS awareness measures are directed to protect Africans from HIV/AIDS or is it also supposed to direct Africans from the so-assumed primitive, backward, deleterious and unruly sexual behaviour towards the so-assumed civilized and life-saving Western political ideology.

A limited knowledge on the African culture and its influence on the practical implementation of the existing sex education programs in schools has hindered the capacity to improve such programs, not only in terms of officially intended health outcomes, but more broadly in terms of the social, political, and relational outcomes desired for all students and schools (UNESCO, 2010; Dienye, 2011). Due to the amount of focus and emphasis given to program evaluation, less is understood about the lessons taught on sex and sexuality in schools and even outside of the official sex education classrooms (Woolman, 2001; Haberland & Rogow, 2015).

UNESCO, in its definition of sex education, recognizes the need for knowledge and skills to prevent sexual health problems, defining it as "an approach, age-appropriate and

culturally relevant education about sex and relationships, providing scientifically sound, realistic information without pre-judgment. Sexuality education provides opportunities to explore one's own values and attitudes and to develop skills for decision making, communication and risk reduction in relation to many aspects of sexuality" (UNESCO, 2010). It is both an organized and comprehensive intentional continuous intervention that integrates the various dimensions of sexuality.

According to Dyke & Alta (2001), traditional African perceptions of sexuality and illnesses are described in terms of the macro-cosmos (the ancestors), the meso-cosmos (witches and sorcerers) and the micro-cosmos (everyday life). The development of cultural approaches to sex education presents two major challenges for Southern Africa. Firstly, the multi-cultural nature of the different African countries means that there is has to be sex education programs to fulfil the sociocultural context of each society. Secondly, southern Africa is home to a rich complexly designed mixture of ethnic, racial, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups. Consequently, the indigenous Africans now live side by side with people of mixed ancestral background as a result of the consequences of the colonial history and the recent migration. And it is obvious that each of them asserts their distinctive cultural identity and religious beliefs.

In order to have effective sex education programs in schools, there is a need for more research based on the African religio-cultural norms with a communicative interchange between the African and the Western views. Thus, a better understanding of the full range of intended and unintended consequences of different sex education approaches can be reached. That is, by focusing on how culture and religion influence the beliefs and attitudes of students, teachers, parents, schools and communities around these issues. There is therefore need to pay

more attention to sex education practices within the African context before implementing policies and their official outcomes.

With the trend of events in globalization, young African women are also highly exposed to the influence of foreign culture. As a member of the global village, Africa experiences the full impact of foreign popular culture being absorbed and embraced as the norm by our youth. Considering the different prescribed cultural bounds faced by our society with which sexuality is treated due to the societal reactions to issues that bother on sexuality, the youth tend to fall prey to the consequences of limited sex education (Dienye, 2011). Bearing in mind that some knowledge could be acquired through formal sex education approach in schools, a lot more could be realized if traditional, religio-cultural and even the social media channels of transmitting information were identified and utilized to augment the currently debatable sex education in schools.

Recent studies have shown that restrictions and limitations on sexuality information among the adolescents in traditional African setting have found an alternative source through the social media. It is playing an important role in serving as a reliable source of the much desired sexual information and has turned out to be an authentic gap-filler. Due to its explicit nature in sexual content, the social media images however convey socially negative messages to adolescents to the extent that social media forms of abuse have been reported, namely cyber-bullying, sexting leading to online harassment and depression. But on the other hand, considering the extensive potential that this technology has to its audience, the social media can also be explored as a useful instrument for sexuality teaching. It can be used to convey messages about responsible behaviour, knowledge relating to abstinence, effects of abortion,

girl-child marriage and pregnancy prevention (Tiemoko & Oku-Egbas, 2006; Eluwale et al., 2014 & Alfred et al.2016).

Tiemoko and Oku-Egbas (2006) 's findings reveal that more than half (56%) of all television shows contain sexual content with scenes that can influence the adolescents and can possibly fuel risks of sexual activity. Recent studies have also brought into the lime light that the potential danger that hidden behind mobile phones. The lack of strict control over cell-phones has led to their abuse and to their contribution as indispensable instruments for the trade of sex workers, fuelling most illicit and lucrative businesses around the world (Alfred et al. 2016). With regard to the above mentioned issues on social media, is the social media filling up the gaps and the loop holes found between formal and informal sexuality education?

According to Bhatasara et al. (2013), the social media is the main source of information that has a strong influence on adolescents' attitudes and perceptions on sexuality. Respondents to their study echoed that they obtained most of their sexuality information through films and music videos. With the abuse of internet and mobile phones, pornographic material was circulated among the youth in schools, serving as sex tutorials especially for boys. A study carried out by Chiyadzwa (2014) gave evidence to the fact that social media has not only had an impact on the adolescents in the urban areas, but has also reached the previously marginalized youth in rural areas. In the colonial era, rural Zimbabwe, according to Chiyadzwa (2014) was characterized by backwardness, poverty, famine and donor-dependency, but the situation has since been reversed. Online relationships have arisen with love affairs blooming between people who are physically miles apart and in some cases continents apart and hence the social media has now become a substitute for counsellors and culturally specific advisers that used to be there prior to the platform.

Despite the fact that many people of southern Africa acknowledge the necessity to make certain changes, the attempt to enforce them does not apply to all. The reconstruction of gender norms and sexual practices must however come from within the culture. It should be noted that these patriarchal customs have been rooted in the culture for an incredibly long time and such cultural practices do not undergo dramatic changes overnight. Foreign countries enforcing their own belief systems on gender equality in the African culture have not been successful to initiate change for there is a need to initiate it within the appropriate African cultural context.

Before devoting to our local findings in Zimbabwe, I would like to firstly point out on the research findings and lessons learnt from the study carried out in 2003 from Several African Life Skills programs that were evaluated and briefly described. For a hypothetical analysis of the of Life Skills programs in several African countries, a content criteria was developed by the authors. An effort was made to pull together what was taking place within the existing classroom-based Life Skills programs.

According to the reflection made by the report on life skills and HIV Education Curricula in Africa, several African programs were evaluated and a content criteria was established by the authors for theoretical investigation of ongoing Life Skills programs also in French-speaking African countries. The study was carried out by the stake holders for curriculum development and for the school designers that included organizations such as the Peace Corps volunteers, the National AIDS Control Program advisors and the UNAIDS/UNESCO/WHO/UNICEF staff who developed the curricula and models discussed in the study. This included those who were responsible for discussing sexuality issues with school-going and out of school adolescents to ensure that adolescents got the support they

needed from their communities. In general, the study outlined on how the concept of Life Skills education was difficult to grasp in program documents, and the term “Life Skills” remained imprecise and even unclear to most actors (Tiendrebéogo, Meijer & Engleberg 2003).

In accordance with the report, most of the emerging supporting activities of Life Skills education in sub-Saharan Africa were lacking in incorporated assessment elements, and few of those that had been evaluated met the minimum criteria for methodologically sound evaluation. Few programs had been however evaluated, and, where data existed, little had been synthesized, thereby leaving those planning Life Skills programs with limited or no guidance and information on what had and had not worked effectively in the past (Tiendrebéogo, Meijer & Engleberg 2003).

The reviewers were however able to draw some conclusions with main findings and recommendations from the data.

- They recommended the Life Skills education programs to have an early start at primary school level. Considering that primary school-age children do not have sexual behaviour patterns formed, and have a considerably low prevalence of HIV infection. They are more manageable, compliant and more flexible as compared to older adolescents who are already addicted to risky and dangerous behaviour.
- They suggested that Life Skills education programs should be based on theory and should be driven by data. Their results showed that most interventions were not based systematic planning and mapping procedures, the only depended on the limited perceptions of program managers. They authenticated the positive results obtained from the experimental experiences that took place in Namibia and Tanzania where theory-based Life Skills education programs

were implemented at both primary and secondary levels. Their results evidenced the progress made in delaying sexual activities among the inexperienced youth.

- To be efficacious in the preventive mechanisms for further dissemination of HIV/AIDS among the young people, they recommended that programs must go beyond pilot levels and be diffused and implemented on a large scale. The socio-cultural and religious significance of sex in Africa sub-Sahara was evidenced by the findings from the Peace Corps volunteers' Life Skills program. Their results show that the programs implemented at large scale proved to be more successful evidenced by the support of other stakeholders who improved in the providence of their services.

- It was recommended that the Life Skills program should not be integrated throughout the existing curriculum and should rather be a separate curriculum. According to the findings of the study, elements of Life Skills education were integrated throughout the standard curriculum. This resulted in curriculum overload within subjects like health education or Biology and most programs were rendered unsustainable due to the large number of teachers that needed to be trained. There is therefore high probability for educators to succeed with implementation of separate Life Skills programs supported by sexuality special workshops.

Educators

- The training of teachers or facilitators well trained in participatory methodologies of Life Skills was considered to be of fundamental importance. The report considered that Life Skills education produced positive results when teachers implemented contemporary participatory and existential learning techniques. The report revealed that most teachers were disinclined and unwilling to discuss sexuality issues and their didactic approach was therefore textbooks reading technique. Teachers did not receive adequate training in participatory methodologies

and were not familiar with role-play techniques in most countries. In contrast, NGOs demonstrated the potential of innovative approaches to training, skills building, and material development and dissemination.

- The report recommended Life Skills programs to include data collection and evaluation. Their findings showed that curriculum developers had paid little attention to evaluating effects, processes, and outcomes. In order to improve the quality of Life Skills programmes, a well-planned development and evaluation process, which include assessment and systematic thinking about learning objectives.

- Further endorsement was made for the need for the Life Skills programs to also advocate for youth that were out of the schooling system and to make the program a national strategy for every child. The education sector had was not yet in a position to implement Life Skills teaching to out of school youth. These youth only survived on occasional and scarce interventions from NGOs'. Uncertainty about funding however made it difficult for NGOs to fully play their role. Collaboration between donors, NGOs, and UN agencies and national authorities was necessary to build the education sector's capacity to design, implement, monitor, and evaluate Life Skills programs and related activities in all countries (Tiendrebéogo, Meijer & Engleberg 2003).

According to an extensive study carried out by Yankah and Aggleton (2008) on the effects and effectiveness of Life Skills education for HIV prevention in young people, the programs had a positive influence on knowledge, attitudes, intentions, skills and abilities. The review evidenced that there were inconsistent effects on sexual behaviour with little effects on biological outcomes such as reduced HIV infections and teen pregnancies. The article reviewed a number of properly designed and well evaluated interventions from Africa, Latin

America, Asia and the Pacific. The study evidenced the complexity that existed in identifying with whom and in which context life skills sexuality based education worked better. According to the study, the life skills programs were not achieving the desired results in the countries with high rates of HIV infections.

The technical paper on methods and evaluations of the life skills and HIV (2003) reports that the different countries shared a common goal to acquaint the youth of HIV/AIDS and support and encourage them develop the necessary proficiency to analyse risky behaviour and the possible consequences before making decisions. The objectives of the programs varied from program to program and from country to country. Zimbabwe due to its high AIDS prevalence rates, it was one of the first countries in Africa back in 1992 to introduce a specific life skills education curriculum in schools to improve adolescent sexual reproductive health. The Ministry of Education and Culture took a very bold step to offer a school based Strengthening Life Skills Sexuality, HIV and AIDS Education Program for schools.

2.4 The Strengthening Life Skills, Sexuality, HIV and AIDS Education Program in Zimbabwe

The Life Skills and Sexuality, HIV and AIDS education Program for Schools is a compulsory subject that targets both primary (grades 4-7) secondary (forms 1-6) and tertiary institutions.

According to the 1995 UNICEF report on the evaluation of the sexuality education in Zimbabwe presented by Gachuchi in 1999, “This school-based action Program has helped to bring the HIV/ AIDS problem in Zimbabwe out into the open for discussion, resulting in a number of important achievements to its credit. More than 6,000 schools are now teaching the

prescribed curriculum, using teaching materials that have been produced and introduced into the schools by the Ministry of education. All national, regional, and district education officers received training through the program, and more than 2,000 teachers received in-service training not only in using specific AIDS education materials, but also in participatory Life Skills methods generally. At the tertiary level, more than 5,000 teacher trainees received similar training in teacher training colleges” (Gachuchi, 1999, p. 14).

Since the launch of the curriculum, service delivery had generally relaxed as the HIV prevalence rate declined. Zimbabwe's HIV prevalence rate dropped from 34% to 14.5%. However, despite the improvement, young people continued to face sexuality and health related challenges such as new HIV infections, STIs and teenage pregnancies (Gachuchi, 1999).

It is without doubt that the Zimbabwean government considers the Life Skills, sexuality, HIV and AIDS education curriculum a priority. This is evidenced by the strategies being used by the Ministry of Education to develop and launch a 2013-2015 Life Skills and sexuality education curriculum and recently launched 2017-2022 Guidance and Counselling: Strengthening life Skills, Sexuality, HIV and AIDS Education curriculum. In his foreword message for the launch of the new curriculum, the then Minister of education Dr. L. D. Dokora, expressed the Ministry endeavours to promote and provide an inclusive quality education for all learners with a goal help develop a whole individual physically, mentally, spiritual and socially. The minister also made reference to the rich diversity of spiritual, cultural and moral values that need to be shared with learners in order for them to develop “*Unhu/Ubuntu*” in the fullest and noblest sense.

Also commenting on the preface of the Teachers' Manuals for the recently launched curriculum, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Dr. S. J. Utete-Masango, the Guidance and Counselling should be offered at all levels of the education system in response to many needs and pressures to which learners in schools are exposed in Zimbabwe. Representing the Ministry of Education, she outlined the major goal of the Ministry to prepare learners for life and work by ensuring that they are equipped with requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes. She also commented on the high level of HIV prevalence in the past and significantly lower levels at present. According to the data presented by the permanent secretary for education, it is estimated that over the past 12 years, the prevalence had halved from 26.5% to 14.3% and new infections had declined by 50%. She also made reference to the 2012-2015 Strategic Plan on Life Skills Sexuality, HIV and AIDS Education as a true and clear testimony of the Ministry's commitment to the multi-sectorial response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

The teachers' manuals for the new curriculum focuses on critical issues of sexuality, HIV and AIDS Education which is encompassed in the Guidance and Counselling Programme in schools. The goal of program is to reduce school dropouts due to teenage pregnancy and child marriages as well as to achieve the zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. It intends to achieve all these goals by promoting a change in attitude and behaviour in matters of sexuality which is crucial to the whole nation and its economic sustenance. Our starting point is to analyse the form and content of sexuality education in Zimbabwe and the factors that inform and influence sexuality education such as beliefs, attitudes and perceptions of the learners, teachers, and the society at large.

The AIDS Action Program for Schools draws on resources from within the existing education system, and one of the program's greatest strengths is on the way the directors and supervisors succeeded in evaluating and in assessing the problems faced and working out ways to overcome them. Their results were achieved by setting up a monitoring system with an effective research approach that generated the data and the necessary information that was then used to make mid-course improvements of the program. The support of the government and other organization contributed to the success of the program. Being the first of its kind in the East and Southern Africa region, the Zimbabwe school sexuality based program set a good precedent for others in the region. Despite various endeavours to integrate a better approach and practices that helped to prepare and instruct and train teachers, there is yet more to be done.

According to a study carried out by Moyo and Zvoushe (2012), the contributing factors to adolescents engaging in risky sexual behaviour at an early stage were the sexuality socializing processes that include; poverty, lack of duty bearers (parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles teachers and even religious leaders), cultural initiation ceremonies, sibling and peer pressure, media and other contradicting processes integrated in the education policy. The study also highlights on the shortfalls of the program, with teachers asserting that there was no clear national syllabus and teachers were expected to use their own discretion and improvise on the topics to teach. According to the school time table, the Life Skills lessons had an allocation of forty minutes per week. Teachers acknowledged the mandatory nature of the subject, but due to the fact that it was not an examined course, it was consequently not given the importance and the attention it deserved.

“An evaluation conducted by UNICEF in 1995 found that only one-third of the teachers had received any in-service training and that they were unfamiliar with experiential learning and participatory methods. Moreover, many teachers felt embarrassed about handling sensitive topics related to sex and HIV/AIDS. The evaluation found that teachers considered single-sex sessions to be better for discussing puberty, sex, reproduction, or gender-specific relationship problems. At the same time, however, it was felt that mixed-sex sessions fostered respect and communication between girls and boys. It seems that a certain amount of experimenting is necessary to reach an optimal balance, which can only be achieved through in-school experience. Teachers considered role-plays with follow-up discussion very effective; for students, role-play, group discussions, drama, and discussion of anonymously written questions were most popular” (Gachuchi, 1999, p. 23).

The results from the survey carried by the UNICEF consultant, Gachuchi in 1999 reveal that the religious leaders were absent in the socialization process and they expressed their concerns on discussing sexuality issues with adolescents. They alleged that discussing such issues would simply encourage promiscuity, adultery and prostitution, which are sins before God. According to the religious leaders in the study, “adolescents were considered as Sunday School material and sexuality issues were not discussed in Sunday school” (p. 26). This in turn is paradoxical to the religious practices of the *Johanne Masowe apostolic sect* (A protestant Christian denomination in Zimbabwe) whose church principles justify marriages of young girls below the age of eighteen. Other underlying Shona cultural practices mentioned in the same survey force young girls into early marriages. According to the Sexual offences Act in Zimbabwe, it is an offense to have sexual intercourse with a girl under the age of 16. This shows a double standard and conflicting religio-cultural practices. The study data also

revealed that in January 2011 and August 2012 there were 65 and 32 reported cases of rape of girls under the age of 16 respectively.

According to the findings of the summarized report of the 2010-11 Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey (ZDHS), implemented by the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT), thirty-one percent of women between the ages of 25-49 were married by age 18, compared with just four percent of men from the same age group. Although the median age at first marriage was reported to be 19.7 for women, thirty-eight percent of women were reported to be sexually active by the age of 18.

2.5 The Content of formal Sexuality Education in Zimbabwe

The Ministry of Education and Sport and Culture school curriculum includes sexuality education in a subject referred to as Guidance & Counselling (G & C). It however emerged in this research that this subject appears as 'Life Skills' on the school timetables at primary and secondary education school level. The research mainly focuses on the content taught in G & C classes. The intention was to find out on how sex education taught through the African family socio-cultural and religious norms interfered with the formal education being taught in schools.

The objectives of the school program are formulated as follows:

- To strengthen the effectiveness of the Guidance and Counselling in all schools and non-formal institutions.
- To standardize approaches to the teaching of specific topics in the primary school Social Studies and Secondary school Guidance and Counselling.
- To encourage teachers to continuously research for up to date information on Life Skills, Sexuality, HIV and AIDS and other health issues.

- Achieve optimal inclusivity in the participation of learners with special needs in the Guidance and Counselling program.
- Reduce and eventually eliminate stigma and discrimination in the organizational and interpersonal culture of all schools.

The official body that determines the most fundamental objective of education in Zimbabwe is the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Committee. It clearly outlines that, the sexuality education should be in line with the curriculum and is to be focused on '*the full development of the human personality*'. The curriculum however goes beyond the biological facts and it includes aspects of behaviour and ultimately of attitudes and values, but the basis that guides all other aspects of the curriculum such as self-esteem and decision-making skills are then limited in the context and compelled within that framework (Tables below).

The curriculum is interlocked with all AIDS prevention strategies, sexual health and reproductive guidelines based on the 1999 National AIDS Policy whose sole moralistic strategy is for HIV prevention based on abstinence principles among young people. The content is considered to be age-appropriate with a culturally relevant approach to teaching sexuality issues and relationships. According to the Ministry of education, the program provides scientifically accurate, realistic and non-judgemental information. Stake holders accentuate that the curriculum provides opportunities for the students to explore their own values and attitudes and to build decision-making, communication and risk reduction skills about many aspects of sexuality.

Policy makers emphasize that the main focus should be based on an approach to sexuality education that encompasses the full range of information, skills and values that enable young people to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights and to make decisions

about their health and sexuality. According to Mapuramoto and Chingwenya (2009), the adolescents' views as integral part to the success of safe and responsible sexuality behaviour change are often ignored and not taken into consideration when designing and implementing such programs.

According to Ngan-Ling Chow et al (2003), teaching sexuality should focus on a dialogic, participatory and experimental (DPE) approach aiming to challenge systems where gender inequality is predominant. To encourage students to critically debate on social construction of knowledge and power, to bring forth consciousness, to urge critical thinking and to promote social change. The DPE approach to teaching sexuality can therefore help to generate central pedagogical themes such as;

- a comprehensive approach that regards women as knowledge bearers;
- safeguard equality and power among teachers and learners and among the teachers and the administration;
- construction of community within the classroom;
- raising consciousness, diversity and justice;
- establishing caring empowerment and caring.

Focusing on the Zimbabwean context and the objectives of his work, two more themes can be included, that is;

- an understanding of the influence of the British colonial and post-colonial discourses;
- examining the influence of culture and religion on the way teachers and learners view sexuality.

Teaching sexuality can be exciting on one hand and frustrating on the other. The tensions and emotions experienced in the classroom can be exciting especially when faced

with new concepts and ideas. The frustration can be brought about by the fact that sexuality is not a subject that can be openly discussed culturally in Zimbabwe. This can result in limited participation where both learners and teachers do not feel comfortable to ask questions nor to debate on issues they consider sensitive. Barriers relating to religion, gender issues and culture can cause students to be reluctant to open up despite their curiosity and interest on the subject, resulting in frustrating the teachers involved.

Helleve, et al. (2009) carried out a study to investigate and identify factors associated with teacher confidence in teaching HIV/AIDS and sexuality in urban and rural South Africa and Tanzania. Their findings demonstrated that the teachers were reasonably self-assured in teaching sexuality issues in urban and rural schools across age, gender and religion in the two countries. The way the teachers perceived the content of the subject and their ability to teach HIV/AIDS and sexuality was not nevertheless specified. The study showed variations between the different types of confidence where the weakest association was found when the subject content disagreed with their own or others' values. The findings did not reveal the extent at which the content was explored by teachers, that is, which issues were emphasized and which were ignored or set aside.

Ndirangu et al. (2013) explored gender factors that influenced the implementation of Life Skills education in Kenya. Their findings echoed on the discomfort that was felt amongst teachers while teaching topics they considered sensitive to students of the opposite sex. For example female teachers expressed uneasiness and discomfort while handling topics on ejaculation and masturbation to male students, and male teachers on the other hand expressed their awkwardness and apprehensiveness in handling topics on menstruation to female

students. The study revealed that due to the influence of the African cultural beliefs, gender specific barriers in teaching Life Skills in schools were evident.

Quoting one of the participants of the study; *“Boys shy off and do not share their problems with teachers especially when such teachers are female. Men also shy off from teaching Life Skills reckoning that it’s a woman job to take care of their children especially daughters. They avoid teaching such topics like girls’ menstrual cycle, complaining that the latter ask too many questions during the lesson than they do in Biology. Consequently, men feel uncomfortable answering such questions”* (p. 9).

Analysing the above stated, eye brows have been raised regarding the teaching of Life Skills and sexuality issues. Findings from the UNESCO (2008) Review of sex, relationships and HIV Education in Schools, reiterates that all sexuality education programs are to be based on values. It stresses that it is not possible to plan or implement any sexuality education program without making reference to values, because they diffuse through every aspect of sexuality education in schools.

It fails to equip young people with the information which they rarely get from their parents or senior family members, which they no longer get from the informal region-cultural education. Literature shows that the lack of information that is customarily provided to young people at the time of initiation leads them to frequently seek for it haphazardly from social media from peers books, magazines, television and even videos, which they sometimes augment by high-risk experimentation (Haberland & Rogow 2015).

This is evidenced by the call from the Life Skills, Sexuality, HIV and AIDS Education Strategic Plan for 2012–2015 to revise the syllabus to add the following topics to its current focus on abstinence: testing and counselling, knowledge of contraceptives and self-efficacy,

awareness of age disparities between partners and male circumcision, to name a few. As with all government-issued plans and strategies, however, follow-through faces challenges that require carefully monitoring of the implementation of promised revisions. Hence, the national life skills education syllabus, which is mandated to be taught in primary and secondary schools, is currently under revision so to speak (UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO, 2009).

Through its sexuality education programs, schools should be regarded as the process of identifying the “valuable” by seeking to help each student develop a personally held value system which will empower them to make correct and safe choices, not only in their youthful years but also throughout their lives. It is important for schools to influence behaviour and inculcate values as part of its traditional role.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter elucidates the design of the study, methodologies and data collection that were used in the research process. The aim was to capture the voices of young Shona women as far as their conceptualization of sexuality was concerned. The goal was to investigate the interplay between the informal sexuality education (that is taught within the family structures, the church and the community at large) and the formal education (that is taught in schools and other public organizations in Zimbabwe). The inherent taboos and the way the Shona deal with sexuality issues made research in this topic very challenging, especially when it came to data collection. Owing to the degree of privacy and concealment, the Shona find it uncomfortable, awkward and even embarrassing to discuss sexuality matters in public and worse still in front of strangers. My awareness of all these factors and the sensitiveness of the subject matter compelled me to employ the methodology with the consent of everyone that participated in the study hence, guaranteeing prudence and the confidentiality.

The qualitative paradigm was used because it offered richly descriptive reports of the sex education curriculum and the young women's perceptions, attitude, beliefs, views and feelings, as well as meanings and interpretations given to their religious and cultural events and experiences. This method was selected as it was considered it to be pragmatic, interpretative and grounded in the lived experiences of the participating young Shona women. As such it was a method best suited to pick up the relation between the social religio-cultural norms of sex education and the formal sex education taught in schools.

Furthermore, the qualitative research paradigm was used because it fitted the purpose of the study by allowing the researcher to explore a wide spectrum of aspects and magnitude of the social world. It enabled the researcher to look into the texture and weave of the everyday life experiences, understandings and imaginations of the research participants in a challenging and exciting manner. Through qualitative research I was able to dig into the routes that the processes and relationships and discourses of the society, of different organizations and institutions function, and to also explore into their relevance.

The primary goal of qualitative research is to establish an appreciation and understanding of how the world is constructed. McLeod, (2001), highlights on the different points of view in which the world is perceived. Qualitative research focuses on how human beings, whether as individuals or collectively appreciate the world around them. Although people depend on the socio-cultural and religious norms and values to base the understanding of their universe. Their perception is however incoherent and inconsistent, and the purpose for qualitative research is to provide conventional statements through expressions of views that provide theoretical accounts of the conceptual frameworks with contemporary or current ways of understanding the world (McLeod, 2001). The qualitative research method was therefore appropriate for the objectives of the study whose purpose was to develop a coherent and consistent knowledge of how sexuality is perceived among the Shona and how that understanding interweaves with culture, religion and formal school sexuality teaching.

