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Mabasa, Tintswalo

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BELIEFS AND PERCEPTIONS OF ADOLESCENTS ABOUT SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS:

A CASE OF TWO PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SOWETO, GAUTENG

A dissertation on a research study presented to

The Department of Social Work

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The University of the Witwatersrand

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Social Work

By

Tintswalo Mabasa

April, 2021

Supervisor: Prof Edmarie Pretorius

DECLARATION

I Tintswalo Mabasa hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original and unaided work. I have acknowledged every source used by means of correctly citing and referencing all sources of information according to APA format of referencing. This dissertation has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University and is being submitted for the first time for the degree of Master of Arts in Social Work in the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Signature: T. L. Mabasa Date: 29 April 2021

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ABSTRACT

Navigating sexual relationships during the adolescence phase is a complex and challenging experience for adolescents globally as the outcomes often affect their education. In South Africa, this is seen in the incidence of unplanned teenage pregnancies that remain on the rise. Several factors influence and confront adolescents that cause them to form sexual relationships. These include exposure to sexually explicit mass media material, peer pressure, lack of parental guidance, poverty and, economic constraints that successively put adolescents' health and education at risk. Health risks include contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs), such as HIV and AIDS. Additional risks are teenage pregnancy, teen births, and abortions. Educational risks are poor scholastic performance and school dropouts. It is evident that when sexual relationships are not dealt with responsibly, they can negatively influence adolescents' health and education. The study explored adolescents' beliefs and perceptions about sexual relationships by employing a qualitative research approach. A multiple case study design was employed. Twenty adolescent participants representing both sexes were selected using purposive sampling. Four focus groups were conducted, two focus groups per school – one focus group for boys and one for girls. Each focus group had five participants representing the different sexes. The research instrument used was a focus group guide, and the method of data collection was focus groups. The method of data analysis used was thematic analysis. Findings revealed that sex education programmes, including the life orientation subject curriculum, do not tackle all issues surrounding sexual relationships and the challenges adolescents face when negotiating sexual encounters. Despite the positive views that adolescents have regarding sexual relationships, negotiating the sexual part of the relationship remains a challenge for most adolescents. Majority of adolescent boys and girls disclosed that adolescents feel unease to discuss the sexual encounter and gaining consent beforehand. Therefore they shy away from verbal communication and resort to non-verbal communication tactics and gestures to express their sexual interest. In contrast, female participants believe that it was easier to use the indirect strategy of giving excuses rather than submitting to their partner's sexual demands. Recommendations made include revising the content of Life Orientation (LO) curriculum, engaging experts and guest speakers to educate about sexual education topics, conducting focus group discussions with learners facilitated by School Social Workers. Recommendations for future research include making use of different data collection methodologies.

Key Words: Adolescents, Beliefs, Perceptions, Public Secondary Schools, Sexual Relationships, Soweto

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL ORIENTATION AND INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a general orientation and introduction to the study. The statement of the problem and rationale for the study are discussed. The research questions, study aims, and objectives, and an overview of the research methods used are highlighted. The identified keywords are defined. The chapter concludes by providing an orientation of the structure of the rest of the chapters of the dissertation.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Navigating sexual relationships is challenging for adolescents globally. Developed countries such as the United States, have high rates of teenage pregnancy, teenage births, sexual transmitted infections (STIs) and termination of pregnancies (Short, Catallozzi, Breitkopf, Auslander, & Rosenthal, 2013). It was discovered that these "rates are among the highest for western industrialized nations" (Short et al., 2013, p. 3). The incidence of teenage pregnancy has also been in the rise for African countries such as Ghana and Malawi. These African countries have high rates of teenage pregnancy and the prominent factors of this amongst adolescents are "early sex and marriage, low contraceptive use, low educational levels, low socio-economic status, lack of knowledge of reproductive and sexual health, gender inequity, and physical/sexual violence" (Kaphagawani & Kalipeni, 2017, p. 694). A study in Ghana found that sexual matters are rarely discussed with the youth (Donkor & Lariba, 2017). Therefore, these young people lack crucial information about the biological changes that take place in their bodies during adolescence leading to unplanned pregnancies (Donkor & Lariba, 2017). This shows that navigating sexual relationships remains a huge challenge for adolescents worldwide.

During adolescence, most young people get involved in all kinds of romantic relationships that are characterised by dating, feelings of tenderness, love and commitments (Newman & Newman, 2012). However, this is considered normal for adolescents to start embarking on romantic and sexual relationships as they transition from childhood to adulthood (Madkour,

Farhat, Halpern, Godeau, & Gabhainn, 2010). It appears that adolescents, both sexes, already start sexual relationships as early as from 10 to 19 years of age (Collins, Welsh, & Furman, 2009). As these relationships progress, sexual behaviours follow, starting from kissing, touching, and leading to sexual intercourse (Short et al., 2013).

According to Newman and Newman (2012), young people are likely to be infatuated with rock stars, athletes, movie stars, or a crush on boys and girls in their surroundings, including the school and their neighbourhood. As young people enter sexual relationships, they learn to flirt, approach, and engage with different gender groups (Newman & Newman, 2012). Peer groups with which adolescents affiliate themselves with play a fundamental role in socialising adolescents to partake in sexual relationships (Braun-Courville & Rojas, 2009). As in other countries, in South Africa, scholars have noted that adolescents are encouraged by their peers to engage in sexual intercourse (Mchunu, Peltzer, Tutshana, & Seutlwadi, 2012). Moreover, it has been found that adolescent boys experience more peer pressure to engage in sexual activities than adolescent girls because, in comparison to boys, girls are less susceptible to peer pressure that influences them to engage in sex (Heeralal, 2014).

In addition, accessibility of mass media platforms such as television is at the forefront of sex education, as is peer groups, because it is seldom that parents educate their children on sexual matters (Campus, 2018; Mudhovozi, Ramarumo, & Sodi, 2012; Phuhongtong, Homchampa, & Sirithanawuttichai, 2018). Studies found that when adolescents use the internet for entertainment and information-seeking purposes, they often stumble accidentally on pornographic sites (Braun-Courville & Rojas, 2009; Svedin, Åkerman, & Priebe, 2011; Wright & Randall, 2012). Again, such explicit exposure to sexual websites has potential implications for adolescents' attitudes towards sexual relationships, for example, a permissive attitude towards having multiple sex partners and casual sex (Braun-Courville & Rojas, 2009). Consequently, these factors increase the rates of unwanted teenage pregnancy, teenage births, abortions, and sexually transmitted infections (STI's) (Short, Catallozzi, Breitkoft, Auslander, & Rosenthal, 2013).

Studies by Donevan and Mattebo (2017), Phuhongtong et al. (2018) and Short et al. (2013) have shown that adolescents ranging from the ages of 10 to 19 have the highest teenage pregnancy rates that eventually lead to childbirth globally. These high rates of teenage pregnancy indicate that this group is engaging in sexual relationships. Other studies have highlighted that this age group also has the highest rate of HIV and AIDS cases (Scott,

Wildsmith, Welti, Ryan, Schelar, & Steward-Streng, 2011). These are some of the indicators suggesting that adolescents engage in sexual relationships at a very early stage of development. Studies by Phuhongtong et al. (2018) and Short et al. (2013) have identified a variety of factors like exposure to sexually explicit magazines, television, having access to internet pornographic sites, economic hardships, broken families, social relationships, a quest for academic excellence, curiosity, and unregulated media content might influence adolescents to form sexual relationships at this early stage of development.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Adolescents in South Africa and other countries are increasingly engaging in risky sexual behaviours and have been reported to engage in early initiation of sexual intercourse, which is often unprotected sexual activity (Madkour, Farhat, Halpern, Godeau, & Gabhainn, 2010). Consequently, this might lead to a high level of Sexual Transmitted Infections (STIs) and the Human Immuno-deficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) (Scott et al., 2011).

Heeralal (2014) found that adolescence is a period in the development of heightened sexual risk. This adolescent stage is often characterised by experimenting with the newfound sexuality, making adolescents vulnerable to sexual risks and sexual behavioural risks (French & Neville, 2017). Due to the developmental stage of adolescents, they are also at a higher sexual risk of contracting STIs because they are inexperienced in communicating their sexual needs and desires to their partners (French & Neville, 2017). The inexperience in communication results in adolescents being at risk of forced sex or early sexual initiation related to several health consequences such as unwanted teenage pregnancy and HIV and AIDS, and other STIs (Lynch, Jewell, Golding, & Kembel, 2017). Evidence of significant sexual violence against women makes it more critical that the strategies that young people use when negotiating sex are learned early and that they are aware of the factors that lead to the coercion of one sexual partner by the other (Draughon et al., 2015).

In this study, the researcher explored the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents about sexual relationships and the views of adolescents on the sexual education programmes offered in schools. Existing studies conducted by Heeralal (2014) and others highlight the perceptions of rape within sexual relationships by adolescents in South Africa (e.g., some adolescents believe rape is an expression by men of their domination over women). Today, young people are confronted with unsafe sexual practices that could affect and compromise their focus on

education, especially when misguided and misinformed when engaging in sexual activities. At the time of this current study, limited studies focused on how adolescents perceive sexual relationships at the secondary school level because most adolescents become exposed to sexual experiences. Again, there was need for research that gives voice to adolescents regarding their own experiences and add to the mainstream discourse on adolescent sexual relationships. The study has the potential to contribute to existing literature that could expand and add new ideas on how adolescents perceive sexual relationships at their age and the strategies they utilise when they negotiate sex. The strategies that adolescents employ to navigate challenges that come with their sexual experiences are likely to be helpful information for developing a guideline for appropriate awareness programmes around sexual education for primary and secondary school children.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study:

- What are the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents about sexual relationships?
- What are the views of adolescents on the sexual education programmes offered in schools?

1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

The study's primary aim was to explore adolescents' beliefs and perceptions of sexual relationships and their views on the sexual education programmes implemented at secondary schools.

The secondary objectives of the study were:

i. To explore the views of adolescents regarding sexual relationships.
ii. To highlight if there are similarities and differences between male and female adolescents' perceptions about sexual relationships.
iii. To explore which strategies adolescents use when negotiating sexual relationships.
iv. To explore what sexual education programmes have been implemented in secondary schools to address issues around sexual relationships.
v. To explore adolescents' views on how secondary schools can enhance programmes on sexual education.

1.6 AN OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used a qualitative research approach rooted in the interpretive and constructivism paradigms. The study used a multiple case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the unit of analysis. A sample of 20 study participants was selected using purposive sampling as a technique and drawn from a population of approximately 2100 learners found in two public secondary schools in Soweto. Participants in grades ten and eleven, aged between 14 and 18, were selected for the sample. A focus group guide was used to collect data during focus group discussions with the participants. The focus group discussions were audio-recorded and transcribed into English. Thematic analysis was used to do the data analysis. I engaged in transcribing and reading the focus group transcripts multiple times and re-reading the transcriptions for coding and developing themes. Lastly, I interpreted the collected and transcribed data to present the main findings according to the study objectives, highlight the key findings, prepare conclusions, and make recommendations.