It should be reiterated that researching on sexuality issues in Zimbabwe is one of the potentially difficult areas as it is open to all sorts of (mis)interpretations, misunderstandings and to a certain extent even objections. In the African society, it is a well-known fact that sexuality issues have ethnic and religio-cultural values and meanings. Because of certain

restrictions and gender issues, this research topic is problematic due to the sensitivity of sexual issues in most African societies. Although the HIV/AIDS epidemic somehow brought these issues to the ears of the public in the sub-Saharan Africa, it is however still very challenging to easily get women to freely and openly talk about their private sexual lives. As such, appropriate methodologies used to investigate and understand sexuality issues and their determinants are important because some young women might feel uncomfortable and might find questions on sexuality awkward and embarrassing.

This chapter focuses on the theoretical and methodological frameworks underpinning the study. A description of the research method design is presented that includes setting and sampling procedures. The development of the research tools are also outlined.

3.1 Research Methodology

The research is an exploratory field study with a hermeneutic interpretive paradigm using interviews, observation and document analysis to collect data and interpreting the qualitative data through thematic analysis. The study is mainly descriptive and transversal, characterized by measurements made in a single moment to allow the description of the characteristics of the young Shona women with respect to certain variables like age, educational background, religious background, denomination, ethnic origin, level of education, their distribution patterns and interrelations, comparing them reflexively with those studied in the literature.

The paradigm was also used due to the following unique aspects of qualitative research that contributed to our rich, insightful results:

- The dynamic nature of the ethnographic interviews that helped engage our respondents more actively than in a more structured survey.

- The paradigm provided the opportunity to probe by asking how they felt about religion and culture influencing their sexuality as young African women. Thus enabling the researcher to reach beyond initial responses and rationales.
- It provided the opportunity to observe, record and interpret non-verbal communication, for example voice intonation, facial expressions and body language as part of the respondent's feedback which was very valuable during interviews and during the analysis of the data.
- The interviews provided depth and detail that a standardized questionnaire wouldn't have been able to provide.
- The openness of this methodology helped generate new theories and recognize phenomena on African sexuality ignored by previous researchers and literature.

The research design served as the structure of the study that showed how all the major parts of the research project were fitted together as shown in figure 1. The design of this research suffered a lot of constant shifts due to the unexpected unfolding events during the course of the work.

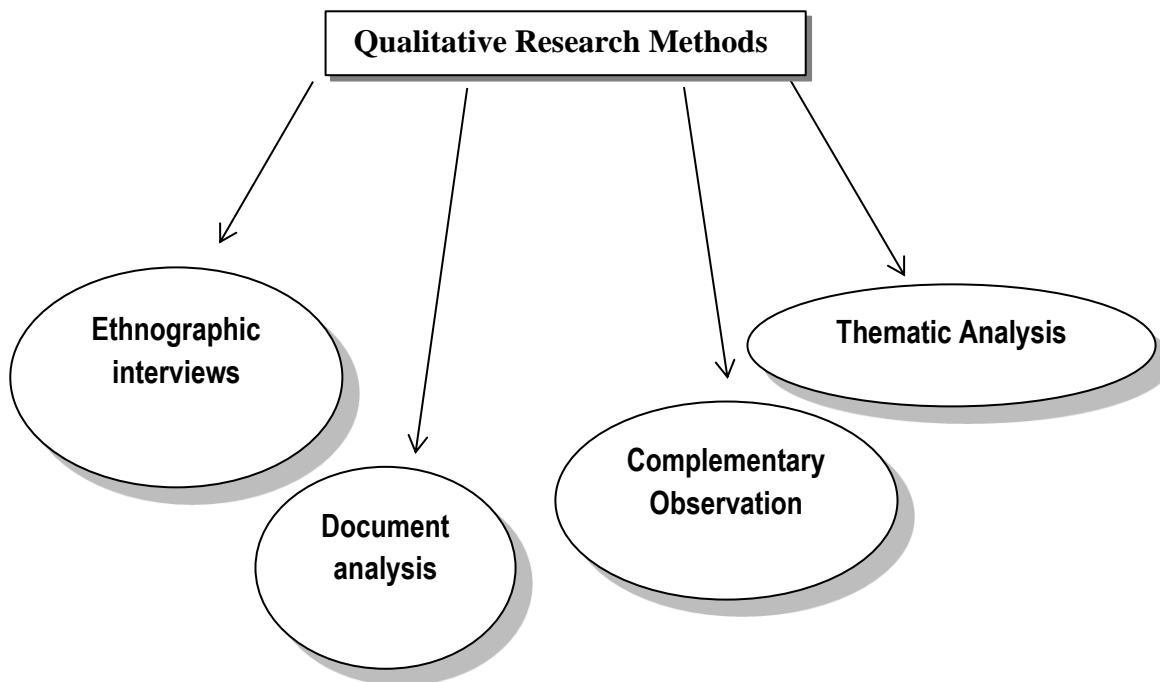


Figure 1 *Selected qualitative research methods used in the study*

The study aim is to encapsulate the voices of these young women investigating the interplay between the socio-religio-cultural aspects and formal sexuality education in schools in Zimbabwe.

The methodologies helped to measure the following;

- personal experiences (for example, of the existing gender inequalities promoted by the African culture, up to what extent they can freely talk about their sexual experiences)
- processes (for example, the young women's views on the acceptability of the African cultural norms in their society or the acceptability of the content of sex education in schools)
- personal values and beliefs (for example, about taboos and puberty rites, about the choice or use of contraceptives, the number of children they can have)

- interactions and relationships (for example, the quality of the teacher-pupil relationship during sex education classes, the openness of a counselling session at church, the interactions with without concealment when discussing sexuality issues)
- service evaluations (for example, what was good, useful or bad about teachers' experiences in class discussions during sex education classes).

3.2 Research setting and sampling

The time and the resources that were available naturally influenced the methodological decisions for this study. To delineate the sample, a set of inclusion criteria was used to specify the attribute that each young woman must possess to qualify for our study, that is, she had to be a Shona female aged between 18 and 30 (an age range mature enough to respond to questions related to both cultural and formal sex education), had a religious background and had to be from any part of Zimbabwe. The cross-cultural nature of this research project gave an initial sample heterogeneous nature of eleven (11) young Shona women (A1-A11). Unfortunately, A1, A3 and A6 had to be excluded from our sample as they failed to respond to at least fifty percent of the interview questions due to personal reasons known to them. Failure to collect enough data from these three young women contributed to the reason of their exclusion.

3.2.1 Sampling method

The fieldwork took place between August 2015 and December 2016 where the study aimed at a sample of different ethnic Shona groups from different religious backgrounds in Zimbabwe. The study focused on the Shona culture that is predominant in Harare.

Due to the local knowledge the researcher had, the nature of the study and the sensitivity of the context at hand, the intention was to mainly use the opportunistic or emergent sampling.

During the field work, the opportunity sampling was eventually grouped together with other incidental types of sampling such as ethnographic and purposeful sampling (combination sampling). Consequently, the researcher conveniently used the young women she came across with and that were available at that moment in time, in other words, availability sampling was used by randomly approached ordinary young women on the streets, at the market, in the neighborhood and from other different corners of Harare. Before approaching any young woman, the researcher first looked around the area to identify those who more relaxed who did not look too busy. After approaching them, the researcher presented herself in a very friendly manner and ask if they had time to spare and be interviewed. This was quite a challenging part because she had to surreptitiously intrude into the young woman's personal lives to explain the purpose of the interview and the subject matter at hand which is a taboo and an unmentionable topic in the Shona culture. Due to the nature of the study and the subject, convenience sampling made it easier for me to get a required sample.

The practical reality during the field work however lead me to alter the sample size within the agreed parameters. According to some researchers, the size of the sample when conducting interviews, should be large enough to collect as much data as possible until no new phenomena or concept emerge (Silverman, 2010; Boddy & Boddy, 2016). It was therefore important for me to realize that I had hit the peak of my data and that I had not left out anything missing.

To gurantee the research ethics proceedings, the research was based on participants' freely volunteered informed consent. The researcher had the responsibility to explain fully and meaningfully what the research was about and how it would be disseminated. Participants

were made aware of their right to refuse to participate; to understand the extent to which confidentiality would be maintained; to be aware of the potential uses to which the data might be put.

3.2.2 Participants for in-depth interviews

To characterize the research sample, the following information about the eight interviewees is presented as follows: They all claimed to be Christians and they all echoed that they were brought up under strict Christian norms.

Three of the women (A5, A9 and A11) had an urban upbringing and the other five (A2, A4, A7, A8 and A10) had rural backgrounds. This was a true representation of the characteristic urban migration in Zimbabwe. Urban migration is regarded as a process that involves the movement of people from rural to urban areas in search of greener pastures or better living and employment conditions and opportunities. As expressed by Munyoro, Kabange and Dzapasi, (2016), the rural urban migration in Zimbabwe increased considerably and was triggered by natural disasters such as drought and famine. This explains the fact that five out of eight of the participants had migrated from rural areas.

Five of the young women (A4, A5, A7, A9 and A10) were married all with children from their marriages, yet another evidence on the importance given to marriage and procreation in the Shona culture. Whereas A2, A8 and A11 were single and claimed not to have any sexual history, indirectly implying that they were still virgins, a typical response expected to be given by any single well cultured young woman. According to the Shona culture, this an epiphonema of a young woman who is marriage quality that shows how virginity is still a determining factor for any woman who intends to enter into matrimony the correct way.

The youngest woman from the sample was twenty years old and single, and the oldest was thirty years old and married with two children. Interestingly enough, none of the married women had more than three children, reflecting the fairly low fertility rate in Zimbabwe (2.80 children). Comparing to the demographic results published by the Oxford institute of population in 2015 of other African countries that were as follows; South Africa, 2.40, Botswana, 2.80; Mozambique, 5.80; Angola 6.0 Nigeria, 5.30 and Senegal 5.60 (Machiyama, 2010).

The young women who participated in the interviews, came from different Shona ethnic groups, i.e. Zezuru, Ndau, Kore kore, Karanga and Changani. According to Solano-Flores (2009), people from the same culture have common beliefs, experiences communication patterns, common set of values, teaching and learning skills and even epistemologies. In this study, these ethnic groups stemmed from urban settings and they showed to be cultural variations due to the very different experiences in their lives. These differences were influenced by the different multicultural community around them and their different religious and family backgrounds. In Zimbabwe, ethnic groups in urban settings (in Harare in this case), can be strongly influenced by the sacred and the spiritual material areas of life.

As field notes, it was noted how the young women characterized and understood their sexuality. What is going on with their sexuality? What assumptions do they make? Field notes were also noted. These notes helped to visualize what was going on with their sexuality especially when asked very sensitive questions? The field notes were very useful in getting a better reflection of what had been recorded i.e. facial expressions, body language, gestures of discomfort or embarrassment.

Interpretative research methods assume that researchers create and associate their own subjective and intersubjective meanings as they interact with the social world around them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The approach was appropriate for this study because it helped to understand the processes underlying the influence that religion and culture has on formal sex education in schools. This was achieved through accessing the values and meanings that the young women assigned to sexuality in Africa. In addition, this was very valuable as it allowed the collection of data rich in attitudes, beliefs and values associated with sexuality. The information gathered was therefore not constrained by rigid data collecting frameworks that may have limited the ability to capture cultural, religious and social paradigms that influence formal sex education in schools.

3.3 Data collection methodology

After an analysis of the state of the art and a concerted attempt to extract more and better knowledge about the topic under review, a triangulation of several insider sources was performed using the following techniques:

- Ethnographic interviews aimed at the young Zimbabwean women aged between 18 and 30 from different cultural and religious backgrounds. As shown in Figure 2. The figure was designed from the inspiration from Rohrer, 2014 on his article on research methods.
- Complementary Observation
- Desk research of official documents from the Ministry of Education within the educational reform in

Zimbabwe, review of the annual plan of activities or courses with content within the sex education, review of articles published in journals of reference and research recently held in Zimbabwe or elsewhere in Africa and the rest of the world.

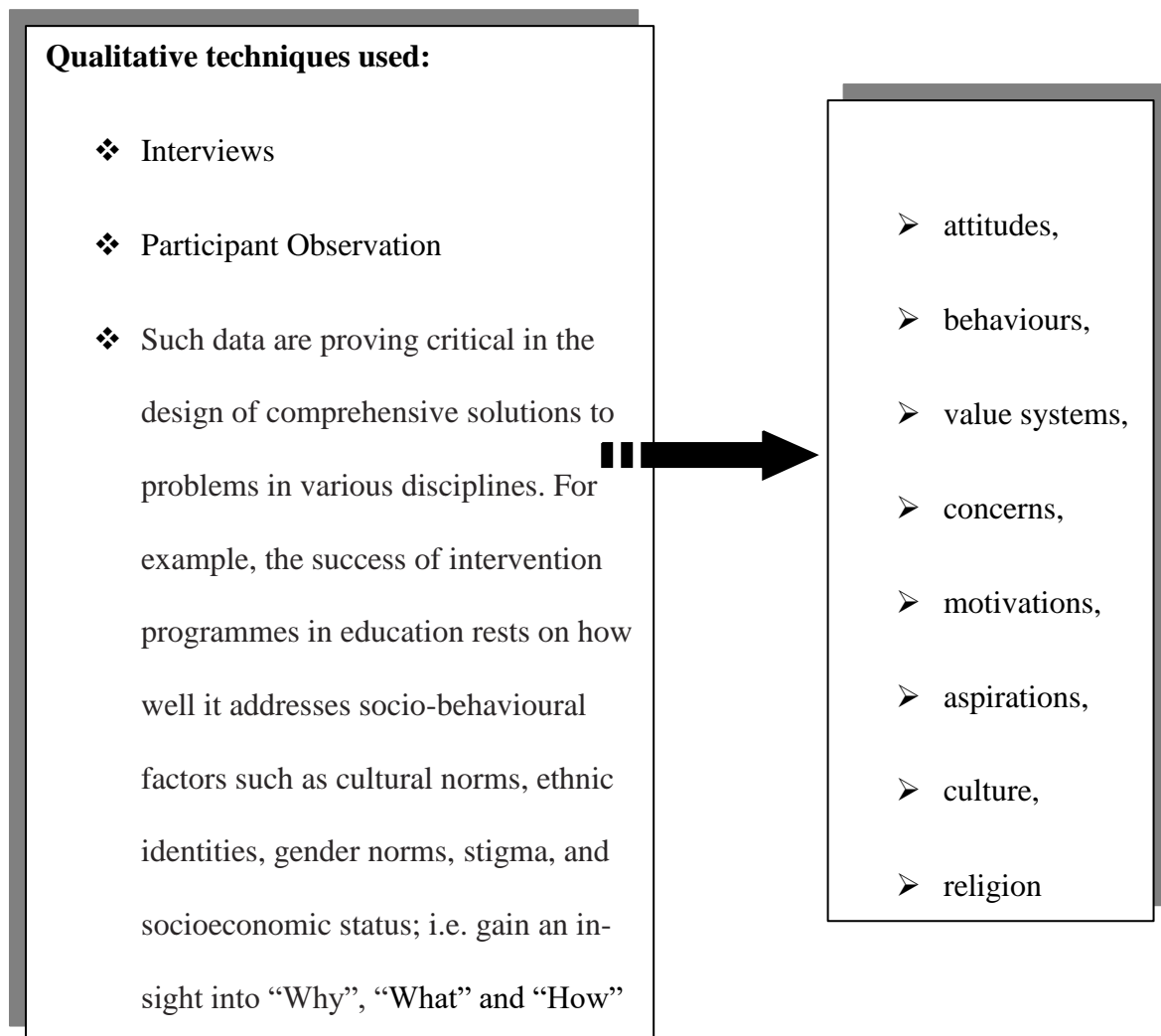


Figure 2. *Qualitative research seeks to gain insight into “why”, “what and “how”* adapted from <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/which-ux-research-methods/>

3.3.1 Ethnographic interviews

As a method for conducting qualitative research, interviewing was an effective method for tuning into the inner voice of the participants where it presented an unusual dynamic that required the participants to divulge personal or emotional information in the presence of a complete stranger, breaking down the more presentational barriers of the guarded outer voice which often prevailed (Seidman, 1998). Therefore, carrying out ethnographic interviews in my own culture required for me to “make the familiar strange,” or make visible what is implicit and taken for granted aspects of sexuality, helping to provide interpretive and descriptive analysis of the symbolic and contextual meanings in everyday life sex education practices. This helped to provide access to what was "inside each of their heads", allowing the collection of data on what they knew on sexuality, their likes and dislikes (values and preferences) and what they thought (attitudes and beliefs), also highlighting the experiences that occurred in their lives at any given time (biography).

For generating data for this research, interviews were found to be the most appropriate method to help in the awareness of the nature and significance of the developments in relation to a phenomenon that has not been explored much by scholarly articles.

All the interviews were conducted in colloquial, conversational manner, using an interactive–relational approach. By developing an interactive and relational stance, the researcher was able to access knowledge and data that would not been otherwise possible to collect through formal structured questions alone. Such an approach was very necessary and effective for the interviews considering the reserved and sensitive issue of sexuality.

Through the interactive-rational approach, the researcher was able to establish a relationship with each interviewee and this facilitated the flow of acquired knowledge that

would otherwise not have been disclosed. The Interviews provided the study with the opportunity to acquire and yield data through argumentation, interchange, conversation, discussion, and to a certain extent consensus. The interviews were all recorded on audio-recorder with the consent of the interviewees and constituted important primary sources of information for the study.

Although the interviewees understood the English language reasonably well, the researcher made an intentional choice to conduct the interviews in Shona, because it was far much easier and more comfortable to tackle Shona culture sexuality issues in the language they were comfortable in. It is important to mention that the English language is an official language of Zimbabwe although most indigenous people still treat it as a “foreign” colonial language. Therefore, using English for interviewing my own people would have sent very wrong signals about me trying to assume a superior status of a person who is no longer able to communicate in her own mother tongue, one who disregards her culture and identifies herself as one of the “elite”.

The Shona easily presume that if a native Shona speaker communicates in English all the time they automatically belong to an upper class with a better social status that is economically and academically advantaged. It is not surprising for the Shona to behave in such a manner because it is the lingering evidence of the socio-economic divisions of the colonial era, where the English speakers were the colonizers and Shona was spoken by the indigenous folks. This kind of division and segregation automatically resulted in socio-economic structures that were clearly defined into “them” the English, and the “us”, the native Shona. It is therefore not surprising that up to the present date, a native Shona who only uses English as only their form of communication are labelled as “upper class”. This however

distances and detaches them from their people who may feel secluded, ignored, betrayed, let down or even disrespected up to some extent. To curb this constraint, the researcher therefore used Shona for almost all the interviews conducted; by so doing, she was able to do away with the probability of being identified as one of them, but as an “alien”. This helped to easily and closely connect better with the interviewees.

The study used ethnographic interviews to gather cultural data where the researcher focused on Shona culture through the young women’s perspective and through first-hand encounter. It was an effective method that helped to highlight the nuances of the culture. The researcher was careful enough not to impose her values through the phrasing of questions or the interpretation of data. Descriptive questions allowed to collect a sample of young Shona women. Structural questions on the other hand helped to discover the basic units in the young women’s cultural knowledge, and contrast questions provided the study with the meaning of various sexuality terms.

There was no complication in attaining trust and in having a close harmonious dialogue with each and every participant, which allowed the researcher to easily gain the necessary rapport. There was no need to familiarize with the understandings of the young women that participated in the study because of two basic reasons. Firstly, the researcher had once lived in different parts of Zimbabwe and could speak various Shona dialects and was well aware of the different ways that certain sexuality terms could be expressed. Secondly, she was born and brought up in Zimbabwe and therefore a Shona native speaker who received her education in mission, government and private schools. The other contributing factor is that she was brought up in a family which lived a typical religious Shona culture in a Zimbabwean lifestyle.

My father being a Church Reverend, the nature of his job made our family undulate between the different parts of the different regions of the country, both rural and urban. This hence justifies the background of my upbringing. Having been born and brought up in the late sixties and seventies, the heart of the colonial era in the then Rhodesia, I still have vivid and interesting memories of my experiences in the colonial times. This background created conducive environment to carry out my research without having to face a lot of challenging obstacles. My background served as a jump-off point for my research because it help me acquire information much faster, that is, to find answers for the 'who', 'how' and 'what' questions. Besides, I had ample knowledge of the different formalities, protocols and approaches that I needed to employ while dealing with the individual interviewees. I was also familiar and aware of the uniqueness of each participant and the expectations of the society when addressing sensitive subject matters on sexuality.

Although my aim was to pursue an interactive process which facilitated continuous dialogue between sexuality concepts, assumptions and an ever-growing data base of empirical knowledge obtained from the young African women's life experiences on sexuality, gender roles and relations, local practices and norms, this approach however faced challenges when questioning people in their native languages. For example, there are no words to describe sex and sexuality in my local Shona culture without the very real risk of sounding vulgar. Which is a common problem encountered by curriculum developers who shy away from such words and replace them with euphemism such as "guidance and counselling" "life skills" and "life education" (Amanze, 2010).

For a successful analysis that is theoretically coherent and consistent, a six phase approach was used based on proposition formulated by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 88-89).

- Familiarisation with the data: reading and re-reading the data.
- Coding: generating succinct labels that identify important features of the data relevant to answering the research question; after coding the entire dataset, collating codes and relevant data extracts.
- Searching for themes: examining the codes and collated data to identify significant broader patterns of meaning; collating data relevant to each candidate theme.
- Reviewing themes: checking the candidate themes against the dataset, to determine that they tell a convincing story that answers the research question. Themes may be refined, split, combined, or discarded.
- Defining and naming themes: developing a detailed analysis of each theme; choosing an informative name for each theme.
- Writing up: weaving together the analytic narrative and data extracts; contextualising the analysis in relation to existing literature.

3.3.2 Gossip as a data collection method

My intention was to also establish a dialogue with the people responsible in the drafting of sex education curriculum, performing questions relevant to the issue at hand, seeking data on their way of thinking on these issues. Thus, the combination of methods will help to overcome any limitations that occur through the use of only one method of investigation.

Gossip as a research tool for data collection is a controversial issue but can be a very good source of information. Although it could be considered it as “idle talk”, it was a useful instrument for this study where I used it as “situational gossip”. It is situational in the context where there is social disapproval on most discourses on sexuality, more so in the case of the young women who found themselves in a situation where they did not feel safe or were most

likely to be misconstrued for talking about sexuality issues. Through gossip, they were able to express their profoundly premeditated and meaningful intentions without compromising anyone. For example when asking personal and very intimate questions like labia minora elongation or their first sexual experience in their matrimonial bed. Using gossip including the typical gestures and whispering made the young women feel safe and comfortable enough to narrate their experiences. The study therefore found it as an intriguing method of data collection that uncovered some fascinating and interesting insights into the research, for example, the coinciding of the inconsistencies collected from gossip when consolidated with those from other methods of data collection.

Regardless of the fact that gossip is debatable and disputed in academic research designs (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995; Baumeister et al, 2004), the main reason why I chose it for this study is that gossip plays a significant role in controlling numerous aspects of social life especially in relation to sexuality matters. The nature of our research topic prompted me to utilize gossip as a way of gathering information on sexuality because the participants seemed to distance themselves from certain questions. Generally speaking, talking about sexuality issues, in other words, “the sex talk” is referred to as gossip mainly because of the way people hide certain truths and they do not come out in the open to discuss their personal experiences. Interestingly, it is a subject matter that arouses a lot of interest when discussed in private arena. I also thought that since the study is not a subject of open discussion with strangers it would be a good idea to immerse into gossip, follow its leads and see what I could come up with.

3.3.3 Complementary observation

My role as a researcher was to be physically present in the field in order to observe, interview and collect data. I had to apply naturalistic qualitative research by immersing myself

in a situation without manipulating and without controlling it but rather watch naturally occurring events (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). I was responsible for the situation as the main instrument of data collection and I was able to adapt to the changing conditions. For example, as a sensitive topic, I was very sensitive to the reactions of the respondents and the data I tried to immediately process the data and I would take the necessary action to check and confirm with the subject if I had any doubt or uncertainties.

It should be emphasized at this point that the study used the complementary observation as a research tool that was carefully conducted systematically with precise notation that allowed for retrieval of information and orderly categorization and analysis of the gathered information.

Complementary observation was a highly important inquiry method used to note the interviewees' facial expressions, body language and gestures in addition to their words. It provided a chance to learn the aspects of sexuality that the young women were unwilling to discuss during the interviews. It implemented in this study in order to reveal complex interactions in natural social settings. Due to the nature of the topic, it was somehow uncomfortable facing the ethical dilemmas that come with the secretive nature of sexuality in the Shona culture. What made observation less challenging was the fact that the researcher was familiar with the Shona language and culture and a description of the purpose of using the observation method. For example avoiding eye contact was done for two reasons; to show respect as they were being interviewed by an elder; and to hide their discomfort and awkwardness in discussing sexuality issues. Emerging analytic insights about the behaviour and attitudes of the interviewees were noted through field notes. The comments made proved

to be quite fruitful as source of analytic insights and clues that helped focus our data collection more tightly. They eventually provided important questions for subsequent interviews.

In addition, immersion in the Shona culture setting facilitated the researcher to observe, to listen and to experience reality as the participants did. Luckily, the researcher did not have to spend considerable amount of time learning about their daily lives. This immersion offered me the opportunity to learn directly from my own experience. Personal reflections are integral to the emerging analysis of the Shona culture, because they provide the researcher with new vantage points and with opportunities to make the familiar strange.

The aim was to capture the essential flow of everyday experiences of the young women, as such it served to detect patterns, concepts, trends or categories that were considered to be meaningful by the young women in the course of their daily experiences. As described by Adler and Adler (1994), as the “Click experience” referring to the unforeseen revelatory manifestation to the emotional depth that is significant of an event or a phenomenon. The authors were in this case referring to the surprises encountered in real life that should be registered by researchers in order to deeply and thoroughly reflect on the meaning behind the behaviour that provoked it.

This approach therefore provided valuable insights into the local perspectives of the study sample, it contributed to the attainment of an insight into “why”, “how” and “what” issues of sexuality in Zimbabwe. Besides producing culturally specific and contextually rich data, this methodology helped to address socio-behavioural factors such as cultural norms, ethnic identities and gender norms. The methodology was used as a strategy and a plan of action for this study.

3.4 Data analysis methodology

The qualitative data obtained in interviews was analysed using the technique of coding of observation notes; field notes (which included details of informal conversations with the elderly women; analytic memos; recording of personal experiences during the interviews in this case, context in general) and thematic analysis.

With respect to documents, material was collected from the national archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ), documents like teacher's guides and the curriculum from the Ministry of Education and Culture, local newspapers and the internet. These sources verification were used for the purposes of reinforcement, confirmation, enhancement of the information from alternative documentation. The focus of my investigation was to examine the consistency between the perception of sexuality manifested in the documents and the present day appreciation of the phenomenon expressed in the interviews.