1.7 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The following key concepts are relevant for the study:

Adolescents

An adolescent is any individual who can either be a girl or boy, developing from childhood to adulthood and usually falls between the ages of 10 to 19 years (World Health Organisation (WHO), 2018). Locally, the South African Constitution of 1996 defines an adolescent as any person below 18 years (SA Constitution, 1996). For this study, the WHO definition of adolescent is adopted.

Beliefs

A belief is a state or habit of the mind that places confidence in a person or thing (Gardenhire, 2010). In this study, a belief refers to what a person accepts as the truth or what is right about something (Gardenhire, 2010).

Perceptions

Perceptions refer to a “cognition or apprehension obtained through the sensors and intellect, as well as ideas or notions arising from such knowledge” (Marrin, 2013, p. 9). In this study, the

term perception means the ideas and notions that people derive from the world almost exclusively through sensory and intellectual capabilities (Marrin, 2013).

Public Secondary schools

A public secondary school (sometimes referred to as a high school) refers to a third level of the South African schooling system, where learners further their education after completing their primary school education (Pinnock, 2011). Secondary school education has five grades, divided into two phases: senior and further education and training phases (Pinnock, 2011). The senior phase consists of grades eight and nine, while further education and training consist of grades 10 to 12 (Pinnock, 2011). This definition of a secondary school is adopted for this study.

Sexual relationships

Collins et al. (2009, p. 632) define sexual or romantic relationships as "mutually acknowledged on-going, voluntary interactions, commonly marked by expressions of affection and sexual behaviour". In this study, this definition will guide the understanding of sexual relationships.

Soweto

Soweto is an acronym for South West Townships. Soweto is a township managed by the Metropolitan Municipality in Gauteng, South Africa. This township was established during the apartheid regime.

1.8 ORGANISATION OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation has been organised into five subsequent chapters.

Chapter One includes the introduction to the study, background of the study, and the problem statement and rationale for the study. The research questions, aims, and objectives of the study are explained. It provides an overview of the research methodology and definition of key concepts used in the study.

Chapter Two provides the introduction, theoretical framework relevant to the study, and the study's literature review. The literature review discusses adolescence as a development phase, factors that shape the development during adolescence, perceptions of adolescents about sexual relationships, risks of adolescents' sexual activities, and the relevant legislation, regulations, and guidelines concerning adolescent's sexual activities, and provides a summary.

Chapter Three covers the research methodology used for the research study. It begins by providing an introduction, description of the research paradigm, research approach, and design. A discussion of the population, sample and sampling procedures is presented. It provides the research instrument, method of data collection, and method of data analysis. Subsequently, the chapter discusses the study's trustworthiness, ethical considerations, study limitations and delimitations, followed by a summary.

In Chapter Four the collected data are presented and discussed.

Chapter Five, the last chapter of the dissertation, summarises the main findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the theoretical framework relevant to the study and describes adolescence as a phase of development, followed by discussing adolescents' development characteristics, explicitly focusing on adolescents' biological, psychological, and social development. The second part of the discussion will focus on factors that shape adolescence, including their family system, traditional and cultural beliefs and rituals, poverty, economic constraints, peer pressure, experimentation with substances, and mass media. Furthermore, the section will discuss adolescents' perceptions about sexual relationships and the risks of adolescents' sexual activities, including teenage pregnancy, poor school performance and school dropout, and health risks of adolescent sexual activities. Lastly, the section will highlight and discuss the relevant legislation, regulations, and guidelines related to adolescents' sexual activities.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK RELEVANT TO THE STUDY

The study adopted Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory to understand the influence that the broader environmental context has on the developing individual, including all the mutual interrelationships between the individual and the various structures such as the family, school, and the community. Bronfenbrenner's theory is based on the notion that an individual and the individual's behaviour cannot be understood separately from the individual's context as other people and the environment contribute and shape the development of the individual (Ryan, 2001). Therefore, it is paramount to take into cognisance the individual's environmental systems that play a role in the development of the individual as proposed by Bronfenbrenner, namely: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem.

The microsystem consists of individuals that form part of the child's immediate environment and with which the child has direct contact (Ryan, 2001). This system is characterised by relationships and interactions between the child and immediate groups of people surrounding the child, namely: parents, caregivers, siblings, teachers, classmates, family, school and friends (Dawes & Donald, 2000). The child is shaped as he or she grows by the interactions occurring between the child and the immediate groups.

The mesosystem is formed from interconnected microsystems that link the developing individual from one environmental context to another, such as learners moving from their homes to school for education purposes (Watts, Cockcroft, & Duncan, 2009). In this study, this system will give an understanding of how associations and influences from differing parts of the microsystems connected have on a developing child. An example of this could be that children may come from families that are not supportive, nurturing, and caring and yet be supported, nurtured, and cared for by educators at school. Therefore, it can be depicted that the school microsystem also provides a support system that protects children from feeling emotionally neglected at home. As children grow into adolescence, they may not be exposed to sex education at home but may only be introduced to this information at school. Therefore, the study adopted this framework to examine and understand adolescents as individuals who belong in an environment where they acquire information on sexual relationships and simultaneously learn to engage in sexual relationships.

The exosystem encompasses other systems in which the child does not directly function, but at the same time, these systems can have a substantial impact on the development of the child (Ryan, 2001). The exosystem involves the parent's workplace, the neighbourhood, and community at large (Dawes & Donald, 2000).

The macrosystem signifies the broader context that involves cultural values, customs, and laws that also affects the developing individual (Ryan, 2001).

Lastly, the chronosystem refers to all of the experiences that an individual has had during his or her lifetime, including environmental events, major life transitions, and historical events (Hook, Watts, & Cockroft, 2002). Intergenerational effects of poverty and parents' economic status can be transmitted from them to their children (Neves, 2012). This happens because children are given care, access to health care, nurturing and access to education through parents (Neves, 2012). Hence parents' characteristics and circumstances shape their children's development – physically, psychologically, and cognitively, and mines their potential economic productivity (Neves, 2012). Literature has shown that high-income families produce children who are more likely to finish their schooling, while families with low income produce children who are more likely not to complete their schooling (Mueni, 2015; Wood, 2010).

2.3 ADOLESCENCE AS A DEVELOPMENT STAGE

Adolescence is a period defined as an intermediary and transition stage that starts in childhood and extends to adulthood (Sawyer, Azzopardi, Wickremarathne, & Patton, 2018). During this period, adolescents transition from childhood to adulthood by maturing physically and sexually (Zastrow, Kirst-Ashman, & Hessenuaer, 2019). This is the typical time where adolescents experience massive body changes and begin their journey to discover themselves and figure out who they are and how they fit into society. They experience the awakening of sexual desires, pressure to conform to their peer groups, and intense conflicts between adolescents and their parents begin to occur (Sheafor & Horejsi, 2012; Zastrow et al., 2019).

2.3.1 The characteristics of development in adolescence

2.3.1.1 Biological development

One of the physical changes in adolescence is the growth spurt. During adolescence, the growth spurt refers to the rapid increase in height and weight for both girls and boys (Weiten, 2014). On average, the peak growth occurs at 11 to 13 years of age, where girls are found to experience this peak growth earlier than boys, which makes them taller, stronger, and weigh more than boys (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2010). However, after the growth spurt, boys appear to be larger than girls. Boys tend to have broader shoulders and long legs and forearms, while girls get more outspread on their pelvic area, hips, and buttocks (Zastrow et al., 2019).

The other physical change which marks the beginning of adolescence is puberty. Puberty is the stage in which sexual and reproductive organs (reproductive system) reach maturity, resulting in adolescence (Zastrow et al., 2019). During this stage, the body parts increase drastically in size for both girls and boys, and their sex/reproductive organs become functional (Newman & Newman, 2012). This rapid increase in body size is coupled with physical changes to their body related to their sexual functioning. The physical changes involve the development of primary and secondary sex characteristics. The primary sex characteristics that develop in both girls and boys are sex organs responsible for reproduction (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). In females, primary sex characteristics include the uterus, vagina, and ovaries, whereas for males, it is the penis, prostate gland, and testes (Newman & Newman, 2014). Major sex glands in females are ovaries because they produce both sex hormones and eggs that bring about fertilization, while sex glands for males are testes that produce both sex hormones and sperms (Newman & Newman, 2014).

Secondary sex characteristics distinguish the two sexes from one another but play no role in reproduction. Additional outside appearances include menstruation and breast enlargement for girls and nocturnal emissions – wet dreams for boys (Zastrow et al., 2019). Together both sexes experience secular trends, hair growth, growth of reproductive organs, and changes in voice and skin (Zastrow et al., 2019).

Moreover, boys and girls experience physical changes in their bodies, and their brains continue to develop by going through physical changes due to the production of new hormones (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). Boys than girls greatly experience these changes. As the brain undergoes physical changes, adolescents might find themselves exploring mind-altering substances such as alcohol and tobacco, which have devastating effects for them (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). Body changes in adolescence put them at risk of being vulnerable as they tend to engage in many behaviours that threaten their health, such as experimenting with smoking cigarettes, taking illegal drugs, and drinking alcohol (Loke & Mak, 2013a). For example, those that drink alcohol extensively may impair their mental functioning at a later stage in life (Loke & Mak, 2013b).

As adolescents experience body changes, they begin to be self-conscious about their body image, and they might have issues about their physical appearance and body image (Zastrow et al., 2019). According to Zastrow et al. (2019), a person's level of self-esteem depends on how they perceive their body's physical appearance and attractiveness. This means that if they perceive themselves as attractive, they tend to be more self-confident and satisfied with themselves and vice versa. Concerns regarding changes to the outward appearance that occur during a growth spurt, such as weight gain, are more common among girls than boys (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2010). However, the growth spurt is slow and happens at a later stage for some boys compared to others. Boys who mature late may feel conspicuous and inferior because they appear smaller and younger in size than others who are in the same age group (Zastrow et al., 2019). Subsequently, these feelings of inferiority and conspicuousness lower their self-esteem and adjustment abilities as they are not respected and given the same attention given to more mature-looking boys (Zastrow et al., 2019).

On the other hand, boys who mature early have the advantage of being popular and are often the leaders in schools. They are poised, relaxed, and good-natured; their verge for sports and admiration of their friends increase their sense of self-worth (Zastrow et al., 2019). The disadvantages of early maturation include a greater risk of engaging in delinquent acts and the

use of alcohol and drugs (Zastrow et al., 2019). Early maturing boys are often attributed to possessing more decision-making skills, perceptiveness, and leadership abilities than they do (Zastrow et al., 2019). They are vulnerable to join old-aged peers who will expose them to situations, and they are not emotionally and intellectually prepared (Zastrow et al., 2019).

Furthermore, girls who mature earlier are vulnerable to more significant risks such as smoking, drinking, depression, eating disorders, engaging in delinquent acts, striving to be independent of their parents earlier, acquiring older friends and their bodies responding to males, which leads them to start dating and have sexual experiences earlier (Zastrow et al., 2019). Having mentioned that, girls who mature early commonly cohabit and marry easier and are less likely to complete their secondary education (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2010). Girls who mature late are most likely to feel anxious as their maturity is prolonged; however, they are more likely to do better at school than other learners (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2010).