The following three types of documents used were classified according to O'Leary (2014):

- **Public Records:** The official: Documents from the National archives of Zimbabwe, Strategic plans, Annual reports from the Ministry of Education Sports and culture, syllabuses (Life Skills and Sexuality curriculum), School textbooks or student hand-books.
- **Personal Documents:** Articles from the local Newspapers and journals.
- **Physical Evidence:** Flyers, Billboards Posters and teachers' manuals.

The analysis of all the documents was an important tool for the research. To safeguard reliable results before the analysis of documents, a planning procedure was also followed according to O'Leary (2014). The steps that were undertaken were as follows:

A list of texts and documents that were used for the study was created.

- The authenticity of the documents was assessed.
- Consideration was made regarding the possible linguistic and cultural barriers that could be faced on accessing the documents.
- Awareness was made for possible preconceptions and prejudices.
- Familiarization with the data
- Consideration of moral or ethical issues

The thematic analysis was conducted within the constructionist framework due to the fact that it focuses on theorizing the socio-cultural contexts and structural conditions that enabled me to provide individual accounts. The analysis mentioned in this chapter is therefore based on the constructionist paradigm.

Document analysis required that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss 2008). It helped to identify, analyse and report patterns (themes) within data, thus helping the researcher to organize and describe the data set in (rich) detail. It however helped to go even further than this by interpreting various aspects of sexuality. In the analysis of the data, the researcher found it useful to assess the degree of confidence deserved by each source, taking into account their seriousness, their background and references and any other information that appeared important. At the end, the results were recorded and my personal opinions and conclusions were part of to the final synthesis and interpretation of the data analysed. This synthesis was the final completion of the project that addressed the problem of research.

CHAPTER FOUR

Analysis of the Strengthening Life Skills, Sexuality, HIV and AIDS Program

Introduction

This Chapter outlines the main findings from the analysis made on the content of the curriculum in relation to sexuality education in schools. A content analysis of the teachers' manuals and the school text books was done to assess the extent to which sexuality education is being implemented within the formal school system.

The program covers both the primary school (Grades 0 to 7) and the secondary school level (Forms 1 to 6). The primary school program is further divided into two parts that focus on infant and junior levels. Whereas the secondary school program is divided in three distinct groups, that is, forms 1-2, forms 3-4 and the senior level that includes forms 5-6.

The school curriculum framework of the Sexuality, HIV and AIDS education is a cross-cutting issue, it is taught within the context of Guidance and Counselling (G & C). The study area incorporates diverse concepts such as:

- Relationships
- Health
- Human, Growth and Development
- Values, Beliefs and Citizenship
- Child Protection
- Career Guidance

For this study, not all the above mentioned concepts are explored, only the concepts in line with the research questions and objectives are analyzed.

4.1 The content and objectives of the sexuality programs in schools

The following objectives and tables were retrieved from the teachers' manuals that are referred to as high quality reference material on the topics covered in the manual globally, regionally and nationally. The manuals are meant to serve as a practical reference guide for teachers delivering Guidance and Counselling in schools. According to the program, teachers are expected to use their own discretion in using any information from the bibliography provided and to lookout for more information to enhance the delivery of Guidance and Counselling.

The content of the program in the infant level formulated the following objectives:

1. Identify and describe themselves in terms of the self, family and community.
2. State their rights and responsibilities.
3. Identify different types of abuse.
4. Describe ways of reporting child abuse.
5. State forms of good behaviour at school, home and in the community.
6. Identify vulnerable members of society.
7. Create inclusive approaches to involve the vulnerable.
8. Demonstrate *Unhu/Ubuntu/Values*.
9. Distinguish between good and bad relationships.
10. Identify ways of resolving conflict.
11. Identify the different family members.
12. Describe the different types of family structures.
13. State the roles of different family members.
14. Identify changes that can take place within a family.
15. Identify good personal and environmental hygiene practices.
16. Identify substances that we eat, drink or inhale that are harmful to health.
17. Identify health related conditions.
18. Distinguish between the useful and harmful effects of the internet and social media.
19. Identify issues related to HIV and AIDS.

Main Theme		
<p>1. Identity</p>	<p>Individual (Self)</p> <p>Family</p> <p>Community and wider society</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name • Sex • Age • Identify body parts • Choices (likes and dislikes) • Family name • Identify family members • Identify self in relation to other members • Location • Totem and implications • Location • Identify neighbours • Institutions in community e.g.school, health centre, church, police post • Community leaders e.g.councilors, kraal heads,headman, chief
<p>2. Rights and responsibilities</p>	<p>Children's rights and responsibilities</p> <p>Shared confidentiality</p> <p>Child abuse</p> <p>Child protection at home, school and in the community</p> <p>Gender roles and responsibilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic rights • Responsibilities • Who to confide in • Trust versus mistrust • Types of abuse • How to report abuse • Instances of child abuse • Identify friends • Protection in case of danger • Avoid being alone • Junior call (junior police) • Child Protection Committees (CPCs) • Gender roles at home, school

		and community • Universal roles
3. Unhu/Ubuntu/Values	<p>Respect and tolerance</p> <p>Social etiquette and manners</p> <p>Religion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-respect • respect for others and adults • positive attitudes towards vulnerable members of society • good and bad behaviour • language register • values for example, honesty, obedience, trustworthiness, respect for work, empathy • dress code • my religion • respect for different religious groups
4. Relationships	<p>Relating to self, family, friends/peers, strangers and community</p> <p>Conflict management and resolution</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self esteem • talents • team work • effective interpersonal Communication • at home • at school • in the community
5. Family Life Education	<p>Different types of families</p> <p>Family tree</p> <p>Parenting responsibilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nuclear • extended • child headed • one parent • mixed Paternal • Maternal • gender roles • gender stereotypes

	Family Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • family support system • births • deaths • marriage • relocation
6. Healthy Living	<p style="text-align: center;">Hygiene and cleanliness</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Environmental health</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Lifestyles, diet, exercise and Habits</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Substance and drug abuse</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Communicable and noncommunicable diseases</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The human body parts and diseases that affect them</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Definition of HIV and AIDS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal hygiene • care of belongings • home • classroom • school grounds • toilets • community • disposal of waste • good food • junk food • importance of exercise • names • sources • effects • communicable diseases • non communicable diseases • prevention • public health concerns (cholera, bilharzia, measles, malaria, rabies, Ebola, scabies, intestinal worms etc.) - • Prevention strategies • Stigma and discrimination • Treatment, care and support • Myths and misconceptions

Table 1 *The content of the program in the infant level.*

The content of the program in the junior level formulated the following objectives:

1. Show how family members should relate to each other.
2. Explain the importance of the family in relation to HIV and AIDS issues.
3. Identify forms of abuse in the family and community.
4. Identify different types of relationships
5. Identify causes of conflicts within family and community, suggest ways of resolving them.
6. Differentiate between exploitation and victimization.
7. Identify ways in which communities deal with sexual abuse and sexual relationship.
8. State the effects of stigma and discrimination on relationships.
9. Establish the link between personal and environmental hygiene.
10. Explain the link between Nutrition, HIV and AIDS.
11. Identify substances we eat, drink or inhale that are harmful to the body.
12. Establish the link between substance abuse and risky behaviour.
13. Explain ways of preventing and reducing stress.
14. Identify the emotional, physical and psychological changes in adolescents.
15. Show how the change influences their behaviour and their risk to HIV infection.
16. Identify the benefits of abstinence, delayed sexual activities and consequences of early sexual activities.
17. Appreciate differences in individual growth and patterns.
18. Explain the importance of other HIV prevention strategies
19. Describe the economic, social, physical and emotional challenges of living with HIV and AIDS.
20. Explain the effects of myths and misconceptions on child growth and development.
21. Identify sources of values.
22. Describe forms of good behaviour at school, home and in the community.
23. Discuss the challenges which vulnerable members of society face.
24. Identify inclusive approaches to involve the vulnerable.
25. Demonstrate *Unhu/Ubuntu/Values*.
26. Discuss what one should do to demonstrate love for one's country.
27. Demonstrate ways of positive interaction with people affected and infected with HIV.
28. Identify social services and referral systems available.
29. State their rights and responsibilities.

30. Explain different types of abuse.
31. Describe ways of reporting child abuse
32. Establish child protection committees.
33. Identify effects of child abuse.

Main Theme		
<p>1. Relationships</p>	<p>Different types of families</p> <p>Marriage</p> <p>Parenting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nuclear • extended • child headed • one parent • mixed • effects of HIV and AIDS in the family • Modern marriage • Traditional marriage • Other types of marriages • Parental roles • Gender based violence
<p>2. Human Growth and development</p>	<p>Male and female reproductive anatomy</p> <p>Sex and sexuality</p> <p>Puberty</p> <p>Abstinence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reproductive Organs (Refer to Social Studies and Environmental Science Syllabuses) • definition • sex and gender roles • sexuality education • development of girls • development of boys • effects of puberty • Definition • benefits of delayed sexuality activities • managing sexual pressures • consequence of early sexual activity • Definition • modes of transmission

	<p>HIV and AIDS</p> <p>Myths and misconceptions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prevention • stigma and discrimination • how to live positively • cultural • religious
3. Health	<p>Hygiene (Personal and Environmental)</p> <p>Nutrition in relation to HIV and AIDS</p> <p>Communicable and non-communicable diseases</p> <p>Drug and substance abuse</p> <p>Mental health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • home • school • community • self-grooming skills • body cleanliness • dental hygiene • importance of balanced diet • nutritional gardens • definitions • communicable diseases • non-communicable diseases • prevention • public health concerns (cholera, bilharzia, measles, malaria, rabies, Ebola, scabies, intestinal worms etc. • names and types of drugs and substance abuse • effects of drug and substance abuse • definition • causes of mental ill health • causes of stress • stress management
4. Values, beliefs and Citizenship	<p>Sources of values at</p> <p>Respect and tolerance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home • School • Community • self-respect • respect for others and adults • positive attitudes towards vulnerable members of society • good and bad behavior • language register • values for example, honesty,

	<p>Social etiquette and manners</p> <p>Religion</p> <p>Citizenship (refer to Constitution of Zimbabwe, Chapter 3 Section 35 – 43)</p>	<p>obedience, trustworthiness, respect for work, empathy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dress code • my religion • respect for different religious groups • Define citizenship • Patriotism
5. Care, Management and Mitigation	<p>Care and Support for learners affected and infected with HIV</p> <p>Available Support Systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treatment adherence • role of support groups • child protection • BEAM (Basic Assistance Education Module) • Referral systems (eg. local clinic, hospital, etc.)
6. Child protection	<p>Child Abuse</p> <p>Child Protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms of abuse • Child rights and responsibilities • How to report child abuse • Potential abusers at <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Home - School - Community • Child Protection Committees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At school - In the community

Table 2 *The content of the program in the junior school level.*

The forms 1 and 2 program has the following objectives formulated:

1. Describe different types of families.
2. Identify potential abusers and abusive tendencies in the family, school and community.
3. Differentiate between different kinds of relationships.
4. Demonstrate skills in resisting peer pressure.
5. Apply personal and environmental hygiene practices.
6. Explain the importance of grooming and etiquette.
7. Describe common STIs.
8. Discuss stigma and discrimination in relation to HIV and AIDS.
9. Outline the importance of early treatment and prevention.
10. Discuss consequences of early sexual debut.
11. Discuss importance of participating in physical activities.
12. Differentiate between puberty and adolescence.
13. Explain the challenges experienced at adolescence stage.
14. Describe the male and female reproductive system.
15. Discuss about sex and pregnancy.
16. Analyse the risks of early sexual activities.
17. Analyse sexual behaviours in relation to HIV and AIDS.
18. Identify values and their importance.
19. Describe forms of good behaviour at school, home and in the community.
20. Discuss the challenges which vulnerable members of society face.
21. Discuss inclusive approaches to involve the vulnerable.
22. Demonstrate *Unhu/Ubuntu/Value*.
23. Discuss what one should do to demonstrate love for one's country.
24. Outline learner welfare incidences
25. State children's rights and responsibilities.
26. Describe ways of reporting abuse.
27. Identify commonly abused drugs and substances
28. Suggest ways of managing learner welfare
29. Make relevant subject choices

- 30. Describe good study skills
- 31. Identify career opportunities
- 32. Discuss entrepreneurship
- 33. Prepare for an interview

Main Theme		
1. Relationships	<p style="text-align: center;">Types of family</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Communication Skills</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Abuse within the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Different kinds of relationships</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Peer relationships</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Conflict and conflict resolution</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nuclear • child-headed • extended • one parent headed • mixed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • types of communication • barriers to communication • parent-child communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - family - school - community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • forms of abuse i.e. sexual, emotional, physical, neglect • potential abusers and abusive tendencies • children’s rights and responsibilities • child/human trafficking • friendships • dating and courtship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • marriage (refer to constitution) • abusive relationships, for example; incest, pedophilia, inter-generational • cyber dating (computer-based relationships) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • definition • peer pressure • effects of peer pressure • effects of internet and social media in relationships • skills of resisting peer pressure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • causes of conflicts - home - school - community • consequences of conflict

	<p>Life skills and attributes of personal identity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conflict resolution • self esteem • assertiveness • critical thinking • negotiation skills • communication skills
<p>2. Health</p>	<p>Health, safety and personal Hygiene</p> <p>Grooming and etiquette</p> <p>Environment Hygiene</p> <p>Sexually Transmitted Infections</p> <p>HIV and AIDS</p> <p>Communicable and noncommunicable diseases</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bathing • oral care • laundry • managing menstruation • elements of fitness • endurance • strength • speed • dress code • table manners • style of walking • style of communication • body posture • home • schools • community • littering • pollution • conservation • veld fires • types • signs • prevention and treatment • definition • modes of transmission • prevention • myths and misconceptions • stigma and discrimination • positive living • nutrition • communicable diseases • non communicable diseases • prevention and management • public health concerns (cholera, bilharzia, measles, malaria, rabies, Ebola, scabies, intestinal worms etc.)

	<p>Drug and substance abuse</p> <p>Mental health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • names and types of drugs and substance abuse • effects of drug and substance abuse • definition • causes and effects of mental ill health • causes and effects of stress • stress management
3. Human growth and Development	<p>Puberty and Adolescence</p> <p>Anatomy and Physiology</p> <p>Sex and sexuality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions • physical changes • emotional changes • psychological changes • Identity crisis • Myths and misconceptions about human reproduction • Definitions • Sex and gender roles • sexual identity • sexual health • Sexual behaviors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - abstinence - delaying sexual debut - concurrent sexual partnerships - inter-generational partners • consequences of early sexual debut • myths and misconceptions about sex and pregnancy • preventing pregnancy • Ministry's policy on pregnancy • Laws and rights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - age of consent - age of marriage
	<p>Values at</p> <p>Respect and tolerance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home • School • Community • self-respect • respect for others and adults • positive attitudes towards vulnerable members of society • good and bad behavior

<p>4. Values, beliefs and Citizenship</p>	<p>Religion</p> <p>Citizenship (refer to Constitution of Zimbabwe, Chapter 3 Section 35 – 43)</p> <p>Citizenship (refer to Constitution of Zimbabwe, Chapter 3 Section 35 – 43)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • religious values • respect for different religions • positive and negative aspects of religion with respect to sexual and reproductive health and HIV <p>Define citizenship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualities of a good citizen • Roles and responsibilities of duty bearers and rights holders • Patriotism • The role of Junior Parliamentarians and Councilors
<p>5. Child Protection</p>	<p>Learner welfare incidents</p> <p>Child rights and responsibilities</p> <p>Child Abuse</p> <p>Child / Human trafficking</p> <p>Drug and Substance abuse</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bullying • suicide • satanism • sex parties • unwanted pregnancy • stress • pornography • management of incidents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • forms of child abuse • effects of child abuse • how to report child abuse • coping with abuse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • definition • types • sources • effects
<p>6. Career Guidance</p>	<p>Interviews</p> <p>Entrepreneurship</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grooming • dress code • deportment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • entrepreneurial skills • income generating projects. • capital and human resources • project proposal • market

Table 3 *The content of the program in the secondary school (forms 1 and 2) level.*

The forms 3 and 4 program has the following objectives formulated:

1. Discuss skills needed for managing relationships.
2. Differentiate between different kinds of relationships.
3. Describe roles of different family members.
4. Discuss aspects of peer pressure in relationships.
5. Explain strategies for preventing HIV.
6. Explain the importance of grooming and etiquette.
7. Establish the link between STIs and HIV infection.
8. Describe various types of STIs and their symptoms.
9. Discuss good hygiene practices.
10. Discuss stigma and discrimination in relation to HIV and AIDS.
11. Discuss issues of treatment, care and support
12. Differentiate between puberty and adolescence
13. Explore the challenges experienced at adolescence
14. Discuss the risks of early sexual activities.
15. Describe the male and female reproductive system
16. Describe the signs and symptoms of pregnancy and the stages of foetal development and child birth.
17. Discuss sexuality
18. Discuss sources of values.
19. Describe forms of good behaviour at school, home and in the community.
20. Demonstrate *Unhu/Ubuntu/Values*
21. Evaluate impact of various religions on personal values and beliefs
22. Assess the relationship between freedom, accountability and responsibility in the light HIV/AIDS
23. Discuss the challenges which vulnerable members of society face.
24. Discuss citizenship.
25. Discuss learner welfare incidences
26. Discuss human rights
27. Discuss commonly abused drugs and substances
28. Identify career opportunities.
29. State subject combinations for different career opportunities.
30. Identify prevailing training opportunities.

31. Develop entrepreneurship skills.
32. Write job application letters and Curriculum Vitae.
33. Prepare for an interview.
34. Identify income generating projects.

Main Theme	Sub-theme	
<p style="text-align: center;">1. Relationships</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Families</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Communication in relationships</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Types of relationships</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Managing relationships</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Conflict management and Resolution</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Peer influence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • types • roles of family members • parent to parent • parent to child • sibling to sibling • peer to peer • teacher to pupil • child to adult • Positive • Negative • Effect of internet and social media • managing peer pressure
<p style="text-align: center;">2. Health</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Personal hygiene, exercise and fitness</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Grooming and etiquette</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bathing • oral care • laundry • managing menstruation • health related fitness • skill related fitness • dress code • walking style • style of communication • body posture • table manners • types • signs

	<p>Sexually Transmitted Infections</p> <p>HIV and AIDS</p> <p>Stigma and discrimination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prevention and treatment • definitions • modes of transmission • myths and misconceptions • Prevention strategies • care, treatment and support • definitions • causes and effects • coping with stigma and discrimination • adolescence living with HIV
<p>3. Human growth and Development</p>	<p>Puberty and Adolescence</p> <p>Human Reproduction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions • physical changes • emotional changes • psychological changes • Identity crisis • anatomy and physiology • facts, myths and misconceptions about human reproduction • pregnancy and prevention • fetal development and child bearing • early sexual activity and associated risks e.g. cervical cancer, obstetric fistula • components of sexual and reproductive health and rights • Sexual and reproductive health services • Ministry's policy on pregnancy • Laws and rights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Age of consent - Age of marriage - delaying sexual debut - concurrent sexual partnerships - inter-generational partners • consequences of early sexual debut • myths and misconceptions about sex and pregnancy • preventing pregnancy • Ministry's policy on pregnancy • Laws and rights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - age of consent - age of marriage

	Sexuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • definitions • components of human sexuality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sensuality - sexual intimacy - sexual identity - sexual and reproductive health - sexualization
4. Values, beliefs and Citizenship	<p style="text-align: center;">Sources of values at</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Respect and tolerance</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Freedom, responsibility and accountability</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Religion</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Culture</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Citizenship (refer to Constitution of Zimbabwe, Chapter 3 Section 35 – 43)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home • School • Community • Self-awareness and respect • respect for others and adults • respect for differing opinions, values and beliefs • conflict resolution • positive attitudes towards vulnerable members of society • virtues of being a good role model • freedom • accountability • responsibility • respect for different religious groups • positive and negative aspects of religion with respect to sexual and reproductive health and HIV • contribution of various religions to the development of personal values and beliefs • definition • traditional practices • modern practices • evaluate gender and cultural values and beliefs in relation to sexuality, HIV and AIDS • Define citizenship • qualities of a good citizen • patriotism • the role of Junior Parliamentarians and Councilors
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subject options and combinations

<p>6. Career Guidance</p>	<p>Career opportunities</p> <p>Job Applications</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Business Skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subject career links • various career opportunities • job seeking skills • application letters • curriculum vitae / resume • advertisement in different media (press and internet) • grooming • dress code • deportment • entrepreneurial skills • income generating projects • capital and human resources • project proposal • market
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Table 4 : *The content of the program in the secondary school (forms 3 and 4) level.*

The forms 5 and 6 program has the following objectives formulated:

1. Communicate freely with members of the family.
2. Describe challenges to the family institution.
3. Differentiate between types of relationships.
4. Analyse power dynamics in different relationships.
5. Outline factors that influence choice of a partner.
6. Discuss aspects of peer pressure in relationships.
7. Appreciate the importance of hygiene.
8. Explain the importance of grooming and etiquette.
9. Describe various types of STIs and their symptoms.
10. Discuss prevention and treatment methods of STIs.
11. Establish the link between STIs and HIV infection.
12. Explain strategies for preventing HIV.
13. Discuss stigma and discrimination in relation to HIV and AIDS.
14. Discuss issues of treatment, care and support
15. Discuss sexual and reproductive health and rights.

16. Analyse the impact of early marriages and pregnancies among young people.
17. Discuss sexuality.
18. Discuss sources of values.
19. Describe forms of good behaviour at school, home and in the community.
20. Demonstrate *Unhu/Ubuntu/Values*
21. Evaluate impact of various religions on personal values and beliefs
22. Assess the relationship between freedom, accountability and responsibility in the light of HIV/AIDS
23. Discuss the challenges which vulnerable members of society face.
24. Discuss citizenship.
25. Discuss learner welfare incidences.
26. Discuss human rights.
27. Discuss commonly abused drugs and substances.
28. Critique subjects combinations
29. Relate to subject combinations to higher and tertiary education career path.
30. Identify various career opportunities,
31. Identify income generating projects.
32. Develop entrepreneurial skills.

Main Theme		
1. Relationships	<p>Communication in relationships</p> <p>Types of relationships</p> <p>Managing relationships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parent to parent • parent to child • sibling to sibling • peer to peer • teacher to pupil • child to adult • family • friendship • dating • courtship • intergenerational • understanding power dynamics

	<p>Conflict management and Resolution</p> <p>Peer Influence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • peer pressure • positive influence • negative influence • independent thinking • conflict resolution
2. Health	<p>Hygiene, Sport and Recreation</p> <p>Environmental hygiene</p> <p>Grooming and etiquette</p> <p>Sexually Transmitted Infections</p> <p>Stigma and discrimination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal hygiene • home • school • community • littering • pollution • conservation • veld fires • sport psychology • sport sociology • adventure games • dress code • deportment • body posture • communication style • self confidence • verbal and non-verbal cues • types and symptoms • prevention strategies • treatment • link between STIs and HIV • definition • causes of stigma and discrimination • adolescence living with HIV • working towards elimination of stigma and discrimination
	<p>Sexual and reproductive health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • overview adolescent sexual and reproductive health - national - regional - global

<p>5. Values, Beliefs and Citizenship</p>	<p>Religion</p> <p>Culture</p> <p>Citizenship (refer to Constitution of Zimbabwe, Chapter 3 Section 35 – 43)</p>	<p>to the development of personal values and beliefs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • definition • traditional practices • modern practices • evaluate gender and cultural values and beliefs in relation to sexuality, HIV and AIDS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • define citizenship • dual citizenship • qualities of a good citizen • patriotism • the role of Junior Parliamentarians and Councilors
<p>6. Child Protection</p>	<p>Learner welfare incidences</p> <p>Child Abuse</p> <p>Child/human trafficking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bullying • suicide • satanism • sex parties • unwanted pregnancy • examination stress • pornography • prevention and management of incidences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • forms of child abuse • effects of child abuse • how to report child abuse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual Offences Act (2001) • HIV and AIDS Policy (2000) • Child Protection and Adoption Act

	<p>Human Rights</p> <p>Drug and Substance abuse</p>	<p>(2002)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Age of Majority Act (1982) • UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • definition • types • sources • effects • services for addicts
<p>7. Career Guidance</p>	<p>Opportunities</p> <p>Training opportunities</p> <p>Job Applications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subject options and combinations • various work opportunities • entrepreneurship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apprenticeship and internship • current economic opportunities • job creation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognizing genuine job offers • advertisement in different media and on internet • curriculum vitae / resume • responding to job advert • preparing for different types of interviews

Table 5 *The content of the program in the secondary school (forms 5 and 6) level.*

4.2 Sexuality teaching in schools

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the curriculum is broadened within the Guidance and counselling learning area that is centered on basic platforms that include human rights and dignity, life skills, learner empowerment, *Unhu/Ubuntu*, healthy living and lifestyles, human growth, development and personal responsibilities. The program also focuses on Social

Services and other referral systems for management and mitigation, family relationships and dynamics.

For the analysis of the school curriculum, the following main themes and sub themes were identified:

Themes	Sub-themes
1. Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family life dynamics, roles of family members • Marriage and parenting • Peer influence and peer pressure • Gender roles and gender stereotypes
2. Sexuality education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male and female reproductive anatomy • Sex and sexuality education • Puberty and adolescence • Use of contraceptives • HIV and AIDS • Identity crisis

<p>3. Religio-cultural norms towards sexuality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural and traditional practices • Modern practices • Gender and cultural beliefs to sexuality • Sex and pregnancy • Sources of values • Respect and tolerance • Social etiquette and manners • Religious values towards sexuality
<p>4. Life skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self esteem • Critical thinking • Negotiation skills • Communication skills
<p>5. Student welfare incidences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying • Sex abuse • Suicide • Satanism • Sex parties • Substance and drug abuse • Unwanted pregnancies • Pornography

Table 6 *The main themes and subthemes identified in the study*

4.2.1 Relationships

At primary school level, the program focuses on relationships such as different family structures, the roles of different family members and discussing the importance of family. At secondary school level, the focus is on how the students should relate to their family, friends, peers, strangers and the community. At this level, they are taught how to develop effective interpersonal communication skills where they are expected to be able to be competent in resolving and managing conflicts at home, at school and in the community. At a much higher level, the program focuses on marriage and parenting.

It is evident that the relationship aspects covered in schools do not focus on other human relationships such as dating and intimacy. The program underestimates the sexual feelings that are experienced by the pre-teens and the teenagers themselves. The avoidance of mentioning and discussing such issues serves as evidence that the curriculum developers are reluctant to put these issues in the lime light of sexuality education. The silence to intimacy reflects on how the culture influences the drafting of the curriculum. All this is motivated by the moral view that openly discussing such issues will awaken and stimulate the dormant desires. If such aspects are not outlined in the teachers' guides, it is obvious that the teachers will not venture into discussing intimacy issues. The underlying factor here is that the African cultural norms certainly influences the stake holders in determining what and what not to include in the curriculum.

The G&C books do not show any delimitation between the sexual and nonsexual enjoyment holding hands, of touching, embracing or even kissing. Short of genital intercourse, there is a wide range of other behaviours that may or may not be socially, legally, or ethically considered as sexual relations. For example, in Zimbabwe, it is not very common to see lovers

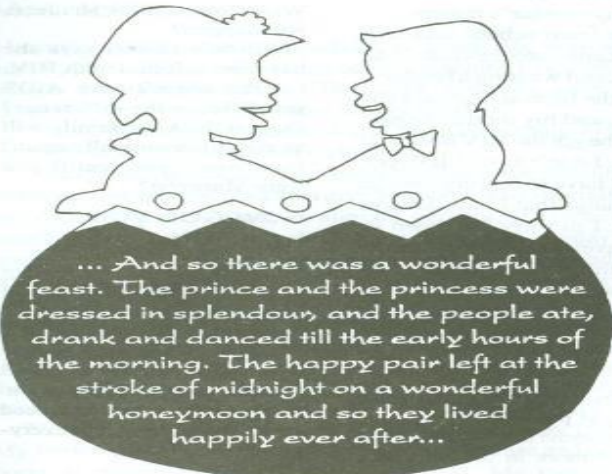
holding hands as an expression of non-sexual relationship because hand-holding or hugging in public would be interpreted as lack of respect for the elders and most likely signify a sexual or intimate relationship.

Zimbabwe's norms and cultural expectations do not reflect the sexual inclinations of the modern youth. Those who wish to openly express their intimacy have to form sub-cultures within the main culture where they feel free to express their sexuality with like-minded partners. Other aspects of how the students get exposed to socially unacceptable sexual behaviour include films on internet and pornography, telephone sex (commonly known as *sexting*), strip clubs, certain types of native and exotic dancing.

Although the Zimbabwean society view these activities as disreputable and attempt to control or prohibit them, the G&C books tend to completely omit these issues. Some of these activities have even got to an extent of being shown to have negative effects on marriage, and they can fall under similar moral structures as other extramarital sex in the Zimbabwean Shona culture. Disregarding this aspect without taking comparable action might mean that we are burying our heads in the sand, hoping that somehow the storm will pass. When in fact, the storm will not pass, but rather come stronger than anticipated, and unless we take appropriate measures, our children will be lost in the seemingly powerful media.

Analysing the content in the text books, the message given is that intimacy only exists after marriage. The only choice that the students are expected to make when they eventually decide to get into a relationship is to focus on marriage. Figure 3 depicts the messages on marriage conveyed in the text book.

20 I do and I will!



... And so there was a wonderful feast. The prince and the princess were dressed in splendour, and the people ate, drank and danced till the early hours of the morning. The happy pair left at the stroke of midnight on a wonderful honeymoon and so they lived happily ever after...

Now and forever more . . .

We are always reading fairy stories that end with a feast and a marriage, but what happens after marriage?
Do people always live happily ever after?
If they don't, what stops them?
Why do many stories show marriage as the end of the story?

Act it out!

Make up a story where the marriage happens at the beginning of the story. Try to show some things that may happen to make the marriage happy, and some things which might make the marriage sad. Each group can act out their story for the class.

Think about it!

Pretend you are getting married at the end of Form 2 and imagine who you would choose. It has to be someone who will make you happy — someone whom you can live with for the next 50 years!

Think of things you would be looking for in your partner for life. Make a class list and study it — is there anybody who has everything you are looking for? Can we expect to find someone like this? Which things are more important than others? Why?

Would you mind marrying someone who . . .

- isn't always truthful
- is very rich
- has been to prison
- drinks and gambles
- looks down on people of the opposite sex
- is 15 years or more older
- does not want children
- comes from a different tribe, race or religion
- is very good-looking
- is a lot more educated than you are
- you don't know well but has been chosen by your parents
- has a serious illness or handicap

Figure 3 Extracts on "I do and I will"

Note. From "Think about it" by the government of Zimbabwe, 2012, Think about it series, 3, p. 44

Furthermore, the curriculum does not openly portray the roles of males and females and the required gender balances. Considering the fact that gender is a focal point in both formal and non-formal sexuality education, it is important to analyse how it is put across in the text books. The books however encourage discussion and debate on the issue, it is not very clear how gender roles and gender stereotypes are depicted. The concept is not clarified and it can be misleading to the students when the expression of sexuality is conveyed through acceptable roles and behaviours for males and females.

Changing Roles?



Let's talk

Look at these pictures. What do you think of the roles being played by the two people?

Would you, as a boy, change nappies, and, as a girl, would you be happy to fix things in the house?

In the work context, are there any jobs which you think are only for women or men? If so, why?

What roles do you think are appropriate or inappropriate for young men and women of your own generation?

Figure 4 Extracts on "Changing roles"

Note. From "Think about it" by the government of Zimbabwe, 2012, Think about it series, 2, p. 21

4.2.2 Conceptualizing sexuality education

It is understandable that the approach to the implementation of the program stems from the fact that sexuality education cannot be separated from other spheres of life such as the learning of life skills, social and cultural values and norms. One cannot ignore that the curriculum was revised and introduced into the education system in a period when the fight against HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe was top priority. This justifies the fact that among other sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS was placed right at the centre of the national sexuality education agenda. Evidently, schools in an AIDS-free world cannot be the same as the school in an AIDS-infected world.

Looking at it from a bigger picture point of view, the generic long term objective to this approach is for the sexuality education to play a key role in establishing conditions that reduce the spread and contagion of HIV/AIDS. The fight against HIV/AIDS is meant to promote gender equality, personal empowerment and at a larger scale, to reduce poverty. A policy in the Zimbabwe government of providing relief for the poor due to the fact that impoverishment can serve as the breeding ground that lead to HIV infection, influenced by the dependency of women on men and susceptibility to other diverse factors such as prostitution are reduced.

It is interesting to note that no focus is made on contraception and no information is provided on the different forms of contraception. Although condom use is mentioned, the condom rate failure is blown out of proportion, mechanism used to discourage sexual intercourse among school going children (Hearst & Chen, 2004; Kalahari & Takavarasha, 2014).

Despite the fact that some STIs are mentioned, AIDS is used as the main focus is to highlight them as an *inevitable* and assured result of premarital sexual behaviour. The content of guidance and counselling (G & C) textbooks manifestly focuses on abstinence only approach, that is, the sexuality education content that advocates for solely abstinence until marriage.

With the aim to inspire the students to delay sexual activity until marriage, *'Say No to Sex'* is a predominant motto or slogan as illustrated in the books as shown in Figure 5. By analysing some pages and examples from the G & C books, it is evident that the students are left with no other choice but to abstain from sexual intercourse until marriage.

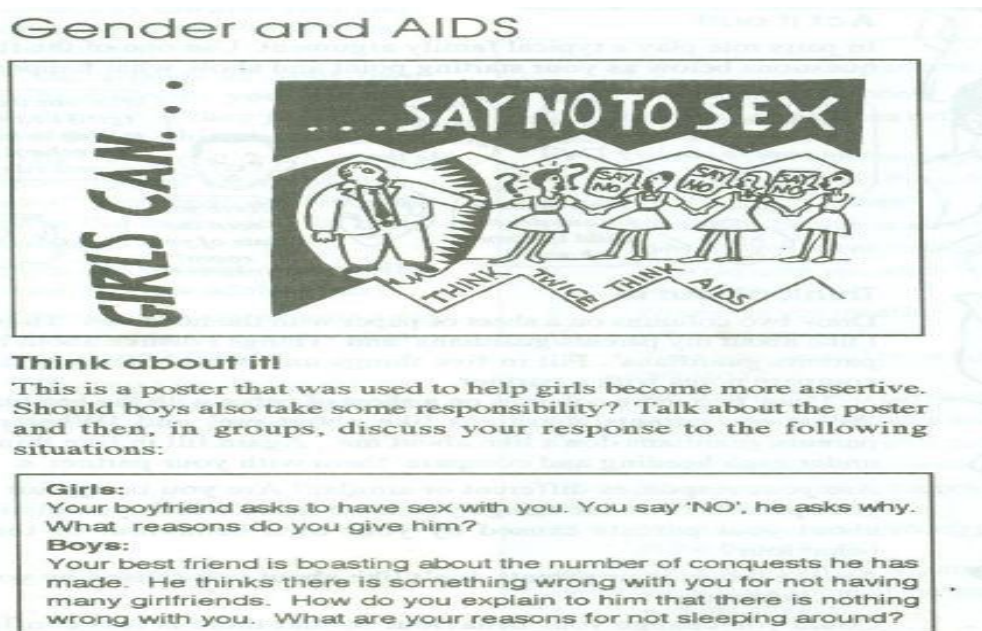


Figure 5 Extracts on decision making on gender and AIDS

Note. From “Think about it” by the government of Zimbabwe, 2012, Think about it series, 1, p. 17

Further illustrations using implicit and explicit language show that there is unrepairable damage, undesirable outcome and devastating consequences (like pregnancy and getting infected with HIV) of the youth that indulge in sexual intercourse. As shown in Figure 6. The teaching methods play a fundamental role as they are clearly centred on figuratively discouraging sexual intercourse by instilling fear in adolescents so as not to indulge in sexual relationships. All this is done with the aim to deter them from sexual intercourse or to delay sexual encounters.

Young people who are not sexually involved should of course be encouraged to delay or to abstain until they are in the right relationship and are physically and emotionally ready for sex. Helping them to avoid the risks of unwanted (premature) pregnancies and infections. Illustrations in book 3 lack on the focus that sexual involvement can create a

false sense of intimacy that can easily replace a healthy exchange of ideas and thoughts of other activities that foster authentic intimacy. Its inadequacy in focusing that intercourse involves both partners on the physical, which can lead to mutual or one-sided exploitation. This leads to subtle escalation of insecurity and selfishness resulting in jealousy and possessiveness.

A young girl's dreams can be undermined by months of pregnancy, childbirth, and child nurturing which can derail her ambitions for a promising career. She is left with the prospect of years of battling as a single mother. Since abortion or adoption are not options, if she nevertheless chooses to have an abortion, it would be under unsafe conditions that carries along with it health risks with consequential psychological scars.

Figures 6 and 7 illustrate the authentic guilt or fear of getting infected with an STI or ending up pregnant that lead to deeper feelings of shame or guilt running the risk of blame, punishment and loss of social and family respect if it is discovered? Paraphrasing, this brings about shame before one's self conscience or family, generating an undercurrent of tension that gnaws or ruin young girl's future. Pregnancy is a potential consequence (intended or not) even when birth control is used.

12 Worries!

Gift and Nomsa's story

For six months Gift has had a girlfriend, Nomsa. A week ago they had sexual intercourse for the first time. Afterwards, they both had a lot of worries which they were afraid to discuss. They both know that there are a lot of risks attached to having sexual intercourse. They worried about these risks before but now, after having sex, they are even more worried!

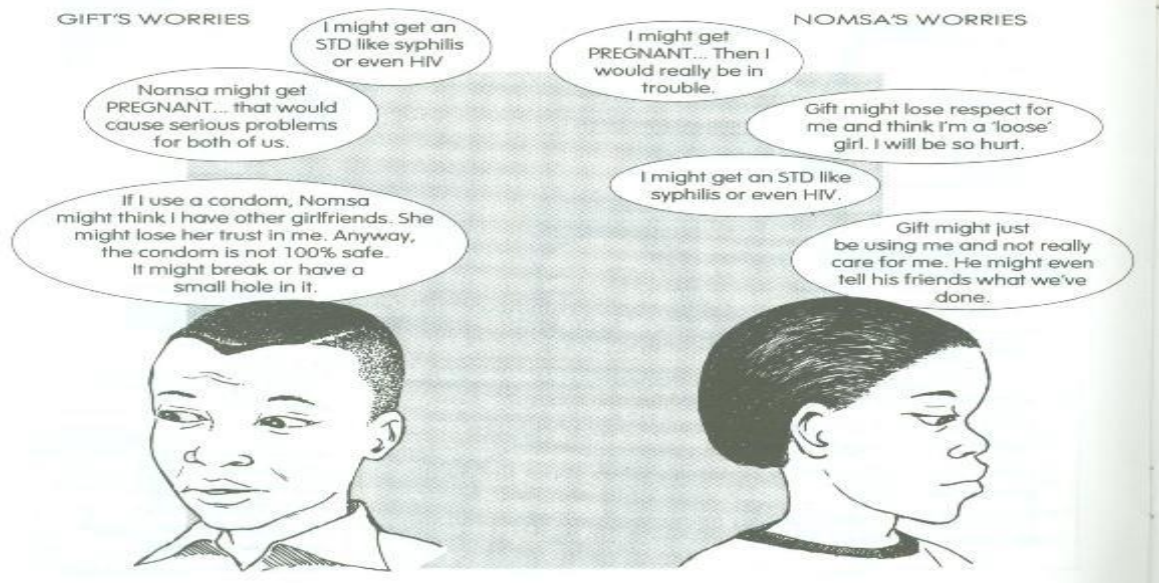


Figure 6 Extracts on 'worries' associated with the onset of sexual intercourse

Note. From "Think about it" by the government of Zimbabwe, 2012, Think about it series, 3, p. 26

According to the research done by Sedgh et al., 2015, where they examined pregnancy rates and outcomes (births and abortions) among 15- to 19-year olds and 10- to 14-year olds in 21 countries where recent information was obtained and where trends since the mid-1990s were examined.



Figure. 7 Extracts on 'worries' associated with the onset of sexual intercourse

Note. From "Think about it" by the government of Zimbabwe, 2012, Think about it series, 4, p. 19

The implications and contributions of the project illustrate that "adolescent pregnancy rates declined since the mid-1990s in most developed countries with reliable trend data, but the rate remains exceptionally high in the United States.

Rates are even higher in Sub-Saharan Africa and in some former Soviet countries where data quality is variable. The proportion of pregnancies ending in abortion varies widely across countries" p. 224.

Literature shows that suicide amongst teenage girls can be precipitated by illegitimate pregnancies, especially in African cultures and characteristically in countries like Zimbabwe where social sanctions and religious demonization are particularly stringent (Mbizvo et al.

1993). Moreover, in specific religious and cultural contexts, conceiving out of wedlock, history of being abandoned, referred to as “dumped” by the boyfriend either during or before the current pregnancy, and an unhelpful or unsupportive family structure also show a strict connection with antenatal depression and suicidal behaviour as illustrated in fig. 7.

4.2.2.1 Attitude towards use of contraceptives

The stigma to supplying contraceptives to teens and the school sex education curriculum contributes to the lack of government policies that help teenagers to have access to comprehensive family planning. Both sex education taught in schools, homes or even churches seem not to mention factors associated with suicidal ideation and factors which may contribute to the occurrence of violent and definitive suicidal acts, available data clearly indicate a noteworthy disparity between the prevalence of suicidal ideation during pregnancy and the rate of death due to intentional self-harm among school going teenagers. “This discrepancy seems to suggest that maternal death due to suicide mainly occur in the presence of several backgrounds that set off and involve different areas of the complex maternal universe such as compromised mental stability, weakness of the desire to experience maternity, unhealthy life-style, poor affective liaisons and family support, disadvantaged economic conditions, difficulty in adherence to rigid cultural and religious rules (especially in contexts which stigmatize any female non-orthodox behaviours), and a previous history of personal traumatic experiences” (Gentile, 2011 p. 96).

According to Marindo et al. (2003), the private sector and other non-governmental organizations promote the use of condoms for all young people in Zimbabwe while Christian and traditional leaders advocate for abstinence as the restrictive strategy for the young Zimbabweans. This in turn results in moral conflict that gives young limited choices about

their sexual behaviour. Schools should therefore provide clarified and unrestricted policies regarding abstinence and the use of contraceptives as complementary alternatives. Moreover, teachers and adults should reconsider their moralizing concerning young people's sexuality issues. As a country with a high level of HIV prevalence among sexually active adults, and where a large proportion of HIV infections is believed to occur during adolescence, sex education in schools should therefore be more flexible and not limit students to abstinence only (Marindo, Pearson & Casterline 2003).

As evidenced, the curriculum does not focus on protective measures to safeguard oneself from diseases and other undesirable consequences debilitating and deadly consequences that come along with it. The education sector has a major role to play in addressing HIV/AIDS and to portray sexuality in a positive light as natural part of growing up addressing all concerns that are dealt with by adolescents. Schools can provide knowledge as well as information on protection, thereby reducing overall vulnerability to HIV infection. Comprehensive sex education in schools should be used as tool to reduce both prevalence and stigma, as schools are able to reach a large number of youth before they become sexually active.

Sexuality involves the, mind, the spirit and the body. Considering the fact that that sex is essentially a moral act, it is therefore fundamental to regard sexuality holistically. Bearing in mind that most religions concord and approve on the view sexual intimacy as proper only within the marriage set up. If done out of wed log, churches consider that it can be destructive to human flourishing. Zimbabwe as a Christian society, promotes and re-appropriates the goodness of married sex and therefore encourages the belief that sex is God's gift to express love between husband and wife and increase the health and satisfaction of marriage. Sex outside of marriage is a different matter. Religions in Zimbabwe condemn extramarital sex by

considering it as sinful and even sexual attraction to anyone who is not one's spouse is condemnable (Haberland & Rogow 2015).

As echoed by Machingura, 2012, "the status of Zimbabwean women is in an unfortunate state due to the preponderance of patriarchal masculinist norms that depict women as subordinates". p. 40. Different safe sex awareness programmes including media seminars and conferences promote protective measures against HIV and AIDS have made both women and men conscious of the deadliness of the disease. Cultural barriers supported by traditional African and religious beliefs reflect the dominating behaviour of male partners in relation to safe sex. Despite the fact that women are the majority in Zimbabwe, negotiating for safe sex with their partners is ineffective as they have been made to believe that it is improper for a virtuous woman to negotiate, discuss or even argue about safe sex.

According to Machingura, 2012, the bible is used in most cases as a powerful instrument to justify the oppression of women in relation to their sexuality. The combination of the Shona culture and the teachings of the bible mould them into subordinate and obedient women whose role is to facilitate the enjoyment of the lives of men and to satisfy their partners' sexual desires. Gender is culturally engineered to put women and girls at a disproportionate risk of getting an unwanted pregnancy or even contracting STDs.

4.2.3 Religio-cultural norms towards sexuality

Sexual behavior in Zimbabwe is strongly prevailed and customarily influenced and affected by the general and typical norms of the African culture. The expression of sexuality is regulated by the spoken and unspoken or the coherent and inherent bylaws authenticated by the prohibition of sexual practices before marriage. The African tradition defines sexual behavior that is culturally acceptable and permissible, hence, the Shona culture disapproves

of teenagers that engage in sexual intercourse out of wedlock. The adults in the society in general preach the gospel of abstinence from sexual intercourse before marriage and the use of myths and taboos are thought to be helpful in safeguarding moral values within the youth. In schools, hypocrisy is however substantiated by some young male and female teachers who do not serve as a good role models to their students. This is evidenced by cases where male teachers ask for sexual favors to female students when they are supposed to be the role models. Worse situations manifest when young “unmarried” female teachers shamefully carry their pregnancies around the school premises when the gospel being preached in schools is no sex before marriage. What example is the single female teacher giving to the young girls in the school? How can such teachers deliver sexuality education classes and expect to be respected by their students? This will simply mean that the teachers themselves do not practice what they preach (Smith & Harrison, 2013).

Furthermore, for the many adolescents who are the victims of sexual abuse, their first sexual experience is with adults. According to the summary of World report on violence and health, 2002, studies indicate that a majority of pregnant adolescent girls began their sexual activity as the result of being raped or abused by elderly men including family members. Without the norm of marriage, all the lines become blurred. Indeed, today's widespread culture of sex outside of marriage, loss of virginity and extramarital sexual relations can be easily interpreted as deviant behaviour.

This raises the issue of how media influences sexuality. Life skills programs in schools seem to disregard the glamor expressed in adolescent sexuality and promiscuous lifestyles that create unrealistic expectations about romantic love and how these stereotypes impact student's love life in negative ways. The internet, movies and advertising industries are a

testimony of how they are saturated with sexuality that shapes the environments that these students live in.

Both religious and cultural values should therefore be considered when tackling the issue of extramarital sex due to the severing link that exists between sex and marriage that comes at the expense of religious and traditional norms of marriage and family. Sexuality education needs to address the rampant in today's youth culture of "hook-ups," characterized by a series of exclusive intimate and romantic relationships that last for some time.

The Shona traditional culture regard with disregard the public expressions of sexuality, especially in comparison with the liberal Western customs. Western women's dress reveals too much for conservative Zimbabwean society, which has led to a resurgence of the value being given to traditional dressing. Cultural conflicts over permissible sexual expression are an important subtext in the current "clash of civilizations."

The Shona culture and tradition teaches "*Tsika*"- well manneredness to all children as they grow into adulthood. It embraces what we would call simple etiquette, that is, how to address elders, for example, virtues such as obedience and paying attention to what others say, and prudential behaviour. This virtue is of uttermost importance as it regulates the behaviour of teenage girls and young unmarried women in general. *Tsika* includes modesty, self-respect and the ability to reject the amorous or sexual advances of men, together with the strength and will to resist one's own physical and emotional impulses. The possession of *tsika* fosters self-control. A well brought-up girl therefore invariably grows into a respectable woman (Pearce, 1990).

Figure 8 illustrates different views and opinions that reflect the predominant views from different parts of the Zimbabwean society. The idea of engaging students in a debate of this

nature fostering non-judgmental and open discussions on sex and sexual relationships can be motivating to students. Such classroom debates encourage students to actively participate depending on the flexibility and competence of the teacher to stimulate the students to reflect on the relevant and challenging issues. On a positive note, the students can hence develop strong self-esteem and efficient social skills to face challenging situations regarding premarital sex.

As believed by people from different convictions, principles and religio-cultural walks of life, there is a need to endorse comprehensive information on sexuality education in order to empower all youth to make informed decisions about their own sexuality. In this case, the teacher will have to be very well prepared to address each and every issue raised in the dialogue to the students. A closer analysis on the dialogues presented in fig. 8, it is evident that the older generation (Mr. Ncube and Mrs Muramba) is still trapped in the no sex before marriage theme whereas the younger generation does not see any harm in engaging into sex before marriage. The hidden agenda here being the Shona *tsika* culture and the religious norms that have to be carefully addressed by the village elder, Mr. Ncube affirming that in the Shona culture, premarital sex is not acceptable and emphasizes that he will not marry a woman who is not a virgin.

11 The right time ...

Points of view

Felix Pfende, a programme presenter with a local radio station, interviewed some Saturday morning shoppers in Harare to find out their views about sex and sexual relationships.



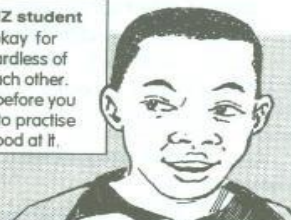
MR NCUBE a village elder
In our culture it is acceptable for us men to have pre-marital sex but wrong and unacceptable for women. I could never marry a woman who was not a virgin.



JANE a 16 year old schoolgirl . . .
If you stick to one partner at a time there's nothing wrong. You're not being 'loose' or promiscuous.



ITAI a 19 year old UZ student
Pre-marital sex is okay for people over 17, regardless of whether they love each other. You can't drive a car before you learn how; you need to practise having sex to be good at it.



SENZENI a receptionist
There is nothing wrong in young people who are already friends gradually moving into a sexual relationship, either for a 'trial marriage' or just to broaden their experience of each other.



NETSAI a student teacher
Sex before marriage is only acceptable in situations such as a stable relationship where the two people know they are going to get married, when a couple is engaged to be married or when lobola is about to be paid.



26

BRIAN an agricultural student
It's simple. The bible says you should 'glorify God in your body' sex is strictly for marriage! Look it up in Corinthians Chapter 6.



MRS MURAMBA a mother of three teenagers
Sex before marriage is wrong for both young men and women. They should wait until their marriage night. Our children are getting into all kinds of trouble because they have no moral values and no self-control!



Figure. 8 Extract called 'The right time'

Note. From "Think about it" by the government of Zimbabwe, 2012, Think about it series, 2, p. 26.

On the other hand Brian, the university agricultural student quotes the bible to express that it is not acceptable before God to engage in pre-marital sex. Evidently, religions celebrate wholeness for all people, including children and youth, and it is believed that sexuality is a gift of the divine.

If the teachers are not properly trained to adequately and professionally tackle these issues, there is high risk that teachers will use their own life experiences and religious beliefs to clarify these issues (Supa, 2005).

This was evidenced by the report from the UNAIDS and the World Health Organization survey carried out in 2011 by international reporters in Zimbabwe, the HIV prevalence for youths aged 15 to 24 stood at 7,7 percent and 2,9 percent, respectively. From the interviews carried out, two thirds of the teachers strongly oppose the idea of distributing condoms to school going children alleging that it would encourage and promote the youth to be actively engage in sexual relationships. The teachers argued that according to the traditional Zimbabwean culture and the Christian faith, sex among youths was prohibited and is viewed as taboo and a sin. They went on to dispute that the only eligible people to discuss sexuality issues in preparing the youth for matrimony are the aunts and uncles. Interestingly, the National AIDS Council of Zimbabwe recommends the introduction of contraceptives to youth as a measure to fight against the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

In this survey, the Life Skills Curriculum was criticized for not addressing the issue of contraceptives. The youth welcomed the ideas brought up by the organization, expressing that as the future generations of the nation, their opinions were not being taken into consideration (Pettifor A et al., 2004, UNAIDS global report, 2012).

On the other hand, new youth policies that comprehensively include both HIV and pregnancy prevention have resulted in a more comprehensive strategy by complementing delay of first intercourse, condom use, partner reduction and abstinence. As part of the most recent National Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy, these policies include the National Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy, 2010–2015 and the National Policy on

HIV/AIDS. As part of the policy, the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare is committed to clarifying the misperception that adolescents younger than 18 need parental consent to receive contraceptive and HIV services. In this policy, the ministry aims to “develop and disseminate guidelines that will give direction towards the provision of sexual and reproductive health services for pregnancy, rape, STI, HIV infection and contraception to minors.” (UNFPA, UNICEF & WHO, 2009).

The main approaches to programming incorporated by the National Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy are;

- community-based (youth centres offering counselling, recreational activities and condoms),
- health-facility– based (on-site youth-friendly corners, which are supposed to offer voluntary counselling and testing, as well as condoms and other family planning methods) and
- school-based (life skills training and counselling). (UNFPA, UNICEF & WHO, 2009).