Adolescence is a period of sexual development, and as a result, there is an increased number of teenagers having sexual intercourse. Adolescents are said to engage in sexual intercourse before the right time due to the surge of hormones that their body is experiencing or because they are curious about it or ready for it (Zastrow et al., 2019). Therefore, the relatively high prevalence of unplanned teenage pregnancy shows that teenagers are having sexual intercourse at an early age, and both girls and boys become teen parents.

Sexual relationships for adolescents play a significant role of transitioning them to their first sexual intercourse. According to Campus (2018), both boys and girls at this stage share similar incentives that drive them to engage in early sexual relationships. Sexual relationships for adolescents have been found to be strongly associated with HIV/AIDS and unplanned pregnancies for adolescents by various studies (Doyle, Mavedzenge, Plummer, & Ross, 2012; Scott et al., 2011). This is because adolescents are less likely to use condoms and contraceptives for their first sexual intercourse (Chandra-Mouli, McCarraher, Phillips, Williamson, & Hainsworth, 2014; Madkour et al., 2010). Again, adolescents and contraceptive use have been extensively documented. All of these studies have substantial evidence suggesting that the likelihood of adolescents to use condoms and contraceptives is commonly low when having their first sexual intercourse or during the first few times of sexual intercourse (Scott et al., 2011). Some do not use contraceptives as frequently as they have sex, while some fail to use contraceptives because they are embarrassed and are worried about keeping the contraceptives confidential and private from their parents (Zastrow et al., 2019). The majority of adolescents

believe that they are less likely to fall pregnant when having sex for the first time or the first few times (Scott et al., 2011; Zastrow et al., 2019).

The lack of sexual education also adds to the failure to use contraceptives because adolescents may feel uncomfortable discussing sexual matters with their partners and vice versa, which subsequently leads to inadequate information on sexual matters (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2010).

Other predictors of teenage pregnancy include believing in erroneous myths that adolescents are at a stage where they are not old enough to conceive, that people their age do not become pregnant the first time they have sex (Zastrow et al., 2019). Their perceptions are that they will only fall pregnant if they have intercourse frequently, and others do not want to be bothered by using contraception (Zastrow et al., 2019). Some feel that sexual activity is not pleasurable when they use contraceptives, while some believe that there are certain times of the month in which they are safe to have sex and that withdrawal before ejaculation is one effective method of preventing pregnancy (Zastrow et al., 2019). It is evident that unsafe sexual practices, inconsistent contraceptive use, and unprotected sexual activities put many girls at risk of untimed pregnancy, and adolescents find themselves becoming pregnant for several reasons, as highlighted (Thobejane, 2015). Lastly, teenage pregnancy is not the only factor that results from unprotected sexual intercourse. Another outcome of unprotected sex includes STIs such as chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, pubic lice, scabies, trichomoniasis, genital herpes, HIV, and human papillomavirus (HPV) (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2010).

Studies suggest that the likelihood of boys becoming teen fathers is when they come from low-income households, engage in delinquent acts, impregnate girls to gain a social status, infrequent use of contraceptives and have poor school performance (Paschal, Lewis-Moss, & Hsiao, 2011; Weber, 2012; Weed & Nicholson, 2015). One of the studies also supported that teen fathers tend to be involved in deviant behaviours such as gang membership, fighting, and substance use (Newman & Newman, 2014; Weber, 2012). Other depictions of teenage fathers include having violent and maybe criminal behaviour and being absent fathers (Weber, 2012). On the other hand, girls are judged more or less the same as boys when they become teen mothers, such as that they have been attributed of being poor, alone, vulnerable, and with suspect morals (Weed & Nicholson, 2015). Teen mothers are generally judged negatively for various reasons that include their youth, not yet fit to be a mother, immorality of being an

unwed parent, suspicions of substance use, criminal behaviour, and irresponsible behaviour, ignorance, laziness, and at risk for child abuse or neglect (Weed & Nicholson, 2015).

Sex in most communities is culturally framed as a taboo subject to talk about (Nambambi & Mufune, 2011). In most instances, discussions around sex happen either with elders advising the youth or with peers advising each other. Again, direct expressions are not used during sex discussions. Instead, they use "language coated with euphemisms, politeness, idioms, gestures, and symbols" because the explicit or direct expression is considered disrespectful or disgraceful (Ndinda, Uzodike, Chimbwete, & Mgeyane, 2011, p. 2). When parents talk to their children concerning sex, they often limit their discussions to the importance of virginity and side-line issues such as sexual activity and its consequences and share information on reproduction health services (Mudhovozi et al., 2012). Parents fear corrupting their children due to being explicit as they believe that they will promote sexual activity or sexual experimentation in their children. Therefore, they resort to impart messages associated with danger, shame and fear, and the value and honour that comes with maintaining virginity (Mudhovozi et al., 2012).

Good communication between parents and young people on sexual matters has the potential of increasing the use of contraceptives, the time taken to become sexually active, girls become less likely to fall prey to premarital pregnancy, reduce multiple sexual partners and STI's (Mudhovozi et al., 2012; Nambambi & Mufune, 2011). Parents might not impart sexual education to adolescents because of embarrassment, unawareness of what to discuss, lack of confidence, and poor parental communication skills, apart from these, fear that sex education will lead to sexual experimentation and the lack of traditions, which usually leads parents to discuss sexual matters with their children and fear to corrupt their children (Nambambi & Mufane, 2011). As much as sex is considered a taboo subject, adolescents direly need discussions around sexual matters because studies and statistics have revealed that a significant number of adolescents are engaging in sexual activities and should therefore be educated to be more responsible in their sexual relationships to avoid issues such as teenage pregnancy and contracting of STIs.