The operation of some of these programs falls under the Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council, which partnered with the United Nations Population Fund to create youth-friendly corners that provide confidential services in both behaviour-change messaging and clinical care. In the nongovernmental sector, Population Services International offers services (youth-friendly information and clinical care through mobile and fixed sites) and training of both health professionals and young people to act as peer counsellors and “distributors” of condoms (Gregson, S. et al., 2010 p.1318).

5.2.4 Life skills and student welfare incidences

Considering the challenges on sexuality issues that are faced by young people, the teaching of life skills through guidance and counselling is of fundamental importance in any sexuality teaching program. The school going age is the stage at which they become more aware of their sexuality emotionally, physically and even psychologically.

When it comes to sexuality decision making, young people easily find themselves in situations where it is difficult to adhere to strict sexual rules, even if after receiving sexuality education. Sexual activity does not only involve physical activity, it impacts the heart and mind as well as the body. Schools in Zimbabwe define sexual activities outside marriage as inappropriate (wrong time, wrong place, wrong person, wrong activity and even wrong norm.) There is widespread tendency to devaluate sexual acts out of wed log. Schools seem to ignore the fact that students have access to other sources of information on sexuality that acknowledge extramarital sex and casual sex. Schools need to prepare the students to face the fact that modern society has increasingly approved casual, illicit sexual relationships as a result of sexual revolution which advocated for an optional sexual ethics, defending recreational sex as a healthy activity (Amitai & Mackenzie 2005).

Schools continue to ignore the fact that the youth are faced with all sorts of temptations and challenges during their lives when it comes to sexual intercourse. This is why proponents for sexuality education need to be very clear on the teaching of the required skills to enable the students to be able to make the right choices. Sexual activity can express committed love on one hand or could mean a worthless casual event for recreational purposes. As shown in figure 9, youth are caught up in loving relationships that include romance, intimacy and passion where commitment is not part of the equation.

The curriculum does not focus on how sexual relations can have a lasting impact on the psyche of the students. It does not inculcate into students useful life skills like the ability to communicate, listen, negotiate with others, ask for and identify sources of help and advice which can be applied to relationships. Sexuality is an effective and potent force that carries with it moral responsibility that can do tremendous good or terrible harm. The focus on the capabilities perspective is on those determinant factors which place an individual in a vantage position enabling them to enjoy certain sexual privileges or rights.

14 Your choice

Making decisions

“Can't you make up your mind for yourself yet?”

“You're not a baby any more.”

“I would have thought you would know what to expect by now.”

“It's over to you. You should know what you want.”

“Are you four years old or fourteen?”

“I am not going to be here to run around after you forever you know.”

“Isn't it time you thought about things instead of just following the crowd!”

“You should know better by now.”

One minute we must make up our own minds, and the next only *they* know what's good for us!

Let's talk

What do the parents or adults mean in the examples above?

Why do they stress the idea of growing up and making decisions?

What do the young people feel about it?

32

Figure. 9 Extract called 'Your choice'

Note. From "Think about it" by the government of Zimbabwe, 2012, Think about it series, 2, p. 32.

Most school going boys and girls are involved in relationships where feelings of closeness and physical arousal are involved. The commonly known as “love at first sight” is characterized by an intense sense of longing to be with the person of desire, and for the youth. In this case, compatibility maybe non-existent due to lack of maturity and readiness to more committed relationships. Schools should therefore clearly explore the issue of intercourse, commitment and its significance in a relationship.

Sexual intercourse as a part of sexuality should be of course a consensual choice and decision. Limiting the young people to just “Saying No” might not necessarily take into consideration those youth that are truly at a crossroads in terms of providing the necessary skills to those who are not sure on who should?, with whom?, where/when?, how often? It does not give them well informed options on the use of contraceptives. Sexuality education should consider the many other underlying aspects related to sexual intercourse.

General decision making is important but making decisions related to sexuality are equally important as they touch on the choices the youth make. Most importantly, the subject being called “life skills”, its syllabus should not give the youth the recipe on how to act or what to say in making decisions over sexuality but instead, should equip and encourage them to make responsible choices and decisions on their own. Once a decision is made then one should face the consequences in an informed manner. Besides, there should be support systems in place just in case of doubtful situations. Especially when it comes to the conflict between the different sources of sexuality information.

13 Getting physical

The story of Susan and David

Susan was a lovely girl, lovely in personality as well as in looks. Everyone who knew her thought her sensible, intelligent and morally upright. She had lots of girl friends and lots of boys wanted to be friends with her as well.

Among the boys who admired Susan was David, who was two years older than her and also the captain of the football team at her school. David and Susan fell in love but they both knew they couldn't marry because they were still too young and also still at school.

One afternoon David invited Susan to his elder brother's house. What Susan did not know was that the elder brother had gone away on business. There was no-one at his house. When they got there, Susan wanted to leave once she discovered she would be alone with David, but he persuaded her to stay. They listened to the radio, talked and even prepared themselves some food. Gradually Susan began to relax. One thing led to another and before they knew it, they had made love. From then on, the two young people would meet in various places and have sex together.

Some time later Susan missed her periods. This is when she began to be afraid. When she finally discovered she was pregnant, she talked to David and asked him what they should do. David was angry with her. He told her that he had assumed she was on the pill. He refused to see her again and accused her of being careless and wanting to ruin his future.

Two days later, Susan threw herself into the river and drowned. Her body was discovered four days later.

Let's talk

Why did David get angry with Susan?

Why did Susan throw herself into the river? Was she afraid of what had happened or was she filled with shame? Why?

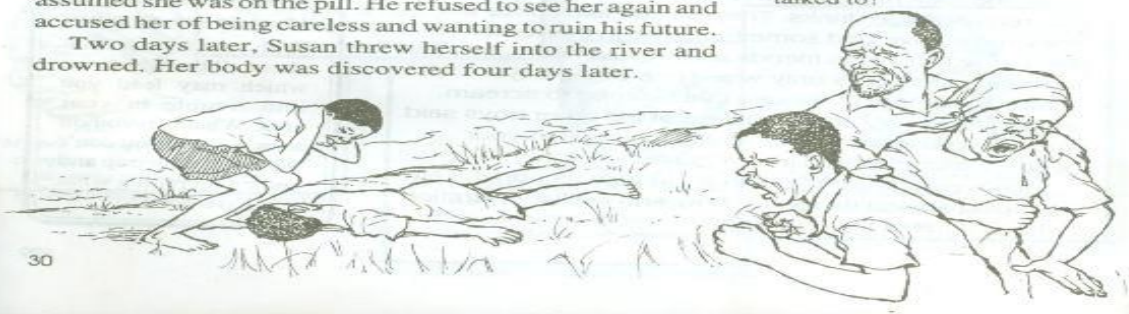
Has anything like this happened to anyone you know? What could have helped the situation?

Is this a story of true love or a story of lust which is just physical passion?

What drove David and Susan to make love? Why didn't they stop this from happening? Did David plan it?

If you were Susan, what would you have done to avoid this tragedy?

In Susan's situation, would talking to someone else have helped? Who should she have talked to?



30

Figure. 10 Extract called 'Getting physical'

Note. From "Think about it" by the government of Zimbabwe, 2012, Think about it series, 4, p.

For example, empowering young girls in confronting situations where they are connived to give in to risky sexual behaviour by an adult who can even be a family member. In the case that one chooses to abstain they should avoid risky settings like secluded places and actions that are likely to reduce sexual inhibitions for example, taking drugs, drinking alcohol. On the other hand, if one should decide to have sexual intercourse then they should be able to discern the options available to them and where to obtain these protective measures.

The extract shown in Figure 10 is a true reflection of what happens to the only option left for many teen girls who find themselves pregnant due lack of comprehensive information on how to avoid or prevent unwanted pregnancies. The discussion questions presented on the “let’s talk” section are destined to promote the moral fibre of the abstinence only approach.

CHAPTER FIVE

Data analysis of the interviews

Introduction

Verbal data from the interviews was transcribed and used to conduct our thematic analysis. The transcription process served as a key phase to analyse the information gathered. It proved to be an excellent way to familiarize with our raw data, although it was frustrating and time consuming. Through rigorous orthographic transcripts, a verbatim account of all verbal utterance was used. This was a very helpful and important approach that helped to retain the information that was needed from the verbal accounts, a way that facilitated to reflect on the original nature of the data.

Important issues raised from our research questions were used as different themes to represent some level of patterned response and meaning to our compiled information. It is worth mentioning at this point that the unanticipated emerging issues that came out during the research period are also included as part of the research findings.

The research approach was inductive due to the fact that our themes were strongly linked to the study, thus bearing to some extent some similarity to grounded theory. Since the study key information was collected via interviews specifically for this research, the analysis was purely data driven. The researcher could not free herself from her theoretical and epistemological commitments due to the fact that data is not coded in an epistemological vacuum.

The approach to the thematic analysis used in this study was based on social constructionism where the reality of the young women's sexuality is socially constructed. The use of the Shona language played an important role in focusing, interpreting and reporting on

their assumed reality evident in the data. This led the researcher to report the experience, meanings and reality of our participants. Due to the nature of the data and considering the way in which the events, realities, meanings and experiences, the methodological approach turned out to be a constructionist method. It focused on how sexuality education reality is created by the data based on the effects of a wide range of discourses on sexuality operating within the Zimbabwean society. The method was effective in reflecting the reality by unravelling the surface of reality that lies under the sexuality of the participants.

The theoretic and analytic interest in sexuality education was the driving factor to our theoretic thematic analysis and this explains why the findings provide a more detailed analysis of some aspects of sexuality education and a less rich description of the data itself. The decision behind the level at which our themes were identified was based on the latent level approach where our themes were not only identified within the explicit meanings of the data, but focused on identifying the underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualizations- and ideologies on sexuality.

“The research did not look for anything beyond what the participants said. The research approach involved progression from description where our data was organized to show patterns in semantic content and summarized to interpretation with an attempted to theorize the significance of the patterns and their broader implications” (Braun & Clarke 2006 p.104).

The following main themes were identified and further subdivided into subthemes:

- Sexuality teaching within the family set up
- Influence of society on women’s sexuality.
- Social influences on sexuality
- Teen pregnancies

- Gender roles
- The institution of marriage
- Emerging issues
- Religious influence on sexuality education

5.1 Sexuality teaching within the family set up

As mentioned in chapter one, the family unit is an integral part of an individual's life in the African society. It is within the family setup that an individual learns how to interact with the rest of society. Lessons that shape an individual's belief system are often imparted in that setup during the formative years of one's life. With time an individual is expected to impart those same lessons to their own offspring and thus the knowledge is passed from generation to generation.

In Zimbabwe the traditional family structure has been broken up. It is no longer possible to find paternal aunts that are ready to teach in each and every family and families have had to adapt to the changed circumstances. The burden of teaching is now on the mothers of the children and available older females that are present in any family. In some circumstances the family has been beaten to the punch by other influences and sources of information such as school teachers, friendly neighbours, the internet and helpful close friends.

Through the data from the interviews, this fact was evident as it was also the norm that most of the women interviewed received their knowledge from multiple sources. This could have served as an advantage to them because it would have enabled them to compare and filter the most useful information. It is highly doubtful that at the ages that they received the information, they were not mature enough to have been mentally equipped to dismiss or to

select one information source from the other, especially considering the fact that their most trusted source would have been their family.

There seems to be a distinction on the type of knowledge passed on, with the first phase being knowledge on puberty and the onset of adolescence and the second phase being knowledge on matters of sex within the matrimonial set up. There was no emphasis on the teaching on puberty being done by the paternal aunts. In fact it was mostly done by the mothers or elder sisters of the girls themselves. Among the interviewees A5 and A7 had received their first lessons on matters of puberty from their school teachers at 16 and 12 years respectively. A11, A9 and A2 received information on puberty from their elderly sisters. A2 had received her information from various sources, namely, from her teacher her mother, her sister and her friends. She had to build up what to believe and dismiss by her own self.

A10 on the other hand who was an orphan who lived with her uncle and step aunt had received her information from a school program on reproductive matters that had been held at her school when she was 11 years old. The program was an initiative of a non-governmental foreign based organization that visited schools and held school programs geared towards teaching young children in schools about reproductive matters. In addition to that she was helped along by her female neighbour on the onset of her menstruation when she was searching for more information. What is interesting is that her uncle (the only direct relative she had) was aware that she needed assistance but instead chose not to get involved since he felt that it was an issue to be handled exclusively by females. This was very revealing and pointed towards the fact that males are not part of this teaching experience and often are excluded from contributing anything towards the education of the female members of the family. It would seem that it would be taboo for any male member to impart any knowledge

on this subject matter since the structure for that information to be conveyed from any male to female simply does not exist in this society.

A4 was the only one who followed the conventional method and was taught by her paternal aunt. This is more indicative of the fact that the nature of teaching has undergone immense transformation and other channels of conveying information have emerged to fill up the void.

On other matters pertaining to sexuality most of the women had received the information from the same sources cited above save to state that the aunts and grandmothers had played a more active role in this regard. They seemed to value this part of their education more than any other areas. Perhaps this is because this is an integral part of the girl child's education regarding marriage and if she is not taught they would be directly to blame for any repercussions that would occur once the girl entered into marriage.

An interesting case to note was A10 who had been taught about sexual matters by her mother in law after she had entered marriage without the requisite knowledge. This was also a rare occurrence in African society since if a girl is discovered to be bereft of knowledge concerning how to please her man in the matrimonial bed she is often sent back to her parents' home for her to be instructed in the ways of properly handling and pleasing her husband in bed. In this case, A10's situation was however peculiar because her mother in law was a volunteer teacher of newlyweds of the community where she taught women in the area about sexuality and other matters.

In these contemporary times it was interesting to note that the women had also received their education from other sources like social media as in A5's case or from adult movies as in A8's case. The presence of alternative sources of information was non-existent before the

present generation and now that it is widely available. Therefore current young generation has more options than previous generations. They now have the freedom to disseminate the benefits and disadvantages of what has been widely accepted as facts by the previous generations and to either accept or to reject that information based on evidence.

Ideally, knowledge is supposed to be passed on before the girl reaches puberty in order to prepare her for the onset of womanhood, but this is not however always the case. As revealed in Table 7, in most circumstances the young women were taught about the impending adolescent experience by their mothers, but they recall having being taught during their teenage years

The age range seemed to differ from individual to individual but all of the women had received teachings on puberty and matters of a sexual nature from the early to mid-teens.

It is important to note in light of the information revealed in table7 that some of the teaching occurred over a period of time that was reserved for the teaching of information on puberty and on matters of sexuality. The young women were hence taught over a period of time using different approaches from different teachers in different locations within their individual family setups.

In accordance with the contemporary typical Zimbabwean society, the young women had both a rural and an urban home. Most of them had experienced their childhood in the rural areas before migrating to the urban areas in search of better economic opportunities or because of marriage or just simply urban migration. Girls who had spent the majority of their time in the rural areas had received information on matters of sexuality much earlier and in much detail than those who had grown up in the urban areas.

Interviewee	Age
A2	16
A4	14
A5	16
A7	12/13
A8	12/13/17
A9	14
A10	10/11
A11	13

Table 7 *Information on the age at which sexuality teaching initiated*

The information had also been consistent and they had been more closely monitored to ensure that they were implementing what they were being taught.

Those who had been brought up in the urban areas seemed to have received most of their lessons on female sexuality when they had visited the rural areas during their school vacation. They had gathered up the information and they seem to have had quickly forgotten about it and discarded the more practical elements of it once they had gone back to the city. There seems to have been a lack of follow-up when they had returned to the urban homes.

The difference in the type of education given to the young women seems to have also contributed to the age at which they entered into marriage or might have been the reason why there was a difference in the type of education and the time they received the education. The ones that were brought up in the rural areas received it earlier and were also married at a much younger age (below the age of twenty) as compared to their counterparts in the city who

received theirs at a later stage and consequently they were married when they were in their twenties.

Education on sexuality within the family setup covers a whole spectrum of issues. It begins from the tentative information on puberty and finally culminates in the exploration of all matters pertaining to sex within the matrimonial home. The latter is considered important and it is that information that takes up the bulk of the education on sexual matters given to the young women. To better convey the information that they receive it would be important to explore the subjects covered separately.

5.1.1 Puberty

As previously intimated, the young women were taught on issues of puberty by their mothers, sisters, school teachers, neighbours, aunts and grandmothers. The content of these tutorials are what's most interesting. The information evolved around maintaining hygiene once the girls had started menstruating.

A4 was taught that once menstruation had started she would have to have cotton wool handy and that she was supposed to keep a *Zambia* (a traditionally imprinted wraparound) around her all the time in order to avoid embarrassing herself in case she blood stained her dress.

For A2 the onset of menstruation was quite a surprise for her because when it occurred no one had told her anything about the menstrual cycle. She recalled going into a panic mode, thinking she had hurt herself when she saw the menstrual blood. After informing her mother on the incident, she was told that the blood signified that she was now a mature grown woman and that is she fooled or played around with boys, she could fall pregnant. Apart from providing her with sanitary pads no other information was provided to her.

A5 was told that she could not 'play' with boys anymore because she would immediately fall pregnant and for a time she was afraid of playing with boys or even simply sitting next to boys because she thought she would get pregnant from any contact with the opposite sex.

In essence the young women were only alerted of the dangers of getting pregnant and none of them had any explanation given to them about what was happening to their bodies, especially the physical changes e.g. the growth of breasts and pubic hair and the hormones that were responsible for the changes within their bodies. Sadly, none of the young women was taught to embrace their entrance into womanhood, only fear to fall pregnant was instilled in them. This presumably served as an indirect way of promoting abstinence before marriage.

Analysing the reason behind this type of approach towards puberty and looking at the reason why the women didn't give any other information besides handling the menstrual flow and discouraging the girls from getting intimate with boys. It is clear that this had been the information that they had also received from their elders when they grew up. They therefore also didn't possess the requisite information, and they were not in a position to transmit any other type of information. They were simply passing on the information that they themselves had received. The information that they had mostly evolved around hygiene and that is what they passed on. The young women were told to increase the number of times they bathed themselves, to change sanitary towels quite often and to wear clean underwear to avoid body odours. Menstrual pains were part of the package and the young women were taught to be strong and courageous withstanding the pain without letting the whole world know about what they were going through. Only negative aspects on menstruation were expressed and in some cases taboos such as not being allowed to prepare food, to wash dishes or even to use the same bathroom as the rest of the family. This rang a bell in my head as I also went through the same

dilemma. Therefore, the trend to regard menstruation as a disgusting and shameful and secretive moment in a young women's life has not quite changed for generations.

The other component of the lesson involved heavy censures on the subject of boys with the girls being told to avoid having sex with them and they had the information drummed into their heads that having sex with boys was a disgrace and would only end up with the girl getting pregnant with unwanted (fatherless) child and with no one to marry her. Sex was to be the sole preserve of marriage. No one cared to explain the mechanics of sex, but rather they were just told to avoid it altogether. This in turn, complicated the whole situation by leading to false information.

Most of the young women had to discover what sex was exactly by other nefarious means and probably the trial and error route resulted in unplanned pregnancies. In the same vein no information on STIs, contraceptive methods and maintaining reproductive health was ever given at that particular stage.

5.2.1 Initiation rites

In African Society within the Sub Saharan region, an important rite of passage into adulthood for the girl child is the sexuality teachings that focus on being cognizant of how to handle her husband in bed. Emphasis is put on the need for her to be aware of the responsibility she has to sexually satisfy husband. Marriage is so highly regarded and considered as the crucial step after the adolescence stage. Such the lessons are of a compulsory nature, rather than an event that a person can opt out of. The young women are told to gather round and learn or imitate what they are being taught. Not participating would bring censure from the adults. In All's case, she was told that not taking part in the lessons would mean that she would not find a husband when they gets older. She expressed on how they were forced into

participation through the threat of being shunned by men in favour of those who had participated.

The lessons covered a wide range of topics that will be explored below:

a) *Labia minora elongation*

A common feature that was in all the girls' experiences was that most of the girls in the study underwent lessons on how to pull their labia minora or "*kudhonza matinji*". *Kudhonza matinji* translates to Labia Minora Elongation defined by Mathabo (2012) as the practice of stretching or elongating the labia minora to enhance male sexual pleasure. In relation to this, A5 explained on how they were told what it meant for men to have sexual intercourse with a woman who had not elongated her labia minora. They were told it was the same scenario as a man climbing a tree without branches. Similarly, when asked on whether women also benefitted from this practice, whether they presented their own quest for sexual pleasure, it was regarded as something irrelevant and not worth of mentioning.

As A2 puts it, "*mukadzi anodhonza matinji kufadza murume wake...*" meaning, 'when a woman elongates her labia minora, she does it with a purpose to provide maximum sexual arousal and enjoyment for her man...' When further questioned why she should consider pulling her labia if it was just for male pleasure, she pointed out that her role in bed was to please her husband and not herself. This was said to ensure that husbands do not have extramarital affairs.

A7, A9 and A10 believed that labia elongation helped to maintain their marriages intact because it improved their social and sexual status and aesthetic value in their husbands' eyes. Part of their accounts demonstrated that even with elongated labia, they lacked the power to

control their husband's sexuality. The interviewees narrated their experiences in this traditional practice.

According to A4 they would get up early and pull the labia using herbs to quicken the process. The name of the herb was not disclosed. She was told that they were elongating the labia in order for them to get a better grip of the penis during sexual intercourse. She was told that all men required them.

In another experience A7 who was an urban dweller recounts that during her school vacation she went to the rural areas and that is where the females closeted themselves and were taught how to elongate their labia. They would gather as a group in one room at night to pull them encouraging and motivating each other. This turned it into a group event that no young women would want to be left out for fear of alienation or stigmatization. Once she returned to the city however she ceased practicing anything since there was no one to do it with her, and she eventually forgot what she had been taught.

In A8's case she was taught by her grandmother and they used a herb called *mupira* or *chidhadhamuka* and Vaseline petroleum jelly to make the pulling easier and less painful. She also alluded on the use of strong elastic although it is not clear how exactly they used it. It might be that they actually tied up their labia and forced them to stretch over prolonged periods. She was taught that men loved them and that it would please her future husband. When further interrogated she just said that is what they were taught and that was all she knew.

A9 had similar experiences and she was taught how to stretch her labia by her grandmother while she was in the rural areas but she was not comfortable enough to go into detail on how exactly they achieved this. In her case, she was told that it would make childbirth

easier. She however shared that no one was threatened with eternal spinsterhood if they declined to join in the practice, it was voluntary.

A11 was taught the practice by her mother and they used a herb from a plant called *mupfuta*. They would take the herbs and burn them up and use them alongside an unspecified powder and Vaseline petroleum jelly and use that paste to elongate the labia. Her mother would show her how to do it by doing it on her own genitals she would simply imitate her in turn. She was also taught that they were pulling the labia because it was part of the culture and that men appreciated the labia that way. When she was younger she was told that it was a must and all the girls were expected to do it. It was only when she got older that her mother explained and clarified that it was for the matrimonial bed. There was also the fear of failing to get married later on in life because of the absence of elongated labia.

There are considered so necessary that brides who do not have them are sent back to their family home in order to get the problem solved. This is considered a shameful thing to occur but it happens nonetheless. This was the case with A4 who was taught under threat by being returned to her parents' home that it was necessary to elongate her labia. In a gossiping voice, she also shared that her husband's friend had also sent his wife back to her family home because she did not have the elongated labia. It was apparent that this was not a relic from the past but a regular and permanent feature of African society even in contemporary times.

An in-depth look at the practice of labia elongation in Africa, according to the World Health Organization (2001), labia minora elongation is classified as female genital mutilation. And as such under their guidelines the practice is not encouraged and member countries have been urged to take steps to end the practice.

What should be done is perhaps a more in-depth study on the issue, exploring on all aspects to afford a chance to contribute to the issue with sound facts. If the practice continues to be done behind closed doors with a lot of secrecy shrouding the subject, no progress can be made in understanding what exactly drives the popularity behind this practice and it will continue to flourish. Equally important is the approach to the subject. Any attempted imposition perceived as Western ideas that are against the African culture are met with resistance. Rather an approach that respects and seeks to understand the deep rooted cultural beliefs is required to find a solution to this issue.

A starting point will be lobbying for a policy that will prohibit people from forcing girls into this practice when they have not yet reached the age of majority. Girls should have the choice of whether or not they want to participate.

Men should also be brought into this discussion fully since this practice is being perpetuated in their name. They are the ones who are perceived to demand the elongated labia and they should be front and centre in the discussion. If men do not come out and condemn the practice then it will continue to flourish indefinitely.

b) *Chinamwari*

This refers to the tutorials or lessons given to girls or women on matters of female sexuality. The lessons are often delivered by older women versed in the acts to the younger girls who are taught in groups. In Shangani community in the southern part of Zimbabwe it is called *tikomba*, adolescent girls are herded in groups into the bush for about a month and taught about all matters from puberty to sex that they are supposed to be knowledgeable about, before they enter into marriage. The male equivalent often occurs at the same time with young boys undergoing circumcision as a rite of passage.

In most communities *Chinamwari* is not that formal or a big occasion anymore but the tradition is carried out by just gathering and teaching young women all the knowledge that they require. A7 alluded to the fact that her grandmother used to teach at *Chinamwari* in the past before she retired to just teaching at home and it is that woman who taught her about *kudhonzha matinji* (labia elongation) and *chikapa*.

c) *Chikapa*

This is a practice, often taught in those tutorials that involve teaching the girl or woman how to gyrate in a way that is sexually stimulating to the male partner. This is taught in tandem with the lessons on labia elongation. It is considered boring for a woman to engage in a sex and just lie there and not move accordingly to please her husband. To remedy that potential disaster, women are therefore taught how to move their hips and waist during the sexual act.

In theory, women are taught how to be more comfortable with their bodies sexually and not to be ashamed of showing their enjoyment of sexual intercourse. It is considered beneficial for both men and women. In reality however, this has turned into a coaching seminar on how to please men in bed. No thought is given on the enjoyment of sexual intercourse by the woman which turns the whole exercise into practice of mechanical movements designed to bring men to orgasm.

A7 was taught *chikapa* by her grandmother and of all the interviewees, she shared how her sister had been told to be more physically active in performing sex acts with her husband. What is interesting to note is that *chikapa* is again meant to enhance sexual pleasure for men than for women involved. It is maybe an insurance policy for those nights that the woman is not invested in the sexual act and the mechanical gyrations will maybe make the woman's enjoyment or participation more convincingly believable.

The data revealed that there is no attempt to teach women how to better understand their own bodies or how their bodies will naturally respond to sexual stimulation or how to achieve orgasm. Rather they have to simulate the natural reactions of a stimulated body that they are not feeling and pretend that the whole sexual act is pleasurable to them.

d) *Menopause*

The young women were not taught anything on menopause and how their biological clock functioned. It was like the subject of what would happen once a woman reached menopause was dismissed as unimportant and reserved as a nasty surprise that the women would discover for themselves when they went through the process. Only one of the interviewees A4 revealed having gotten information on the subject and what she revealed was deeply disturbing. She intimated that her mother had told her that when women passed the childbearing age, if they had sex the semen from the man would collect in their stomach and make them gain unnecessary weight causing them to develop chubby and flabby stomachs. According to her the only reason why women of childbearing age didn't develop a potbelly was because they menstruated and washed out the semen regularly.