2.3.1.2 Psychological development

Erikson indicates that adolescence is the time of self-development and identity formation (Kerpelman, McElwain, Pittman, & Adler-Baeder, 2016). Exploring one's identity helps promote a clear identity, which is important in adolescence for adolescents' subsequent

functioning in adulthood (Kerpelman et al., 2016). According to Erikson, the primary task during adolescence is to develop a sense of self, and identity (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2010). Adolescents explore different and possible selves to try to work out a stable sense of self, which will ultimately result in a stable formation of their identity (Zastrow et al., 2019). During this period, adolescents partake in several roles and incorporate these roles into a perception of self (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). For example, adolescents may explore their sense of self by belonging to peer relationships (peer groups) to get the sense of being a friend (Newman & Newman, 2012).

Similarly, adolescents explore intimate relationships to figure out what it means to be an intimate partner (Beyers & Seiffge-Krenke, 2010; Newman & Newman, 2014). This then makes identity formation important during adolescence because it is a developmental process in which adolescents explore and integrate their experiences and social role expectations into how they view themselves and how they are perceived by other individuals (Kerpelman et al., 2016). It is argued by Kerpelman et al. (2016), that individuals collect and contemplate information by exploring and encountering certain experiences and integrating the information and experiences into their identity. In contrast, Erikson has believed that failure to accomplish each developmental task will result in conflicts in other subsequent stages, which may complicate an adolescent's development into adulthood (Beyers & Seiffge-Krenke, 2010). Again, Erikson further argued that failure to integrate these roles and information from experiences to their identity would result in conflicting roles that they may not cope with and cause them to suffer from role confusion (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2010).

Furthermore, Erikson believes that identity formation occurs throughout adolescent years and stretches to early adulthood and believed that intimate relationships occur in young adulthood. In contrast, Collins has focused on the developmental significance of adolescent romantic relationships, and his standpoint is that the development of intimate relationships occurs in adolescence and that romantic relationships are vital for adolescents. They have an essential impact on the subsequent functioning of adolescents in adulthood (Kerpelman et al., 2016).

Moral development focuses on children gaining the ability to distinguish right or wrong and construct moral judgments (Zastrow et al., 2019). Lawrence Kohlberg proposed a sequence of three levels of moral development in which each level consists of two distinct stages. During the pre-conventional level, the child's behavioural self-control is based on whether the child will receive a punishment or a reward as an outcome of the behaviour (Kohlberg, 1971).

Individuals obey rules and make decisions based on their distinction, sense, or thinking of what is good or bad to avoid punishment and harmful consequences or receive positive consequences (Zastrow et al., 2019). In the first stage of this level, individuals do as they are told to avoid being punished, meaning that when a behaviour or an action is perceived as morally wrong, it is avoided because punishment will follow (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). In stage two, individuals obey rules or do right to be rewarded or receive compensation (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2010).

In stage three of the conventional level, the focus is on seeking the approval of others and adopt good behaviour to avoid disapproval, which means the value is placed on good behaviour and being nice to others to please them (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2010). In stage four, laws are seen as universal, and because laws are the same for everyone, they need to be obeyed. Authority figures are also obeyed in order to maintain the social order (Kohlberg, 1971). Again, in level five, which is post-conventional, the moral choice is determined by socially acceptable laws, whereas in stage six, individuals' base their behaviour on universal principles they choose to follow and ground their decisions on their sense of what is right or wrong despite what the law stipulates (Zastrow et al., 2019).

When adolescents develop their faith, they begin to think abstractly and develop the ability to conceptualise and use more abstract concepts to apply information in new ways (Zastrow et al., 2019). Adolescents start to think about their thinking to reflect upon their stories and name and synthesise their meanings during this stage (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). Young people “develop attachments to beliefs, values, and elements of personal style that link them” in conforming relations with the most significant others among their family, peer, and other non-family adults (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015, p. 35).

2.3.1.3 Social development

As teenagers develop their identity, they explore other relationships with others, which often leads them to distance themselves from their parents and other adults in their lives (Newman & Newman, 2012). Teenagers begin to establish their independence and internal competence to function without their parents and distance themselves from their parents. These shifts away from parents deprive teenagers of parental or adult support when they encounter a crisis. Although parents are no longer seen as integral parts of their lives, parents are still essential parts of their lives as they cannot fully act independently of their parents (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2010). At the same time, adolescents need their parents to provide for their basic

needs such as food, shelter, clothing, and economic needs (Zastrow et al., 2019). Whenever they need help, parents are the closest to offer them help, however, adolescents think they know better than their parents, but at a later stage, adolescents realise that parents know more than they do (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015).

Adolescence is the period where young people rebel against their parents and reject their guidance and opinions as old-fashioned and irrelevant to their current time (Zastrow et al., 2019). They do things that may come as a shock to their parents to demonstrate to their parents that now they can stand on their own and will navigate and take ownership of their lives themselves (Zastrow et al., 2019). Those who are more successful in this development are raised in families where parents have instilled in them self-reliance, responsibility, and self-respect (Zastrow et al., 2019). Those who struggle to shift from reliance to autonomy are raised by parents who are overprotective or permissive and lack interest in their children's behaviour (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). They often struggle to make critical decisions and cannot fulfil their responsibilities as they have not learned the essence of appropriate behaviour and decisions (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2010).

During adolescence, peers stand out to be the most influential individuals for adolescents. Adolescents belong to peer groups where they are influenced around their social activities, study habits, dress, sexual behaviour, use or non-use of drugs, vocal pursuits, and hobbies by other peer group members (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2010). Adolescents identify more with their peers because they believe they share the same values, beliefs, attitudes, abilities, and interests as other people from older age groups and younger age groups (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2010). From this discussion, it is evident that adolescents are influenced to behave in specific ways that create conflict between them and their parents in areas such as doing “homes chores, use of time, attitude towards studies, expenditure of money, morals and manners, choice of friends, clothes selection, use of phone, dating practices, and use of the car” (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2010, p. 330). Therefore, it can be argued that peer affiliation and friendships play an integral part of shifting adolescents from being independent to being self-sufficient.