The only hope for women in menopause was using a herb that was only known to her mother and was meant to wash out the inner plumbing and to keep a flat stomach. She was also informed that men rejected having sexual intercourse with women who had reached menopause because it was believed that they would end up with serious back problems. Needless to say the amount of false information in that dialogue was alarming. It laid bare the fact that the false information had even started with the explanation of what the whole process of menstruation was about and it continued up until the menopause was explained so badly and so inadequately. It is sad that she truly believed her mother's information wholeheartedly

without question and that she would probably offer that information to her own daughters thus continuing the cycle of ignorance and misinformation.

It is not surprising that menopause is not discussed in depth in Zimbabwe and in the African Society at large. This is evidenced by the way women are treated as disposable charlatans whose main purpose is to serve the husband and produce children beyond that they become a burden. Within their marriages they are replaced by younger versions of themselves and are shunted off to the side. The problems they face understanding their own bodies are dismissed as unimportant and are probably chalked up to old age. They often have to disguise the symptoms as anything not associated with youth and vitality is viewed with suspicion. More information was needed and no one was equipped enough to offer it.

Although the interviews were conducted with only the female members of the society, the prevailing presumption among the young women was that their male counterparts were receiving tutorials on sexuality too from their elderly male counterparts although there was no concrete evidence. That was supposed to be the case theoretically, but none of the interviewees alluded to their husbands or brothers ever being taught about sexuality issues by their elders.

The interviewees seemed to view the sexuality education they had received as a highly positive thing and they were thankful that they had at least learned something about their sexualities. They however could not pinpoint in what way these teachings had been beneficial except to express that it had prepared them for marriage.

Though most of the women were very vocal in lauding the benefits of teachings they had received in their family setup, there was a lot of reluctance in answering the basic question of whether or not they would pass on the information to their own offspring.

A7: “He *he he he, amheno ndinenge ndichiona*” (laughed off the suggestion and said it would ‘depend’ and when quizzed said she ‘would see’ what to teach her daughter when she was of age). This pointed to a reluctance to teach her child what she had been taught. Perhaps it was not that beneficial and she was contemplating taking another path altogether than the one she took.

On whether they had any male figures in their lives and what influence did they had during that period in their lives. If the events were shrouded in secrecy in what way does that affect their relationships with the male figures in their lives now? Are they communicative with them about matters affecting their sexual health?

Out of all the interviewees, only two of them were raised by their fathers after their mothers passed away or were divorced. The rest had male figures in their lives including fathers and brothers but with the nature of the interviews any mention of them was completely non-existent. This was not accidental or an oversight but a true reflection of the role of male relatives in the teaching of matters of sexuality in African families. It is taboo for a father to discuss such issues with his daughter with most of them choosing to pretend that their daughters are non-sexual beings.

The teaching on these subject matters is strictly between women, behind closed doors and in the absence of men. Even now it is unheard of for families to openly discuss such matters among themselves- they would rather not discuss it at all. This sets up the basis of their relationship with males in their lives. Even with their own husbands they were quite uncommunicative about sexual matters choosing to suffer in silence than to risk being told that what they are saying is unwelcome. The young women are then left in a situation where

they are indoctrinated into keeping their own issues private even though they might be requiring help.

5.2. Influence of society on women's sexuality

All the interviewees showed great sensitivity to the views of the society on how they expressed their sexuality. Indeed it was so influential in their perspective on matters of sexuality that it was for that very reason that they were willing to be interviewed anonymously for fear of criticism and victimization because of their views.

The young women's interaction with society on these matters showed that there was a lot of stock put on certain types dressing, teenage pregnancies, and public displays of affection and premarital sex which were all viewed negatively and were also frowned upon. This was shown through the different experiences of the interviewees who had this to say:

Most of the women showed that they had been indoctrinated on the subject of how the society expected women to be decently dress and that the type of dressing a woman used directly reflected on her character.

A2 was of the view that a 'real woman' only wore long skirts dresses. That is, clothing that is less revealing and that would cover her whole body. The reason she gave was that it was a form of protection against male predators and rapists.

A2: *“Ukafamba wakapfekawo haungazo repewa kana kunyengedzwa nevamwe kana wakapfeka zvakana”*. (If you travel wearing appropriate clothing you won't get raped or tricked because you will be wearing decent clothes.) It was apparent that she fully believed that there was a co-relation between dressing and sexual assault, with her view being that women who wore certain types of clothing were to blame if they suffered sexual assault at the hands of male predators.

She believed that women's dressing was restricted to skirts and that trousers were the sole preserve of men. She herself did not wear trousers but she did concede once prompted that there were some trousers made specifically for women and that other women besides her could wear them.

The same view on the relation between rape and the way one dresses was also echoed by A11 who voiced the opinion that women who wore mini-skirts were most likely to attract men who were most likely to rape or abuse them. When quizzed if that was the only factor that would lead to sexual assault she did concede that other women who wore mini-skirts were not raped. She then went on to state that women should dress according to the occasion that they were going to attend but that it should always be decent. She did not define what her perception of decency was.

A11: “*Vakadzi vanofanira kuzvibata nekupfeka zvakanaka kwete zvinoratidza muviri, nekuti tuma mini tunopa kuti vabatwe rape nevarume, zvinopinza varume muchiedzo. Munhu kadzi anofanira kupfeka zviri decent*”.

On gender roles, A4 gave an interesting analogy when asked why male and females have different gender roles within society. Her answer in addition to the view that it was because the male was the breadwinner while the woman was the homemaker: “*Uyezve iye anenge achipfeka trouse iwe uchipfeka skirt*” (Plus he will be wearing trousers while you will be wearing the skirt). This was a direct reference to the fact that society has accepted certain dressing in relation to men and women and that each gender is supposed to keep within that prescribed perception. When A4 was confronted with the fact that women do wear trousers she brushed it off by stating that women who wore trousers were very stubborn as they were fully aware of the fact that trousers were meant for men.

A8 was of the view that women should just wear what the society viewed as “decent clothing” that in her own description consisted in wearing clothes that were morally acceptable including not wearing short skirts that would expose the thighs and buttocks or that would restrict her movement if she dropped an item in public and needed to pick it up. She also seemed to suggest that this was especially important for married women.

On the issue of public displaying affection in public, the prevailing message was that it was frowned upon and that most of the interviewees themselves would never publicly show affection for their partners in public since it would be embarrassing and would paint their actions in the wrong light. According to A10, public displays of affection were not decent and any intimate moments between couples should occur behind closed doors. She herself would not mind handholding in public but any other acts of intimacy would not be ‘decent’ in public.

A4 outright called women who engaged in public displays of intimacy as “*mahure*” (prostitutes). She was totally against such acts and urged that such behaviour should solely be reserved for the matrimonial bedroom. She was however not against hand holding which she considered decent and morally accepted, but all other acts including kissing and hugging were anathema to her if done in the presence of other people.

On the issue of premarital sex, the data revealed that the society is definitely against premarital sex and it derives its stance from religious and cultural influences. Most of the women interviewed were virgins when they entered their respective marriages and from the time they reached puberty they were discouraged from engaging in sexual relations. A5, who is now a married woman, expressed that culturally premarital sex was not acceptable even though no reason was ever availed to her as to why premarital sex was frowned upon:

MARTHA

Ah ha like having sex before you get married. Do you know what your culture says....or traditionally is it acceptable?

A5: “No its not”.

MARTHA: Do you know why?

A5: “I don’t know. I just know it’s not allowed.”

5.3 Teen pregnancies

On the issue regarding teen pregnancies, while society disapproves teenage pregnancies there was an element of blame towards the gullibility of girls who were willing to compromise their principles for material gain. A disturbing aspect on this subject was that most teen pregnancies were a result of forced, tricked or consensual sexual intercourse and no direct responsibility was ever put on the male counterpart responsible for the pregnancy. This sentiment was echoed by A2 who when asked why teen girls fell pregnant proffered the opinion that it was because they would have been forced into getting pregnant by the male counterpart and also that the girl might have been offered money:

MARTHA: *Ho vakomana ndivo vanomanikidza vasikana?* (ohh you mean it the men that force the girls?)

A2: “Ehe” (yes)

MARTHA: *Ho horaight so vasikana ava havakwanisi kuramba?* (really, so you mean these girls cannot deny)

A2: “*Kuti hatidi? Vanogona kunyengedzwa nezvavanenge vapihwa semari*” (saying they are not interested? They are easily bribed by special gifts including cash).

As shown in table 8, six of the young women in the study were married and one of them was a widow. Most of the girls entered marriage in their teenage years and their early twenties. Factors that lead to this decision are varied but they include pregnancy and poverty.

Interviewee	Age they got married
A2	Single
A4	17
A5	Single
A7	18
A8	19
A9	21
A10	Single
A11	Single

Table 8 *Information on the age at which each young woman got married*

Two of the young women cited the cruelty they endured at the hands of their stepmothers as the reason they entered into marriage but for at least one of the two interviewees it was definitely the fact that she fell pregnant that she was forced to enter into marriage with her boyfriend.

Under Shona culture once a girl falls pregnant she has to elope to the man responsible for the pregnancy thus forcing him to take care of his indiscretions. This is how most marriages come about. What is disheartening about this practice is that even if the couple is not in love

with each other they are forced to live together for the sake of the baby. Premarital sex is frowned upon and this arrangement is considered a quick fix.

What could have helped the situation is perhaps education on contraceptives and an open discussion on sexual relations rather than forcing ill-informed couples together and blaming them for failing to prevent a situation that they were never equipped to deal with in the first place. Sadly, even in contemporary culture this seems to still be the trend.

In fact the pregnancy was an indicator of the girl's promiscuity and her propensity for material things. There was no attempt to discuss whether these girls who were getting pregnant were being adequately taught on matters of sexuality or how to use contraceptives when engaging in sexual relations.

Another interesting point to note was that teenage pregnancy was only frowned upon if it happened outside marriage and that even in the interview process the women being interviewed may have criticized the practice without being conscious that they themselves (e.g. A4 at 17) had been part of the statistical group of women who entered into motherhood as teenagers. It might seem that according to them their own situation is validated by the fact that they fell pregnant within the marriage boundaries.

5.4 Gender roles

It was universally agreed among all the interviewees that gender roles within the marital relationship were clearly demarcated. Men were accorded the role of head of house with the responsibility of decision maker. Women were the homemakers and the men were the bread winners as revealed in this interview with A4:

MARTHA: Ndobasa remukadzi. Ko remurume? (You mean that is only a woman's responsibility. And the man's?)

A4: “*Kuenda kubasa achishanda, achishandira mhuri*”. (By going to work he is already contributing to the well-being of the family).

Women were supposed to do all the housework while the man was not expected to help with any housework. She did concede that in the urban set up men had literally no chores to do beside breadwinning, while women could be breadwinners and still be expected to perform all the house chores afterwards.

In fact, it was described as demeaning and emasculating for a man to do housework. A4 expressed utter dismay at the very idea and only ventured to say that men could only be expected to help out when their male counterparts were not around otherwise they would be the laughing stock of the community.

A4: “*Anotya kusekwa nevamwe vake.*” (He will be teased by his male counterparts).

It was also because of the suspicion that the man who did housework had been bewitched by using love potions (*mupfuhwira*). She also revealed that her husband would not dare help her out with the house chores in the rural areas but when they were in the city he would sometimes help out by preparing food in a few occasions. This seemed indicative of the difference in perception of gender roles between the two areas with the urban areas more open to change and the rural areas still staunchly against the performance of perceived female chores by men.

A10 had a modern look born out of necessity- she considered the prevailing economic conditions and found it just that a woman should help out by finding a job in order for the family to survive. She was also of the view that men could also perform household tasks like washing dishes in order to help out around the house:

A10: “*Ipapo panonetsa nokuti ukatarisa izvezvi hupenyu hwacho hwaoma. Zvinhu ndezvekubatsirana. So ndoona kuti kana iwe kana uri munhu wechikadzi basa rinoitwa nemunhu wechirume handione paine problem*”. (This can be complicated because things have changed. Some women are also bringing home salaries, so the couple should help each other with house chores. I do not see any problem with that).

MARTHA: *Iwewe wacho rechirume.....murume anogona kusuka ndiro, kutsvaira mumba, kurera vana, kuchinja manapkin?* (And are you willing to be the bread winner while your partner stays at home, cleaning, cooking and baby-sitting?)

A10: *Ehe but ha pakuchinja manapkin apa panozonetsa.* (Yes, I can, but the only problem is that he will not be able to change the baby nappies/pampers).

What she found intolerable was the idea of a man changing baby nappies (pampers), that was totally unacceptable to her, she considered that a woman’s task.

The women were not afforded a fair chance to formulate their own opinion but they seemed to concede in some areas more than others that society did not hold all the answers on the roles of women in the home and outside of it. As discussed above A10 had an outlook based on pure economic considerations on whether women could work outside of the home and A11 was open minded on the issue. They all seemed to agree that their mind-set would probably be different if they had been nurtured in different parts of the worlds and that they probably would be more open minded on matters of sexual expression.

5.5. The institution of marriage

Marriage is an extremely important part of African culture. For women the degree of importance is more pronounced since they are entirely defined by their marital value. It is completely unacceptable for a woman to shun the institution of marriage.

From the time the girls are young they are taught that they should aspire towards marriage. In this case a marriage certificate is far more valuable than a University degree. In this particular study, it has already been established in earlier chapters what the girls are taught during their formative years regarding puberty and what they are expected to do once they get married. They are taught that the husband is the head of the household and the breadwinner. The women are expected to be submissive and obedient to their husbands. Good wives cater to all their husbands' needs even when they do not feel like it.

It is in their youth that the gender roles are defined. A good wife cooks, cleans and washes clothes whilst a man is the breadwinner with no defined role at home. The fact that a woman might also be a breadwinner was accepted but it did not change the duties expected of her. Even in decision making the women were all in agreement that the man should have the final say so on all major decisions such as the number of children that the couple should have.

It is not surprising then that with so much pressure and adulation of the institution of marriage that the girls were eager to enter marriage and put into practice what they had been taught since they were young.

The issue of *lobola* payment in Africa has evolved from being a highly respected part of African culture to being a part of African culture that is now viewed sceptically by more progressive critics of the culture. Historically, as mentioned earlier, *lobola* payment was viewed as a way to show respect to the in-laws' family and to express gratitude to them for raising

a daughter that was now going to join and benefit the new family that she was being married into. Furthermore it was a way in which the family could be compensated for the loss of a productive member of the family who helped in farming through the payment of cows that could equally do the same work and provide sustenance and help in the acquiring a new wife for the family when used in *lobola* payment.

With the advent of colonialism and capitalism, the culture of payment of *lobola* was still practiced but it had lost its significance. Many people feel that greed has perverted the original purpose of *lobola* payment and that since there is no longer any need for it should be abolished. It has been cited as one of the reasons for domestic violence and one of the reasons that women get abused in marital relationships since the man feels that they have bought the woman therefore she is bound by the transaction to do anything he wishes without question. The women also feel that since *lobola* was paid for them they are obligated to be subservient to the wishes of their husbands.

Women who question or demand equal respect within the confines of marriage are constantly reminded that they were paid for and therefore they have no right to question their husbands. This is also the narrative that their aunts tell them when they go to them for advice.

It appears that the aspect of *lobola* payments robs many women of the power to protest or negotiate sexual relations with their men within marriage since the sex has already been paid for. This has far reaching consequences since many women have contracted diseases after being forced to engage in sexual relations without protection because it was the man's right to have the sexual intercourse with the woman despite indications that had been infidelity that would put her at risk for infections.

A11 puts it aptly in a discussion on who decides the number of kids when she said: “*Freedom unayo but kana murume kana achikuudza kuti ndakakuroorera kuti uite vana but hazvizivo zvaunenge uchida*” (you will be free to voice your opinion but if the man tells you that he married you for childbearing you will have to oblige even if that is not what you want). This shows the extent of the influence of *lobola* in that women feel that they can’t voice their opinion and have a say in a decision that will affect their reproductive health.

The issues that arise from that dynamic are extensive but most of them have proved to have negative rather than positive ramifications for females within those relationships. It is obvious that some discussion needs to be held around that very sensitive topic in a way that does not dismiss culture but seeks to find out where the practice stands this day and age in light of women empowerment and the changing dynamic of culture.

As discussed above the participants had undergone tutorials on how to sexually satisfy their husbands in their lessons such as *Chikapa*. But now, how well they actually knew their own bodies is questionable since none of them alluded on having being taught anything about the female orgasm. They had trouble actually explaining what a female orgasm was when asked. What is more interesting is that there was no vernacular (Shona) word for the experience. The women seemed to be more knowledgeable about the male orgasm than their own.

None of the women had actually been prepared for their first sexual experience during their many tutorials.

5.6. Emerging issues

5.6.1. First sexual experience

In African culture it is extremely important that when a woman marries as a virgin. Accordingly, our study evidences this fact since almost all of our participants had had their first sexual experience was with their husbands or husbands to be. As alluded to before, there had been no or little preparation for the girls for this occasion.

A10 describes her first experience at 17 as excruciatingly painful that she had trouble sitting down for days and was stressed by not having anyone to tell: “*Tingati zvakandirwadza. Ndanga ndisina chandoziva. Ndakaita pain yekuti kana kugara ndanga ndisinagoni. Ndakaita stress yekuti kana wekutura ñdanga ndisina. Kuti ndiudze mainini, zvinhu zvanga zvakandiomera*”. (I can say it hurt badly. I knew nothing, it was my very first experience. The pain was so bad that I could barely sit. I got very stressed and I had no one to turn to. I could not even tell my aunt, it was a complicated situation for me).

Her husband did not do anything to help out in the situation or help prepare her beforehand since he was older or more experienced sexually except to tell her after the deed that it was normal and expected for the first experience to be painful but it would get better with time. She was also in the unfortunate position of having no one to confide in after the deed because of fear of reproach.

It was the exact same experience for A8, she was reluctant to narrate her experience except to concede after she had been cajoled that: “*Ndakarwadziwa asi.*” (I experienced a lot of pain). For A9 the situation was no better but she described the indifference that she felt: “*I didn’t know anything about what sex was so I was just doing it. It was my first marriage so I was just doing it like for the sake of it*”. It is maybe important to note that she was twenty

one and decidedly older when she had that first experience compared to her other colleagues' so it is possible that she had garnered more knowledge on what was about to occur and was more prepared.

A7 also divulged that her experience was just as painful "*Ha, pafirst experience pain chaiyo, kunzwa kurwadziwa*". (Ha, at first it was all a very painful experience)

A4 was "*Iiii ndakarwadziwa*". (Iiiii it was awfully painful).

What can be gleaned from the above information is that the first experience was a revelation to most of the women because despite the extensive education on sexual matters they had received they had never been told that they might suffer some discomfort or how to counter the pain through preparation.

Even more glaring was the absence and lack of support that these young women could confide in before and after their first sexual experience. The young women had to simply rely on information from their male counterparts about their experiences with most of them being assured that the pain they felt was normal. It is not evident that the men did anything to make the experience less uncomfortable for the women. Nevertheless, experiencing pain after the first experience ensured some form of male ego because also served as proof that they had married "pure girls" meaning, virgins. So it was an expected norm.

The communication with their male counterparts after the first sometimes traumatic experience probably laid the groundwork for any communication that the women had with their husbands on matters affecting their reproductive health and negotiation of sexual experiences within the marriage setup. And judging from the interaction that the women had with their husbands this situation gave their husbands the upper hand as the person within the

relationship who was more knowledgeable and better experiences in sexual matters. It is probably this perception that later led to them making all the decisions on sexual matters.

And they seemed to have been no talk about the prevention of STDs or contraceptive methods. And it is because of this lack of information that most of the girls ended up pregnant from their first sexual experience. They also felt the pressure to prove their fertility within the first year of marriage drawing us back on the issue of *lobola*. It is therefore debatable whether they would have used any contraceptive if they had been informed beforehand, but all the same they would have been better off armed with the requisite knowledge.

Sex within marriage was a topic that the women were ready to discuss if it meant that they could assure the interviewer that they were performing all their wifely duties to their husbands. When the topic and questions turned to their own sexual experiences they were quite uncomfortable. It was as if their own needs were secondary or not even part of the equation. It is perhaps not surprising that the women were putting their own needs secondary to their husbands' needs. They are taught from a very young age that their husbands' needs matter more than theirs and that if they don't give in to their husbands needs then he will leave them and go and satisfy his needs elsewhere.

Literature reveals that in Shona culture, a bride is taught by her aunts how to behave appropriately in her marriage. She has no excuse to refuse being intimate with her husband at any given time. If ever she denies her husband of his conjugal rights, the husband may look elsewhere and it will be considered "her fault." Meaning that, even when she is tired, she is obliged to engage in sexual intercourse with her husband. There is no good enough reason for a wife to deny engaging sexually with her husband at any given time. Even when she is menstruating, she is taught find alternatives to satisfy her husband sexually.

A woman is treated as a person who has no sexual needs of her own and her husband has to be sexually satisfied at all costs (Motsi et al. 2012). In this case, the value attached to sex within marriage is more than the value attached to one's own life, and this is evident among Shona people. Even when the wife is aware that her husband is having extramarital affairs, she is expected to still comply unreservedly. In general, extramarital affairs do not serve as an excuse good enough for the wife to deny her husband of his conjugal rights. This helps them secure or preserve their marriage that dignifies them in the society. In fact, when a man is having extramarital affairs, the first thing a wife is asked by her aunt is whether or not she had been giving him sex whenever he wanted. Her role is to preserve her marriage by giving her husband as much sex as possible (Motsi et al. 2012).

In light of the above explanation the revelations in our study were understandable. According to the participants, the decision maker in the family is undoubtedly the man. He is the one who decides the number of children to be born within the marriage.

5.6.2. Knowledge on contraceptive methods and STDs

Our results further evidence that the participants had limited knowledge of preventive methods. In general, they were not even aware of the types of contraceptive material that was available to them. None of them had had extensive knowledge before they had entered into marriage and had only come across the information when they accessed clinics during prenatal and postnatal care for their first child. In one case the woman was on her third child before she received information on how to use contraceptives. They did not discuss the issue with their husbands, preferring to seek out the information on their own. A4 had fallen into the habit of intentionally falling pregnant without discussing the matter with her husband. Presumably it was her way of proving her point and making her wishes expressed within the

marriage. The interviewees had vague knowledge on STDs although they were more knowledgeable about HIV and AIDS. What they knew was mostly information they had garnered from science lessons at school. This is consistent with the emphasis given to HIV and AIDS in schools.

They were also aware of other STDs without however knowing their specific names. They described a few symptoms and also knew that they were curable and that some of them could have drastic effects to their fertility. It was however evident that they were resigned from the fact that they had no bargaining power in the use of contraceptives.

And they seemed to have been no talk about the prevention of STDs or contraceptive methods. And it is because of this lack of information that most of the girls ended up pregnant from their first sexual experience. They also felt the pressure to prove their fertility within the first year of marriage drawing us back on the issue of *lobola*. It is therefore debatable whether they would have used any contraceptive if they had been informed beforehand, but all the same they would have been better off armed with the requisite knowledge.

5.7. Impact of culture on formal education in schools

Table 9 provides information on the different levels of education reached by the interviewees in this study. The results show that all the interviewed young women had attended formal education at different levels. As tabulated one girl reached university level, one reached 'A' level meaning advanced (pre-University) level, three of the girls were able to progress up until their 'O' (ordinary) Level and the remaining three were only able to reach forms 1, 2 and 3 respectively. This would mean that all of the girls were done with their educational experience by the time they reached the age of twenty. And for the girls who

dropped out earlier they were in their early teens when they dropped out of school to pursue other avenues in life.

Interviewee	Level of education reached
A2	Ordinary Level
A4	Form 2
A5	Ordinary Level
A7	Ordinary Level
A8	Form 1
A9	Advanced Level
A10	Form 3
A11	University Level

Table 9 *Information on the level of education of each interviewee*

It is a true reflection of society that not many of the women were only able to progress past their ordinary levels and venture into tertiary education. Among the reasons why the girls did not progress was the fact that some of the girls had fallen pregnant like in the case of A10 who had no other option than to leave education behind and get married. Progressing to tertiary education might have delayed their entrance into marriage and by the time they entered marriage and started families it might have been possible that they might have better economic prospects that would lead to better life experiences for their progeny than the opportunities they were afforded. By failing to progress to higher levels of education they might have condemned their children to a similar fate regarding opportunities for better living conditions and access to education than they themselves received.

The education they received pertaining to puberty and other biological processes in their bodies was from science lessons they received at primary and secondary school level. They were taught by both male and female teachers and as shall be discussed below this was particularly concerning to the girls at that time of their development as it affected how comfortable and receptive they students were at the time they received their education.

At primary school they received education from their teachers as a fore warning of the changes that their bodies would undergo once they reached puberty.

A10's educational experience involved being taught by tutors who were part of a schools program who would visit schools and teach young children all about their reproductive health:

A10: "*Yaitove programme yayitwa kumaskols, yekuti vaitouya vachitidzidzisa*". (It was a program that was done in schools, they actually came and taught us.)

They would be educated in different groups: one comprised of boys and the other comprised of girls.

MARTHA: *Vaidzidziswa nevanhu rume kana vakadzi?* (Were they taught by men or women?)

A10: "*Vaiti varume vanoenda kuvarume. Vasikana kuvasikana*". (They would say boys would go with the male teachers and then the girls would go with the female teachers).

It is apparent that the groupings were an attempt to make the students more comfortable with receiving that kind of information together with other people of the same gender. This probably meant that they also received information that was more specific to their gender.

It might have been an advantage when it came to making the children more comfortable but when it comes to destroying the myth about the sexualities and functions of different genders it was a reinforcement tool of the preconceived notion that issues to do with sexuality were not for discussion with the other sex. For the girls who had already started receiving

lessons on sexuality at home behind closed doors undergoing the same experience at school might have further cemented the position that their sexual experiences were a subject that was embarrassing and never to be discussed with the other sex.

It might have been beneficial to have group lessons for the different genders and then combine them at some point in order for the lesson to be a combined one where they all learnt in each other's presence in order to demystify the whole subject and to treat it as it actually is: a natural biological process free of the shame of moral censures.

The most common type of contraceptive and preventative method they were taught was abstinence as is evident from A2's narrations:

A10: "*Kuchikoro taidzidziswa kuti usaite zvehupombwe, usaita zvekudanana muchiri vana vechikoro*" (At school we were taught not to engage in sex, that we were not supposed to engage in love relationships whilst we were still at school).

Whilst the intentions were clearly good, it still raises concerns that the schools taught abstinence to the point that other forms of contraceptive were maligned and treated as unimportant. This was the only source of information that they could receive that was not subject to morally imposed restrictions and could be purely conveyed scientifically yet cultural, social and religious influences were clearly evident in the warnings that the girls received pertaining to not engaging in sexual acts. By concentrating on teaching abstinence and neglecting to teach other sexuality issues, it has actually led most students in losing their chance to learn about other aspects of sexuality and different types of birth control methods. Most of the girls ended up learning about contraceptive methods later on in life because of this missed opportunity. The lessons they received on the subject of puberty and the accompanying subjects were delivered orally with the aid of diagrams in science books.

A10: “*Pamwe taipuhwa matext books, tichiona mapictures anenge arimo*”. (Sometimes we were given textbooks, and we would see the pictures inside them).

The lessons were mostly delivered in English but at times vernacular languages were used to better explain concepts to the students. On the subject of puberty, the lessons tended to be clinically delivered with an emphasis on making sure that the students got the scientific terms correct rather than them understanding the subject matter and how it applied to them. That method of teaching might have led to students memorize rather than actually understanding what that might mean to them in real life and that at some stage they themselves were going to enter the phases illustrated in the diagrams.

These results show that most of the lessons were delivered in English with a spattering of vernacular languages when there were points that needed explaining. This might have been a disadvantage to the students since most of the interviewees seemed to have trouble comprehending simple questions or phrases when they were asked in English. It is clear that if the lessons were delivered in English then the students were seriously disadvantaged and they understood the barest minimum of what was being taught. It might have been better if the lessons were delivered in both vernacular (Shona) and English to enable the students better understand and appreciate what they were being taught. A4 had this to say:

MARTHA: *Ok saka iwewe vaitaura vachishandisa language ipi?* (Ok so what language did the teachers use?)

A4: *Vaishandisa dzese.* (They used them both)

MARTHA: *Dzipi?* (Which ones?)

A4: *English ne Shona* (English and Shona)''

It is clear that the girls did not incorporate the education they received at school as well as they did information from other influences in their lives like their culture and church.

While they profess to appreciate the educational perspective on puberty and sexuality they have found absolutely no use for that information preferring to stick to the lessons they received at home. What they seemed to have embraced most was the education on matters like HIV and AIDS but that was the best they could do. It is reasonable to say that education was not a huge factor in determining their outlook on life.

The interviewees seemed to be aware of the outward physically visible parts of their reproductive systems like the vagina but they seemed unaware of the inner less visible parts of their own reproductive systems like their ovaries or cervix. The knowledge of the existence of the clitoris was not revealed. They expressed discomfort and were too shy to openly talk about their sexual organs. As A2, narrated:

MARTHA: Saka nhengo dzako dzechikadzi dzemukati unodziziwa here? (Do you know your internal reproductive organs?)

A2: “Ahh kwete, ndinongoziwa kuti mukati mune chibereko” (Ahh no, I only know that there is a womb inside there)”

MARTHA: Ko dzimwe nhengo?Unoziwa chinonzi clitoris kana kabhinzi? (And what about the other parts, like the clitoris “so called small bean seed”?)

A2: “Kabhinzi, ndiko kai? Handisati ndambokanzwa Ndinonyara kutaura zvese izvozvo”. (Did you say the little bean seed? (Covering her face)I have never heard about it. I feel so embarrassed to even talk about such things.....).

They were however aware that girls went through menstruation but were not fully appreciative of the process that lead to the issuance of menstrual blood through their vaginal

canal. That little information they had on anatomy could not be wholly attributed to the educational system since knowing the English name for body parts cannot equate to being educated on the subject, it merely means that one is familiar with the language. The young women's responses are a testimony of how the Shona culture heavily influenced the formal sexuality education that they were taught in school.

5.8. Religious influence on sexuality education in schools

Religion is an important part of Zimbabwean society as mentioned in earlier chapters. For centuries it was practiced culturally with many different ethnic groups possessing their own unique way of communicating with their deities and expressing their beliefs in divine powers. With the advent of colonialism, there was a shift towards adopting the religious beliefs of the colonialists. Religion was used to systematically convert people to adopt both spiritual and political beliefs that were aligned to the new masters and that would make the native populace more malleable to new ideas and less motivated to fight against the new order being imposed upon them.

All the interviewees were asked one the same question at the commencement of the interviews: Do you or your family adhere to traditional or religious beliefs? The answer was uniform, all of the interviewees were church going people. This was in conflict with most of the information they later revealed concerning the teachings that they had received culturally and it was an interesting issue to note.

The women were able to accept the teachings of both the cultural and religious influences within their lives without suffering a severe conflict of interest as one might have

expected in such a scenario. They evidently showed that there were not completely ignorant of the visible rift in their belief system by insisting that they did not believe in traditional practices and that they were Christians. It is perhaps an indicator of the identity crisis that is widely prevalent in African communities that manifests in them believing that their cultural and traditional beliefs are backward and that converting to Christianity is a sign that a person is progressive and civilized. Almost always a belief in traditional practices is viewed with suspicion and often equated to being conservative backward and in most extreme cases with dabbling in black magic in order to get rich at the expense of their relatives. What was revealed in our study was that our participants were willing to openly admit to the fact that they practiced pure Christianity and yet that they were constantly turning back to their cultural beliefs behind the scenes.

This classic example of this phenomenon in our study was that it clearly showed our participants were evidently benefitting from the traditional teachings from their aunts and grandmothers but that this was done behind closed doors and seldom discussed in public yet they claimed that the church was their mainstay. In contemporary Zimbabwe, due to the shifting migration patterns and the abandonment of most cultural practices that kept the family glued together, religion has stepped in and has provided an alternate to the vacuum left by the disintegrating family unit. The church has begun to provide advice on matters that were under the strict purview of the family. Because of the powerful influence of religion, and the way it is considered divine, the religious influence on the women interviewed in this study has to be interrogated.

The interviews revealed the following areas as the most influenced by religion

- Abstinence

- Abortion
- Marital roles
- Dressing
- Puberty and Hygiene

Teachings on the beliefs of Christians were taught to the girls by various means. Most of the girls had attended youth meetings were they were taught about various topics by youth leaders. As confirmed by A9:

A9: “*Ma youth leader*”. (By youth leaders)

Later on when they got married they were taught by church elders who almost always include the pastor’s wife who in most of the congregations is tasked with being the leader of the female congregants and is accorded almost the same respect and status as the pastors themselves. The church elders are comprised of elder women who are considered wise enough to impart their knowledge with other women.

Another fairly recent phenomenon has been the popularity “kitchen parties”. These are held just before the wedding as a send-off to the bride. They might have been classified as bridal parties except that the women who are present are a combination of church people and family members who gather around and deliver a last minute crash course into what the woman is expected to do and how she is supposed to act within the confines of matrimony. The teachings included how to respect the husband and the family and the most valuable message that she should always bear in mind throughout her marriage was to never deny her husband of his conjugal rights. Different sex positions were taught by the most experienced elderly women.

The girls were taught to abstain from sexual activity until they were married as A9 shared with the interviewer:

MARTHA: Ok wonderful. So how do you think Christianity influences panyaya dze sex education? (On sexuality issues)?

A9: “Ummmmm” (long pause)

MARTHA: Like did you learn anything from church?

A9: No.no....*Kungoti munhu haufanire kurara nemukomana before marriage.* (No, no. Just that as a person you should not sleep with a boy before marriage)”

Engaging in sexual relations was frowned upon and heavily discouraged.

A2 narrated what she was taught:

A2: *Kuchurch?* (Through church)

MARTHA: *Hongu.* (Yes)

A2: “*Tinodzidziswa kuti usadanane nevakomana, uunoita nhumbu apa unotarisa kuti uri mwana mudoko hausati wamboenda kumaperiods. Usazvitarisire pasi nokuti kune dzimwe nyika kune vana vasati vambosvika mafive years vakaita vana vavo saka unogona kukanganiswa mukati mehupenyu hwako nokuda kwaizvozvo*”. (We are taught that don’t enter into a relationship with boys, you will get pregnant whilst you are still young, when people around you think you are young and haven’t even gotten your period. Don’t look down upon yourself because there are countries where little children as young as five have had children so your life can be derailed because of that).

There were positive and negative consequences of this advice. The positive aspects stemmed from the fact that some of the girls appreciated that abstaining from sexual relations

at an early age would give them enough time to fully mature and understand what sex was all about and they would be better positioned to make decisions pertaining to their sexual health.

They were taught that promiscuity would result in them getting infected with STDs and getting pregnant in their teens. The girls are able to attribute some merit to the message of abstinence that was regularly preached by their religious leaders in that some of them refrained from entering into sexual relations while they were young and thus avoided the twin burdens of pregnancy and STDs. It was able to protect them from the corrupt influence of older men termed “sugar daddies” who are notorious for preying on young girls. Due to this influence they were able to finish their educational studies and to reach educational levels that some of their counterparts were unable to attain.

The girls were taught to aspire to a ‘white wedding’ which meant that failure to keep their supposed virtue would disqualify them from getting married in that route.

Some of the girls who opted to get married along traditional lines by eloping or otherwise were automatically disqualified from receiving some of the advice and help that women who went through the church approved process received.

A4 narrated her experience as follows:

MARTHA: *Saka zvawakadzidziswa nemadzitete, ndizvo zvimwechete zvawakaudwza kuchurch?* (So what you were taught by your aunts, is that the same with what you were taught at church?)

A4: *“Kuchurch handina kuudzwa nekuti handina kuchata. Zvoda kana wakachata. Kana wakunyoresa muchato vanokutora, maelders vakadzi, vokudzidzisa”.* (At church I wasn’t taught because I didn’t get married at church. It’s only possible if you have gotten married the

church way. If you tell them that you want to get married at church the women church elders will take you and teach you).

MARTHA: *Saka zvausina kuchata kudai hapana chawakadzidziswa?* (So because you did not have a church wedding, no one taught you anything?)

A4: *“Aah hapana”*. (Aah, I was not taught anything).

This seems fairly discriminatory and a practice that should be discouraged since it serves no purpose but to burden the girl who chooses to get married traditionally with guilt over failing to follow the so called church way.

Results show that abstinence as a strategic tool to protect young girls from STDs and from making poor life choices until they were mature enough to make those decisions is commendable. The negative aspect of teaching abstinence is the way the message is relayed in particular with a religious connotation.

Engaging in sex with a partner who is not your husband in this context is considered sinful. It is a shameful act that results in stigmatization and judgment from society. Girls who did so were not considered marriage material and that is a great shame to the girl's family as were girls were traditionally taught to aspire to marriage from a very young age.

It instils a sense that engaging in sexual acts is a sinful act that will result in sex being viewed as an unholy act.

Under Zimbabwean law, abortion is an illegal act that if performed will result in a criminal conviction. It is only allowed under certain conditions that include pregnancy that occurs as a result of incest, of rape and pregnancies that would risk the life of the mother carrying the child. The conditions that a person has to satisfy to actually qualify to terminate a pregnancy are carefully designed to discourage any person from trying to go down that route.

When the law is backed by religious views it becomes an unimaginable task to go against the status quo and obtain an abortion for as simple a reason as wanting one.~

Abortion was seen as a sinful act akin to murder. A2 was frank about the subject:

A2: “*Ok. Vamwe vakabvisa nhumbu vanofa nekuti zvakaipa. Chitadzo nekuti unege waita chivi kuna Mwari unenge wauraya munhu wakafanana nemhondi*”. (OK. When some girls abort, they die because it is evil. It is a sin because you will have sinned against God because you will have murdered a person and you are just like a murderer).

The girls were taught that it was wrong and they believed that it was a wrongful act wholeheartedly. There was no debate as to situations in which abortion was permissible; the perception was that it was wrong across the board and that there was no instance that it would be permissible to abort a pregnancy. This was especially worrying since the girls seemed to have received no information as to when they would seek it as a remedy to an unwanted pregnancy.

More so in light of the failure by the tutors of the girls to properly prepare the girls for sexual experiences and the need for self-protection and use of contraceptives, it is alarming that they had no choice at hand to deal with unwanted pregnancies. Girls are often ashamed of themselves if they find out that they are pregnant out of wedlock and they run the risk of being ostracized by the society around them. In their desperation they seek out any way to get rid of a pregnancy that they are sure will ruin their lives. This leaves them vulnerable to backstreet abortions administered by unethical doctors or older women who subject the girls to all sorts of procedures and medical practices that abort the foetus but also harm the girls in the process.

Perhaps it would benefit society if they stopped pretending that abortions actually occur and they allowed that medical procedure to be done openly with proper medical procedures and counselling available to women who so require it.

Another common feature with religion worldwide is its influence on women's dressing. This situation was no different with the women who were interviewed. They had been taught at church that a modest, moral, God-fearing woman dressed a certain way and that was acceptable before God. They were supposed to dress in clothes that were not revealing otherwise they would lead men astray. Women who dressed provocatively were considered harlots and it was advised to steer clear of women who did that.

A11 had this to say:

A11: *“Ehe vakatidzidzisa kuti zvandanga ndichitaura kuti musikana kuti unofanha kuita hunhu. Haufanire kuzviregedzera kunzi haa mwana uya uya wamai nhingi mapfekero ake haaite. Unofanha kupfeka semusikana kwete kuti nhasi wowomekwa wakapfeka katight, nekaguvhu out. Mangwana wowonekwa uri muchurch unongopawo kapicture kasiri right. Kana uri mudikana unongofanhirwa kubhavha semunhu ane hunhu, kuti mangwana vanhu vazodadawo kuti aah uyu akakura zviri right. Aitererawo aiti akatsiurwawo aiterera”*. (Yes they taught us that a girl should have morals. You should not act in such a way that people will say, that daughter of such a mother, her dressing is not acceptable. You should dress like a good girl not like today you are seen wearing tights with a top showing your navel and then tomorrow you are seen in church it doesn't seem right. When you are young you should just behave like a person with morals, so that people will be proud of you and say that you grew up all right. If you rebuked her she would listen).

Setting guidelines on dressing is akin to teaching women that something is shameful about their bodies and that displaying their bodies is a sinful act. It represses self-expression. Women are continually shamed for how they chose to dress themselves and it is unacceptable whether disguised as religion or not.

The most valuable lessons that the women received from church at a young age were the lessons on puberty and hygiene. These were delivered in youth meetings by youth leaders. A9 shared what they were taught:

MARTHA: That's what you learnt kuchurch? What else?

A9: *"Zvekuenda kuma monthly period kuchinja kwebody yako"*. (About going on your menstrual cycle and the changes your body would undergo). They were taught about what to expect when they reached puberty and the changes that their bodies would undergo.

To make the lessons more comfortable they were separated into groups of boys and girls and were taught by people of the same gender as themselves. A9 further goes on to confirm this position:

MARTHA: *Ok so youth leaders ndovaikudzidzisi izvozvo? Saka would they separate boys and girls?* (OK, so youth leaders are the ones who taught you that? So would they separate the boys and the girls?)

A9: *"Ehe"*. (Yes).

The lessons continued even after puberty and they were also taught how to maintain hygienic standards as A5 put it:

A5: They teach the ladies how to do hygiene, bathing and other things like that.

MARTHA: Just bathing?

A5: *"Aah different things. Bathing, eating, the way you eat and hygiene. Something like that."*

Religion forms a huge part in informing women what their role within marriage is. It teaches that women are supposed to be submissive to their husbands and that the man is the head of the household.

It is this teaching that is taught to girls constantly and it is considered a divine teaching such that it cannot be refuted or questioned. A woman who goes against this teaching is considered a bad woman who is probably hell bound.

There has been an upsurge in women meetings that happen in most Pentecostal churches that are called “*china chemadzimai*” so called because they usually occur on a Thursday. In these meetings married women meet and taught on how to perform their marital roles better and the advice they receive include lessons on hygiene, sexual performance, how to treat their husbands and how to keep their homes organized. In fact it was almost an identical teaching to what they were being taught by their aunts and A4 had this to share:

MARTHA: *Ko kuchina chamunoenda kuchurch uku?* (What happens at those ladies meetings that you go to at church?)

A4: *“Kuti ndopavanokudzidzisa manje nokuti vane pavonotaura zvese”*. (That’s where they teach you everything).

MARTHA: *Saka zvawakadzidziswa nemadzitete, nezvaunodzidziswa kuchina zvakafanana?* (So what you are taught by your aunts and what you are taught at church is just the same?)

A4: *“Ya zvakafanana”*. (Yes it’s the same.)

MARTHA: *Kana kuti hapana chitsva chauri kudzidziswa.* (Or there is nothing new that you are being taught?)

A4: *“Hapana chitsva”*. (Nothing new)

In the same vein, women who were about to enter into marriage were also taught the same in the so called “kitchen parties” that were alluded to above. These are bridal parties that are held to teach the woman some last minute lessons on what is expected of them once they enter in marriage. The responsibility of this last minute teaching is the combined responsibility of the church leaders and the girl’s family members. A7 explained:

MARTHA: “*Saka vanodzidzisa kukitchen party ndevekuchurch*”. (So who teaches at these meetings, your fellow church goers?)

A7: “*Kuchurch yake yaanonamata*”. (Yes, those from her church that she worships with.)

MARTHA: *Komadzimbuya nemadzitete?* (What about the grandmothers and aunts?)

A7: “*Vanouya kuzotsinhira*”. (They come to support what is being taught?)

MARTHA: *So kukitchen party kobatanidzwa zvekuchurch nezveculture?* (So at kitchen parties do they combine church and culture?)

A7: *Pamwechete tichibatsirana kuitawo ipapo.* (Together helping each other to do that there.)

A8’s experience was similar, she recounted how she received a tiny-bit of wisdom from one of the parties she attended:

MARTHA: *Ko makitchen party?* (So what about kitchen parties?)

A8: “*Ndaakangoendawo ka one, mai mufundisi vaingotidzidzisa kuti mmunhu wemukadzi wana chaunotawo muhupenyu usangogarawo uchiti murume ndiye anondiitira. I just went once, the pastor’s wife taught us that a woman should at least be independent and not to solely depend on the husband.*”

The emphasis is on what the woman is supposed to do in order to retain her husband’s attention and the girl assumes that the husband to be is being taught the same at his bachelor’s

party. Bachelor parties are equivalent to bridal showers but there seems to be not equivalent to kitchen parties.

It is apparent that the bulk responsibility of keeping a marriage together is considered the preserve of the woman who has to ensure that the man has everything he needs at home so that he won't stray. If he does stray the implication is certainly that the woman is to blame because certainly she did not perform her duties fully. This shames women into not seeking help or even acknowledging that their men are cheating. It is a situation that leaves them vulnerable to STDs because even suggesting the use of a condom within a marriage is considered distrustful and insolent behaviour.

There was no excuse for a woman engaging in adultery but men were given leeway to stray and the woman blamed for her husband's behaviour.

The women in these interviews revealed that they felt burdened by the expectations that were required of them in marriage. They were doing what they were doing because it was expected of them and not because they wanted to or because they thought it was particularly beneficial to them. They got married because they were supposed to. They slept with their husbands because they were supposed to. They had children because they were supposed to. They hoped the children were male because they were told they were supposed to. They let their husbands choose the number of children they had because they were supposed to.

They were uncomfortable being questioned on what they wanted out of the relationship because no one had probably asked them that question before and being asked now was opening doors that they probably didn't want opened and forcing them to voice things they had never had to voice. And propounding that guilt was their religion telling them that it was not a woman's position to question. It was a woman's position to follow the rules and to teach

their offspring those teachings thereby continuing the cycle. Religion is a powerful tool and especially dangerous when in the hands of people who manipulate it to oppress certain classes in society. What must be understood is that religion is a man - made construct that quickly loses its awe inspiring fear when closely examined but unshackling oneself from its influence is no easy task.

Another benefit of having religious structure within one's life was the existence of counselling in times of distress.

A10 gave examples of the times that the church would provide counselling to the girls on two different occasions:

A10: "*Kuchurch kobatsira futi. Pakuti unogona kusheya futi then mobatsirana*". (Church helps too. In that you can share your feelings and get help).

"Nekuti kuchurch kana uri muyouth, vanokubatsira kuti kana uri muyouth vanoubatsira. Ukaita problem vangara pasi nemi kana muti mukomana nemusikana voku counsellai vachikuudzai zvekuita same same nezvaitaurwa kuchikoro kuti ukatamba nemukomana unoita nhumbu especially kana watanga kuenda kumaperiods". (Because when you a youth they help you. If you have a problem they will sit down with you and when you are a boy and a girl they will counsel you and tell you what to do just like they taught you at school that if you sleep together you will fall pregnant especially if you have started your menstrual cycle."

A8 was also able to share her view on the huge role the church was playing in providing counsel and being a place for refuge:

MARTHA: *Ok ok saka apa panyaya idzodzi kana une maproblems nenyaya dzehunhukadzi, dzepabonde nei, unoenda kunani?* (OK, ok, so in these issues, if you have problems about woman issues and sexual issues, who do you go to?)

A8: “*Tinofanirwa kudzidziswa nana mai mufundisi, nemazuvano vanatete vacho havachadzidzisi, vana mai mufundisi ndivo vatoona vanoda kudzidzisa*”. (We are supposed to be taught by the pastors’ wife, these days they are the aunts because the aunts are no longer available to teach us. The pastors’ wives are the ones who are willing to teach us nowadays).

MARTHA: *Ndiwo ave madzitetete?* (They are now the new aunts?).

The church has taken over many of the tasks commonly reserved for the aunts and the teachings have been welcomed because the women want to learn anything that will help them understand and be comfortable with their sexuality.

The influence of the church has been very much a factor in the way that the women in the interviews learned about puberty and gender roles. It has continued to be a factor even in marriages setting the guidelines for their behavior and self-perception. But compared to other influences like culture and formal sexuality education in schools, the interviewees had this to say:

A11: “*Kuchurch kwacho havazotauri zvese than kuti ndikaudza ambuya vanokwanisa kundibatsira zvese. And that kuchurch vanongobata apo neapo.* (At church they don’t talk about everything but if I tell my grandmother she can help me with everything. But at church they just focus briefly on this and that).

A10: “*Ha church yakandibatsira but handingati yakandibatsira zvakanyanya kupinda zvechivanhu*” (Yes the church helped me but I can’t say it helped that much compared to cultural or traditional advice.)

Religion might have played a huge role but other influences seemed to have influenced the girls more according to them. Whether those other influences will continue to be able to

play a huge role is debatable because of the growing influence of religion in the region and the eroding nature of the family se

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study aimed at analyzing what is being taught in terms of knowledge and values, according to the norms of sex education in the African culture as compared to the content of sex education in schools. The questions raised by this objective were used as guidelines for the research process. The analysis of the data collected sought to satisfy the objective of the study. The research questions were as follows:

Question 1

- **“How is the sexuality education content of schools and churches specifically designed for girls?”**

A critical analysis on the educational system in Zimbabwe highlights that it is designed in way that creates inequalities between boys and girls. The school material, text books and the teachers' attitudes reveal clearly defined gender roles according to the expectations on the society. Girls are portrayed as gentle, kind, subordinate, obedient and domesticated members of the community right from a tender age. The teaching material prepares girls to be individuals that abide by the cultural norms to facilitate the maintenance the gender inequalities.

From this study, it is evident that educational materials are designed irrespective of the typical rigid gender categories in Zimbabwe. The sexuality education programs are not examinable and are therefore not regarded as important as other subjects in the curriculum. Sexuality as a sensitive issue, male teachers are often not comfortable teaching girls on issues that specifically affect girls' sexuality. It is a huge challenge for teachers to create open dialogue and discussions while teaching topics related to menstruation for example. The Zimbabwean conservative social and cultural nature puts a lot of pressure on teachers to

reconcile with the curriculum and their personal beliefs. The school curriculum limits itself to the teaching of abstinence only and for the girls to say “no” to sex before marriage. The curriculum does not cater for the sexually active girls. Hence most girls learn about their sexuality from other sources like their peers, the internet or even their elderly female family members.

Thus, to learn about this delicate issue from books using a more scientific approach in a formal school setting was probably not the best way to encourage or motivate them to openly and freely ask questions on matters concerning their sexuality. It was also taught for a fleeting amount of time and the English language that the subject was taught in was probably enough of a language barrier already in place and could have prevented the girls from fully understanding what was being said. Most of the girls only learnt about contraceptives later in their lives due to the fact that it was never fully articulated or understood at school.

It was apparent from the interviews that most of the young women were of the view that the sex education they had received at school was in their view a secondary source of information and influence. The primary source and influence of sex education was the socio-cultural setup closely followed by religious influences. Their exposure to sex education at school had been clinical and academic while the education they had received from family members in particular had been hands on. While the education at school had been according to a school curriculum that had to be adhered and subject to a timeframe that made space for other subjects, the education received at home and at church had begun at the onset of puberty and continued up until marriage and from there had evolved to be taught even after marriage in various forms. As a result, girls find themselves disconnected from sexuality education the so called life skills sexuality education.

The approach to sexuality education in schools is an environment that hinders the reception of information from the girls because of the discomfort, unpleasantness and incommensurability. Basing on the results of this study, it is evident that the girls' sexuality issues were addressed to them through other trusted sources like elder sisters, aunts, mothers and even grandmothers in more comfortable and conducive environment.

The dilemma that mostly confronted sex education in schools was the fact that it was coming from untried sources who had no permanence in the girls' lives and whose influence was short-lived and not consistent. The odds were against it because it arrived on the scene when the other two influences had already had a head start and was not able to be there to provide information once the girls had left educational institutions. The girls were not comfortable with their teachers and there was no opportunity to pursue this avenue of assistance out of the classroom and the environment would have inhibited most of the students from asking questions that were not based on the subject in its academic context. It was no help that some of the teachers according to the interviewees were uncomfortable too with teaching the subject matter. Some teachers either shunted off the lessons to other teachers or taught it but were unable to hide their embarrassment and discomfort from the students. This no doubt impressed upon the students their belief that it was shameful to discuss such matters in public.

The communication of sex education from the religious influences in the women's lives was conveyed in a similar fashion to that from the socio-cultural, it was communicated by female church elders in the exclusive presence of other female members. And, at par with family influence, the education was continuous and not confined to a constrained time frame, like the sex education that was taught at school. It also managed to evolve with time and

conform with the different stages within the women's lives as they entered womanhood and eventually marriage. This opportunity was not afforded to the educational sector which tends to lose the opportunity to continue imparting much needed knowledge.