Young people often find themselves in situations of homelessness and powerlessness due to poverty. Poverty is a contributing factor that often land adolescents into homelessness. In cases of poverty, social workers need to empower adolescents from disadvantaged communities by following four stages to empower them (Zastrow et al., 2019). In stage one, social workers need to make young people understand their powerlessness by allowing them to vent out their

despair, disappointment, fear, and hurt before focusing on positive change (Zastrow et al., 2019). Stage two is about awareness and mutual education whereby young people are encouraged to share and discuss their painful experiences in the same way they have experienced them and picking up themes in their narratives that characterise their lives (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2010). Stage three is focused on dialogue and solidarity, which is achieved by giving them a platform where they share personal narratives and feelings with others to learn and give support to each other (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2010). In their quest for empowerment, they can stand in solidarity, discussing their rights to education, services, income, housing, and legal assistance (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2010). In stage four, the focus is action and political identity where young people need to be empowered to take the initiative and confidently seek to better their lives through interactions and good communication with professionals, family, service providers, and legal system representatives who will help them change and achieve a quality life (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2010).

2.4. FACTORS THAT SHAPE THE DEVELOPMENT DURING ADOLESCENCE

2.4.1 The family system

Newman and Newman (2012, p. G-9) defines a family as "two or more individuals living together who are related by birth, marriage, partnership agreement or adoption". According to Kirby et al. (2000, p. 3), "a family is a group of persons directly linked by kin connections, the adult members of which assume responsibility of caring for the children". A family is a unit with various roles which are essential for the development of young people. It provides financial requirements to children such as food, clothes, and shelter (Kirby et al., 2000). It functions as a socialisation agent of the next subsequent generations into the norms, values, and other cultural aspects which are important to that specific society (Kirby et al., 2000). This unit is geared to protect, guide, supervise, nurture and socialise adolescents by preparing them for adulthood with its responsibilities and commitments (Adolescence, 2012).

On the other hand, lack of parental guidance, extreme dysfunctional families with parental neglect fall among the risk factors for adolescent pregnancy and other sexual outcomes related to early engagement of sexual activity (Adolescence, 2012). Scholars note that when adolescents start engaging in sexual risk behaviours, they tend to distance themselves from their parents, involve them less in their lives, and therefore have no effective parenting, monitoring, and guidance which may lead to increased sexual risks behaviours and early engagement in sexual activities (Campus, 2018; Coley, Votruba-Drzal, & Schindler, 2009).

The hallmarks of neglect include lack of parental guidance and nurturance, which has the most profound effect on young people's health and well-being (Brown, 2013). Other factors associated with neglect are single-parent families, low income, unemployment, and poor educational attainment (Brown, 2013). As a result, these factors contribute to the impairment of normal cognitive development of adolescents (Brown, 2013).

2.4.2 Traditional and cultural beliefs and rituals

Traditional rituals of initiation play a significant role and are often performed to prepare both girls and boys for adulthood. In provinces such as the Eastern Cape, these preparations are paramount. For example, the Bhaca girls' initiation indicates that the girl has transitioned from girlhood to womanhood who has become an adult member of the community (Makaula, 2010). On the other hand, in South Africa, KwaZulu-Natal developed cultural practices that endorse chastity by doing virginity testing to discourage girls from engaging in premarital sex because, as in this society, virginity is valued and honoured (Bhana, 2016). Zulus use initiation schools to teach young girls how to cope with their sexuality to avoid pregnancy and other unwanted diseases (Bhana, 2016).

Parents from the Venda culture send their children to initiation schools to prepare them to become suitable marriage partners (Raphalalani & Musehane, 2013). Domba and Thondo are cultural ceremonies for both girls and boys, respectively, in the Venda culture performed in order for girls and boys to be eligible for marriage (Raphalalani & Musehane, 2013). These two ceremonies are performed to indicate that an individual has reached a stage in which they can be married, meaning that those who have not attended these ceremonies are not fit to get married and are considered young for marriage (Raphalalani & Musehane, 2013). These initiations serve a similar purpose: to incorporate young girls to their societies by using songs, dance, and drama (Makaula, 2010).

Furthermore, these practices are common in other parts of Africa, including the east and central parts of Africa (Mudhovozi et al., 2012). During the initiation, young people are offered education on the responsibilities of sex, marriage, and childbearing (Mudhovozi et al., 2012). In South Africa and other parts of Africa, such as in Tanzania, initiation rites for girls are led by someone who is recognised as knowledgeable and experienced in childbearing and rearing (Mudhovozi et al., 2012). This person is called a ceremonial leader bearing the responsibility to advise young women from puberty and take them through the married life (Mudhovozi et al., 2012).

“Initiation rituals that educate boys about adult male roles effectively move boys from boyhood to manhood” (Kubicek, Beyer, Weiss, Iverson, & Kipke, 2010, p 3). However, underlying meanings associated with circumcision still influence the perception of manliness, meaning that those who went to circumcision schools have effectively moved from just being a boy to becoming a man, unlike those who went to public health clinics for circumcision (Nambambi & Mufune, 2011). This is often the case in more rural areas. “Traditional practices that include the teaching of boys are a fundamental part of the transition to manhood” (Nambambi & Mufune, 2011, p. 4). However, although they are essential, these initiation rituals influence how boys who have become "men" come back to schools and perceive it appropriate to show their manhood by expecting girls to engage with them in sexual relationships.