The need for incorporating sexuality education as part of the formal school curricula in Zimbabwe is unquestionable, considering that Southern Africa is the epicenter of HIV/AIDS even within the region of sub-Saharan Africa. There is no doubt that the incorporation of comprehensive sexuality education programs in schools will go a long way in combating the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Nonetheless, our results show that the imposition or importation of western-oriented models of sexuality in their totality has not effectively achieved the desired results. Not only does the approach constitute a form of cultural imperialism, it is also confronted with some form of resistance especially by teachers who, unfortunately, are supposedly the custodians of the initiatives. It is regrettable that sexuality education in Zimbabwe has somehow been interpreted from a Western perspective and yet, contrary to the unreserved Western sexuality that is publicly shared through magazines, advertisements, reality television shows, scientific publications and many other avenues; sexuality in the Zimbabwean context is very much hidden in the private arena.

Question 2

Do church teachings and the school curriculum, enhance young women with the ability to make informed choices about their sexuality?

The interviews were able to get an insight into the prescribed behaviours and values promoted by sex education programs in schools. While they conveyed information gleaned from their educational curriculum on subjects such as human reproduction, it was apparent that that was as far as they were willing to take that knowledge. The girls were taught about

the human reproductive system in both males and females with books being used as study material. The information was clinical and academic with no further exploration of how the sex act actually occurred. It was up to the girls to read the material and actually try to understand the process on their own. The education also involved information on puberty from a scientific perspective and information on sexually transmitted diseases and infections with an emphasis on HIV and AIDS. With that came the lessons on contraceptive methods with the main emphasis at this point being on abstinence.

The girls are taught to abstain from sexual activities on the onset of puberty because it would result in unwanted pregnancies. There was no exploration of preventative methods were the girls to engage in sex. It was strictly taught that abstinence was the best preventive method for avoiding pregnancy as well as sexually transmitted diseases. At this point, one can evidently conclude that there is a high level of concurrence in the approach to abstinence between what was formally taught in schools and churches and even the Shona culture teachings.

Christianity norms discourage women from confronting their husbands after being betrayed, they are instead emboldened to pray hard to God to show him the way. The idea of entertaining separation or divorce is out of question. In churches there is a spirited attempt to keep the marriage institution alive by offering training advice and counselling to married women. It is important to note that on the other hand, this preparation and grooming of young women is not met with the same dedication by their male counterparts. It is therefore decidedly a one-sided affair. According to Christian norms if a person did not adhere to those teachings, they would then face and suffer the consequences of not getting a church sanctioned wedding and at the same time, it would bring shame upon the family.

This study reveals that issues such as sex before marriage, adultery, fornication, sexual orientation and polygamy seem to be well addressed during many church meetings. Being a Christian myself, the influencing factor to this is that the bible makes very clear references to these issues. Many Christians are able to quote the bible to justify their stance and their sexuality morals. There are however, certain issues that the bible is not very clear on. For instance, the bible understandably makes no reference to contraceptives, masturbation nor even the transgender phenomena. Questions such as; who is responsible for negotiating sex in a married couple? Is it morally acceptable for the wife to initiate sex? Are these not the issues that are expected to be discussed in a Christian gathering? In a largely patriarchal society like Zimbabwe where sex has always been deemed to be the prerogative of the male counterpart, and not for the couple to enjoy. In this regard, it should therefore not be any problem for a wife or a woman to confidently initiate sex whenever she feels like it. She should be able to freely express her sexual desires to her husband and should equally freely experience sexual pleasure without any limitations.

As the Bible mandates the woman to submit to her husband. The voices of the young women in our study echo that our culture unfortunately interprets it by making her a subject of her husband, and not a willful act of showing love to her husband, who has the task of expressing love to his wife and not on account of her being submissive. If the bible instructions are well interpreted, then she should be still be allowed to discuss the different ways that they can make love and both enjoy as a symbol of love between her and her partner. As the biblical head of the house, the man should be able to satisfy his partner's sexual needs. The question on submission in Zimbabwean Christian marriages appears to be an endorsement of an

irresponsible pursuit of sexual pleasure to the extent of disregarding of the biblical principles of love which call on us to guard the well-being of ourselves and others in all of our activities.

It is rather disturbing that the African/ Zimbabwean culture with the icing of Christianity and Godliness hide behind the bible in terms of sexuality to provide an excuse for ungracious, obnoxious and disrespectful approach to sexuality in women. Analyzing what was voiced out by the interviewees, there is some level of disregard for the emotional sensitivities of others, especially the women. It is important to emphasize that the sexual act should guarantee pleasure for both parts and psychologically and emotionally guarantee that the couple is completely safe from any negative consequences of sex.

The HIV and AIDS pandemic has not spared the Zimbabwean community especially the Christian communities. Our results indicate that certain churches have taken initiatives and hold open discussions during their church meetings as precaution. Basing on the expression of love with one another as Christians and the “*ubuntu*” as Africans, there is a need for sexuality teachings to reach out to everyone into communion with moral claim as humans, loving each other in the true sense of the word. Embracing sexuality not only physically but indeed emotionally, intellectually and morally.

A sexuality education grounded in ethics of clear values and sturdy guidelines will indeed go a long way to ensure a balance between religio-cultural norms and formal education in schools. This will reach greater heights in empowering and liberating young African women to reclaim their sexuality, to repossess their bodies as sexual symbols. Our research showed that both culture and the religious background of the young women turned sex into something that is taboo. If the bible talks about it, how then does it become a shameful thing to teachers and church clergy men? If we look at who we are as human and sexual beings from birth till

death, expressing sexuality the way God intended it to be, should not be regarded as inglorious.

Quoting the book of Solomon chapter seven verses 1 to 13:

“You are a princess, and your feet are graceful in their sandals. Your thighs are works of art, each one a jewel; your navel is a wine glass filled to overflowing. Your body is full and slender like a bundle of wheat bound together by lilies. Your breasts are like twins of a deer. Your neck is like ivory, and your eyes sparkle like the pools of Heshbon by the gate of Bath-Rabbim. Your nose is beautiful like Mount Lebanon above the city of Damascus. Your head is held high like Mount Carmel; your hair is so lovely it holds a king prisoner. You are beautiful, so very desirable! You are tall and slender like a palm tree, and your breasts are full. I will climb that tree and cling to its branches. I will discover that your breasts are clusters of grapes and that your breath is the aroma of apples.....”

This is indeed a fantastic description of sexuality. If the bible expresses sexuality in this manner, why then do our young women not able to embrace their sexuality with more confidence?

Christianity and patriarchal beliefs in Zimbabwe have strongly influenced sexuality to the extent of developing rules and regulations to police appropriate sexual behaviour. Such policies are however up to a certain extent unfair to the women. It is lamentable that women quietly endure these rules in the name of culture as regards to what is appropriate sexual behaviour. The fundamentalist approach of the Shona culture expects women not to express their sexual desires (regarded religiously as a sin), at the same time expected to guarantee sexual satisfaction to their partners as marital duty. Sexuality education should aim to strike a balance on the religio-cultural scale that tends to favour the men. Women groups and

organizations should encourage women to reclaim their sexual prowess, ensuring that they equally share the ecstatic moment of sex and the pleasures that come along with it. There is a need for a strong shift in women's liberation when it comes to women's liberation when it comes to their sexuality, especially when it comes to women's rights to safe sexual behaviour. Although not strongly reflected in our study, Zimbabwean women are increasingly voicing out and are slowly becoming aware of their rights and informed choices in terms of safe sex, contraception and even safe motherhood.

Being aware of one's body and that of their partner is a key component of sexuality. Woefully from the results of our study, it was apparent that the Shona culture and to a certain extent Christianity, dismiss sensuality. Arguably, sensuality is also expressed in the bible in the book of Psalms 139 verse 14, "*.....everyone is wonderfully made – and since each person's body has been created with such perfect engineering and craftsmanship, it should surely be enjoyed by the person's spouse*". There is a need to include a chapter on sensuality in sexuality education because if women are taught to be comfortable and to feel good in their bodies, it will equip them with the necessary tools to confront abuse and disrespect from their sexual partners. This is yet another reason why sensuality should be included in sexuality teaching even within the church set as the ultimate display of appreciation for God, living a fulfilling, sensuous life celebrating God.

Question 3

Is the informal sexuality teaching designed and structured to provide both knowledge and skills to these young women?

The study was able to identify the type of knowledge conveyed to the girls through informal sexuality teaching by their African culture. It mostly consisted of sex education at puberty up until marriage and then continual counselling and advice afterwards.

The education at puberty up until marriage consisted of

- information on the menstrual cycle
- labia minora elongation
- *Chikapa*
- *Chinamwari*
- Abstinence
- Personal hygiene

After marriage it consisted of

- *Chikapa*
- Hygiene
- Contraception
- How to please their husbands in their marital bed
- Counselling
- General advice

The results of the study reveal that the general understanding of female anatomy amongst the interviewees was very poor. This can be supported by the data obtained from Chizororo and Natshalaya (2011), where they researched on the awareness of the female

condom by women. Their paper discloses that the women had no confidence in using the female condom, claiming that it was uncomfortable, its insertion caused pain and they thought it was too large (compared to the male condom) and not meant for their female organ. This research came about after it was cited in the local Zimbabwean papers that the use of female condoms in Zimbabwe was a success story. Analysing the circumstances, the female condom is meant to empower women over their sexual rights and reproductive decisions. Our results indicate that reproductive decisions are made by their male counterparts. Chizoro and Natshalaya's study went on to further reveal once again how traditional power imbalances and gender stereotypes influence on how women have limitations in negotiating protection with their sexual partners.

According to Motsi et al (2012), the payment of the bride prize gives the husband exclusive reproductive rights despite of her reproductive capacities, and these rights are extended to the husband's family members after the death of the husband. The young women who participated in the interviews, evidently demonstrated this through their first sexual experiences that they had little or no knowledge on how to deal with the situation. It is unfortunate that these cultural practices have been nurtured for a very long time and have now become the norm.

The young women in this study wear their sexuality differently defined by their experiences and the lessons they have been taught since birth. It is frightening and threatening how certain areas of sexuality are not explored in the culture and religion and even in schools. Some of these unexplored topics are; contraception, celibacy, adultery, casual sex, flirting, prostitution, homosexuality, masturbation, seduction, rape, sexual harassment, sadomasochism, pornography, bestiality, and paedophilia. Our study affirms that both the

religio-cultural education and the school curriculum are very silent on these issues and they treat these topics as inexistent. And yet all these are related in various ways to the vast domain of human sexuality. Although they might not be related to activities that involve the creation of new human beings they are related to the human desires and activities that should not be shunned away. They involve human desires that search for an attainment of sexual pleasure or satisfaction. It is a natural feature of human beings that certain sorts of behaviours and certain bodily organs are and can be employed either for pleasure or for reproduction, or for both.

Curriculum developers need to explore these topics both conceptually and normatively in order to clarify and elucidate the fundamental notions of sexual desires and activities. Exploring sexuality normatively will help contribute to the good or virtuous side of sexuality through determining what moral obligations to refrain from performing certain sexual acts and what moral permissions to engage in others, without thwarting the religio-cultural obligations. By exploring these issues conceptually, they will help the students to arrive at satisfactory definitions of these terms. It will certainly give rewarding results if for example explaining and conceptualizing on how seduction differ from non-violent rape (Greta, 1997). This will prepare the students to face and deal with situations of for example seduction or non-violent rape by their teachers or other elderly family members. By so doing, it puts sexuality education in Zimbabwe on the state of art with the rest of the world.

Question 4

Up to what extent do skills such as negotiation, decision making and self-assertion form the core aspects of the sexuality education, given the role they play in enabling young women to make informed choices about their sexuality?

As established beyond doubt in this study, preaching abstinence at school, at home and at church does not equip the students with the necessary tools to survive in the harsh environment where there is sexual harassment and sexual abuse that the young women live in. Parents, church elders and school teachers involved in sexuality education should not ignore the fact that globalization and greater access to information have begun to influence young people's understanding of their sexuality.

Zimbabwe is also being affected by the stunningly swift growth of social media that has had a huge impact in many countries. Readily available tips are available through internet sites, television shows, magazines and even billboards are slowly taking the role of aunties, the family elders and the custodians of sex and sexuality education. It is important to note at this point that the Zimbabwean government has taken strides in trying to cover the gap between the Shona culture and the western world, through sexuality education programs on radio in Shona and Ndebele. These programs are so far only restricted to adults and are not age appropriate for persons under the age of 18 (although they are sexually active). A number of elders referred to as radio aunties and radio grannies are invited to participate also respond to live calls that address these issues.

Although not clearly evidenced in the study, one cannot shrug off the fact that there is a growing conflict between the values of younger and older generation. There is a strong need for an intergenerational dialogue on sexuality, where activists, community elders from

different walks of life including church leaders can be invited in schools to help ponder on the discourse as rights and not simply a clash of generations and cultures.

Women activists need to scale up their advocacy around sexual rights by creating open, safe spaces where women can talk about their sexuality and their different experiences. Women sexuality in Zimbabwe has not so far been well researched on. Although there is a lot of talking going on due to the increasingly emerging cases of sexual harassment and abuse of young women at work places even in marital home, more research has to be done to help this subject being poorly understood and repressed. Literature so far has erased and brushed aside the complexities and contradictions in the sexuality realities of African and Zimbabwean women in particular as evidenced in the study. Efforts to produce well-researched, state of the art literature on women sexuality should be scaled up as a strategy to challenge the oppressive patriarchal interpretations of women sexuality. More evidence through new research strategies will help strengthen activism and advocacy on these issues and optimistically encourage open and informed communication among sexual partners.

The African culture and Christianity certainly imparted prescribed behaviours to the young women that were actively encouraged from a young age. They are taught to aspire to marriage and to prepare themselves for that event. Failure to take part in cultural practices would ultimately lead to their failure in securing a husband and it would mean they would have failed to attain the glorified state of womanhood in society, that of being a married woman and a mother.

They were expected to dress modestly and learn to abide to the typical female duties which consisted of housekeeping and childrearing. It was also a mainstay that the girls are expected to abstain from sexual intercourse until they were married. Culturally, losing one's

virginity before marriage would reduce the bride price and also bring continual shame to the woman whose integrity would be under question from relatives as well as her future husband.

After marriage, the duties of a good wife included being submissive and catering to all the needs of her husband. In general, both the cultural and Christian norms seem to have some level of concordance as regard to the women's domestic duties and societal expectations. The study results reveal that the women are groomed for housewifery and motherhood and are expected to ensure that a husband is satisfied even if it meant sacrificing her own needs for that of her husband. If the husband were to stray and have extra marital affairs then she would have to face the consequences of shame and blame for failing to adequately cater for her husband's needs. This has led to a cultural revamp that is likely to give the Shona people a new outlook to life. Some of the religio-cultural sexuality concepts have however managed to withstand and survive the storm in such a way that they are being practiced by Zimbabweans who have migrated to other countries. As an illustration, one can highlight the concept of Shona marriages conjugated with its primary purpose of procreation, therefore evidencing the phallogentric nature of the sexuality issues in the Shona culture.

However, there has been an increase in the interaction of cultures accentuated by the fading of the traditional village lifestyles. As more people are moving into more modern city lives, some elements of the traditional habits and attitudes are becoming less practical. The economic and political situation has resulted in an increase in families leaving the country to explore better opportunities in other countries all over the world.

Question 5

Are other skills like recognizing peer pressure and resisting it and asking for help and seeking advice from organizations and people that offer these services being catered for?

Education is meant to empower and emancipate women to enable them to face all sorts of challenges that they face in their sexuality. The strong grip that the culture has on women does not make it an easy task for them to acquire the necessary skills to recognize and resist peer pressure. As shown in this study, even educated women are left with no option but to succumb to cultural peer pressure in a society where organizations and care givers encourage them to strictly comply with the cultural norms if they are to hold the status of marriageable material. This study clearly shows that the greatest achievement for a Shona woman is to be a wife and a mother, no matter how many university degrees a woman might acquire, she is shunned upon by the society as long as she is not a wife and a mother. Women who have resisted cultural pressures and expectations by achieving high educational and professional standards are labelled as “unmarriageable”.

Moreover, the well-defined and established patriarchal practices leave women’s sexuality in the hands of males. Results from the interviews carried out reveal that cultural practices such as levirate marriages, sexual assaults and violations and above all, the payment of *lobola* automatically places women as unequal partners within the institution of marriage.

Women’s lack of control over their sexuality further discloses that the Shona culture is stronger than the religion and the law itself. Any peer pressure is overridden by cultural norms and any advice they seek on their sexuality is based on the strong cultural values. As teenagers, young girls may face peer pressure to be sexually adventurous but being aware of the heavy

cultural penalty they will have face, they are forced to instinctively behave accordingly due to the strong influence and control that the culture has on them.

Question 6

How relevant is the content in terms of the African culture as “non-formal” sexuality education?

Basing on the famous African proverb that says “it takes a whole village to raise a child”, one can deduce that education of an African child begins at home, within the family set up. The relevancy sexuality education within the African cultural context shows that stripping one of their own culture simply reduces their human status. The ancestral teachings that are still being implemented to date reveal that the African culture is a dignifying human aspect whose wisdom is collectively channelled from one generation to the other.

The grooming and shaping of female sexuality in Zimbabwe as evidenced in this study, serves an important purpose in the cultural lenses of the Zimbabweans. It is aimed at adequately preparing the young women for a successful and happy marriage. Marriage hence serves the purpose of creating tight bonds between different folks. The close cultural monitoring and regulation of female sexuality by the mothers, aunts and other elderly women of the society is done to safeguard her reproductive capacities and her sexual honourableness. This was evidenced by the common views stated by the young women in the study.

The interviews provided an opportunity to analyse the socio- cultural challenges implicit in the informal sexuality education where women in general need to balance their roles in encouraging their daughters to engage in flagitious sexual acts. The results in the study further reveal that the young women did not see the need to question the system that governed their sexuality. This furthermore shows that informal sexuality education despite being influenced

by numerous social factors, it is not adapting to the dynamics of the social reality of the young women.

As alluded to above all the young women came from conservative background where sexuality issues were taught behind closed doors as is expected by the Shona culture. The subject is a taboo matter to be discussed in private and never in public let alone by the opposite sex in the presence of people.

It is pertinent to mention that School based CSE guidelines in Zimbabwe call for parents to play an active role in their children's sexuality education and yet most parents also conform to the same traditional values that regards the subject of sexuality as sacred. The study reveals that discussion of sexuality between parents and children continues to be a taboo in the Zimbabwean community. Discourses of sexuality are socially assigned to aunts, uncles and grandparents, but only when the child is deemed to have reached the appropriate age. The reservation by parents in initiating sexuality discourses with their children is confirmed by a recent study in Zimbabwe, which revealed that most parents, whether rural or urban, professional or unprofessional, are reportedly not comfortable with discussing sexuality matters with their children (Moyo & Zvoushe, 2012).

Sexuality as a sensitive subject where the influence of culture and religion are more pronounced. If the authorities in the education sector expect teachers to just follow the curriculum without taking these factors into consideration, sexuality education will continue with the loop holes it presents till now. Considering that the learners come from homes in which there are cultural restrictions or traditions with regard to learning about sexuality, they may feel less free to participate in activities in which they learn about the human body and explore issues around sexuality in the school context. The results from our interviews

elucidate this overlap, there is a tendency to mix the terms 'culture' or cultural beliefs and traditions seemed to be closely tied up with religious beliefs. There is therefore a need to train and prepare sexuality education teachers to strike a balance between their religious beliefs and their cultural beliefs and practices in a conservative community like Zimbabwe.

Furthermore, the deep-rootedness of some traditional practices, myths and taboos associated with sexuality as well as the tenacity of some forms of traditional sex education continue to exert a powerful influence on contemporary ideological cornerstones of sexuality education in schools. It is, therefore, imperative for designers of sexuality education pedagogies to consider the convergent and divergent aspects and draw from strengths of the co-existing heritages in order to build an integrated sexuality education pedagogy that is culturally relevant for Zimbabwean youth. The process may involve culturalization of some aspects of the Western oriented sexuality education programs to suit their relevance to African contexts and modernizing some aspects of the traditional forms of sexuality education to conform them to modern contexts. The desired product is a sexuality education pedagogy that falls within the framework of global trends but at the same time culturally relevant.

Recommendations

Sexuality education has been faced with situations where there is a poor level of resources in schools, lack of well qualified and trained teachers and even overcrowded classrooms in some cases (UNAIDS. 2012; Undie & Benaya. 2008) Sexuality education in Africa has been a challenge in a number of countries and the major challenge faced being that related to culture and attitudes of pupils, teachers and communities (UNESCO. 2008; UNESCO 2010). Some of the details of the challenges faced are as follows:

- Elders feel that sexuality teaching in schools goes against acceptable traditional norms.
- Cultural values do not permit free discussions about sexuality in mixed sex and age groups.
- Interference from religious leaders who do not agree with teaching about sexuality before marriage or with condom use.
- Some pupils are shy or egocentric.
- Some community members have mixed feelings about sex education.
- Reaction of boys towards sexuality is challenging; they become very excited.
- Unavailability of appropriate and relevant materials by grade.
- SRH is not yet integrated into syllabus and so it is difficult to put on timetable.
- Too much work for the teacher to accommodate all the required materials.
- Language barriers.
- Pupils are not taught SRH at home. Hence they are not ready to mention actual names of genital organs or see it as an insult.
- Teachers and pupils are not used to the interactive approach and methodology.
- Qualified teachers to teach the subjects are lacking.

- Teachers have inadequate knowledge or negative attitude to sexuality education.
- Teacher-pupil relationships raise suspicion of sexual involvement.
- Large class sizes – often more than 70 pupils – make it difficult to teach.

This research highlights on how sexuality teaching is influenced by a wide range of factors i.e., social, cultural political, economic, biological, psychological, religious, judicial and even historical. The implementation of effective sexuality education programs therefore involves a lot of serious strategic planning at government ministerial level, at different governmental and non-governmental institutions that include religious institutions and at communal level, both rural and urban. This is achieved through appropriate synchronization and a good networking system that coordinates with all the organizations involved in children and youth educational system. By this, a strong link between the formal and non-formal education is established.

Although the prevailing financial constraints in the country have a negative impact on fund-raising activities for setting up or implementing of new programs, efforts should be made work with cost friendly projects and not to solely depend on foreign funding. It is of fundamental importance to put in place supervision and tracking to serve a barometer for the progress of the program. This can be achieved through viable ongoing academic research projects aimed at investigating on the different factors that negatively and positively affect the implementation of the sexuality teaching programs. For the analysis and implementation of the program, there should be an active participation of the children and youth as the focus group. The following programs can be implemented in order to bridge the gap between tradition/culture, religion and formal sexuality education in schools.

Community awareness programs:

The purpose of the Programs is to affect community members' attitudes and behaviours surrounding sexuality. That is, sensitizing parents, headmen, cultural and religious leaders to be more receptive to sexuality and life skills education. This involves. Inviting parents, initiation advisors, and religious leaders to discuss the dangers of unsafe sex and attend and facilitate workshops in sexuality education. The program should also take into account a countrywide Plan for Sexual Assault and Abuse Prevention and Awareness for Schools and the community at large, are groomed to practice awareness, assertiveness and critical thinking to prevent sexual violence. The awareness and prevention programs need to address sexuality issues and relationships that involve violence including, without limitation: role of alcohol; understanding and communicating sexual consent; normalization of and common myths about sexual abuse. These programs should bring together community members, teachers and learners to discuss issues on how lack of adequate adult supervision and poverty leads to child marriages and unhealthy, risky intergenerational relationships.

This can also be achieved through holding workshops where parents and other community members discuss cultural issues of sexuality, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. At this point, the media, particularly television and radio can be used to disseminate and educate communities. Other issues discussed include: gender inequality issues and the empowerment of marginalized and vulnerable groups in the community. This will result as a major breakthrough and good practice to encounter the cultural inhibition on discussing sexuality issues between parents and children.

Training of Student Fellow Educators:

Student fellow educators are provided with information, communication and sexuality education materials which they are supposed to use in schools. Fellow or auxiliary education

programs can be complemented with other activities such as competitions on arts, debates, role play, poetry, drama, dances, singing, and distribution of campaign materials, posters, pamphlets or going on road shows on different relevant sexuality issues. These road shows can be hosted by the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare and the Ministry of Education and Culture. Clubs can be formed in schools where fellow education activities are held as part of their extra-curricular activities. This training should convey common messages on sexuality that are taught both at home and at school. Sensitize parents on sexuality, especially new entrants, incorporating traditional good elements of culture in teaching and working with the community to change harmful practices.

Training teachers in sexuality guidance and counselling skills:

This can be achieved by having adequate and competent trained teachers who accept teaching sexuality and life skills education. Teachers can be trained at pre-service level and in-service training level using the few existing experienced and qualified people. That is, trained teachers can also train the rest of the teachers in their community. To motivate trained teachers to train others, they can be encouraged to do so through incentives. Provincial community or District Education Officers can be invited to participate in some sessions of the training programs in order for them to address teachers and learners the importance of the sexuality guidance and counselling training program. Training of teachers in guidance and counselling they are able to provide support to learners and teachers in schools. The ministry should guarantee that there is at least one trained counsellor in every school.

Teachers are trained and encouraged to use interactive methods and to see their benefits. They should share tips with other teachers on how to manage interactive methodologies in large classes with poor facilities. Select methodologies that teachers and pupils are

comfortable with, for example: role-play, drama, miming and stories help to make sexuality and life skills real. Give group work using work cards for pupils to discuss freely. They should endeavour using materials that give step-by-step guidance on how to use them. Finally, trainers should promote clubs where children can learn because it reduces shyness and builds confidence in them.

Capacity Development for Sexuality Education Implementers

One of the most essential aspects of a successful implementation of sexuality teaching programs is the Capacitation of educators. This is can be achieved through in-service of teachers and the people involved in curriculum development programs. By so doing, the learners will be able to accept and discuss sexual matters comfortably. Reaching a point where school heads introduce important topics the role they play in one's sexuality. It is important for community leaders, church leaders, teachers and parents agree on acceptable language to use for body parts, including English and local languages. Teaching sexuality and life skills regularly and slowly will help the learners to be more receptive and to get used to the appropriate sexuality terms and not to regard them as "insults". One important tool is through empowering and encouraging girls to actively participate in debates on sexuality topics without being judged, giving girls roles to play regularly and facilitating same sex discussions and activities at first. Teachers should guarantee gender equality by assigning leadership roles to both girls and boys.

In conclusion, the points mentioned above apply to learning about sexuality for all age groups. As evidenced by the results of this study, there is a need to invest in participatory activities to find out about participants' dreams, expectations and fears to explain the purpose of sexuality education programs. There is a need to inform the participants that the programs

will not be assuming anything about anyone's sexual lives, experiences, sexual orientation or HIV status. These programs will help clarify and explain the benefits of talking more openly about sexuality in order to better take action to improve sexuality teaching in schools. It is important to ensure that the learning activities do not result in any participant being sexually harassed, bullied, punished or exposed in public for any ideas or behaviour that they talk about in the sessions of each program.

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