2.4.3 Poverty and economic constraints

As in other countries, in South Africa, poverty and economic constraints are among the several challenges faced by adolescents. Inadequate financial support from parents or legal guardians towards meeting their children's needs and wants in school compels them to enter into sexual relationships, which eventually results in the initiation of sexual intercourse (Campus, 2018). Adolescent girls partake in sexually risky behaviours that include transactional sex (commercial sex) or gifts exchange for sex due to economic constraints and often find themselves taking risks and are prone to date older men to financially take care of themselves (Adato & Bassett, 2009; Agyei-Mensah, 2008; Scott et al., 2011). Also, older men take advantage of their vulnerability and have sexual intercourse with them weekly (Pettifor, McCoy, & Padian, 2012). As a result of such relationships, young women may or may not negotiate to use condoms as the power lies with their partners who often insist on no condoms to be used, which then put adolescents are risk of early teenage pregnancy and contracting STIs, including HIV/AIDS (Adato & Bassett, 2009). Girls' education is affected and compromised because they tend to focus their attention elsewhere rather than on their education to pursue financial opportunities such as dating older men for monetary value.

2.4.4 Peer Pressure

Many adolescents conform to their peer groups which in turn shape their behaviour patterns because they will do anything to please their peers by seeking peer approval (Newman & Newman, 2012). It is argued by Newman and Newman (2012, p. 376) that peer pressure signifies the "demands for conformity to group norms and a demonstration of commitment and loyalty to group members". During their adolescence development, young people begin to talk,

dress and joke in a way that is acceptable to their peers. They might conform to group norms for peer acceptance wherein they change how they dress and behave because they want to be accepted (Newman & Newman, 2012). While developing friends, adolescents gradually acquire close friends, and as their friendship matures to high levels of trust, discloser, and supportiveness, they share jokes, use secret codes, share family secrets, take each other on an outing and help each other when facing challenges (Newman & Newman, 2014). They enjoy spending their time with friends, and they may fight, threaten to break up, and sometimes reunite after their conflict (Newman & Newman, 2014). In this way, they are learning how to handle their emotions in the context of voluntary relationships.

Peer affiliation and friendships serve as the staging ground during adolescence for a romantic relationship (Collins et al., 2009). Social competence with friends, in general, is linked to romantic relationship activity both in the early and late stages of adolescence. In early adolescence, having a boyfriend or a girlfriend comes with a social status that facilitates their way of fitting in into their social systems (Collins et al., 2009). Another characteristic of young people in their adolescence is that they illustrate their popularity to their friends by having either a boyfriend or girlfriend (Collins et al., 2009). During this stage, girls desire boys who are more attractive, popular, and older than their peers and can afford to bring them gifts. Boys are attracted to girls who are good-looking to showcase them to their friends, which then puts pressure on their other friends to also look for a girlfriend to date (Collins et al., 2009). Therefore friendships are the primary source of support in initiating and pursuing romantic relationships, and it is the primary influence on decisions taken to have sexual intercourse (Newman & Newman, 2014).

2.4.5 Experimentation with substances

Adolescence is the developmental stage where experimenting with a lot of behaviours and exploring lifestyle goals are key. Adolescence is a period where youngsters are susceptible to engage with substances for many reasons. As adolescents embark on their journey of psychosocial development, they seek to have fun, be adventurous, accepted, and popular in their peer groups (Patrick, Schulenberg, O'Malley, Johnston, & Bachman, 2011). These young people try out new different behaviours such as engaging in alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and other drugs, which is a functional way to achieve independence, maturity, popularity and other reasons associated with conforming to their peer groups or other developmental goals (Kaminer, 2010). Along with social influences, adolescents find themselves being exposed to

positive attitudes towards substance use by their significant others, including parents, older siblings, and peers who model the behaviour of substance use (Kaminer, 2010). Other substance use motivations include celebrities in movies, television, and music videos that portray substance use positively (Loke & Mak, 2013a). Advertisements of substances communicate positive messages, leading to positive attitudes and perceived positive outcomes when using substances, leading to smoking of cigarettes and drinking alcohol by young people (Kaminer, 2010). Other factors linked to substance use include lack of school engagement, lack of positive relationships with teachers, and academic failure (Recovery, 2018).

A study focusing on familial, social, and individual factors contributing to adolescent substance use risk indicated a positive association between peer influence, gang affiliation of adolescents, and substance use (Brown, 2013). Adolescents have often been initially exposed to substance use by associating themselves with a group of other young people who are substance users (Brown, 2013). Some adolescents believe that to maintain their popularity, they need to continue using substances, while others are motivated to use substances to gain social standing or join a group (Loke & Mak, 2013b). Other factors that are associated with substance use include "childhood maltreatment (including abuse and neglect), parental or familial substance abuse, marital status of parents, and level of parental education, parent-child relationships, familial socioeconomic status, and child perception that parents approve of their substance use" (Brown, 2013, p. 37). Statistics in 2018 reveals that early African-American adolescents have engaged in drug trafficking wherein they highlighted that they have been asked to sell drugs by drug lords and agreed because these gave them access to drugs they can use for their benefit (Recovery, 2018). Drug trafficking has been found to contribute to higher rates of tobacco and alcohol use among early adolescents than using other illegal drugs (Recovery, 2018).

2.4.6 Mass Media

Worldwide, most adolescents have internet-enabled devices, including cell phones, television, computers, internet, and video game consoles, available in their private bedrooms (Phuhongtong et al., 2018). These devices fall amongst the many factors that influence early sexual initiation for adolescents. This is because adolescents use these devices unsupervised and come across sexually arousing material. Adolescents spend their time watching television, with most of these adolescents being unsupervised when watching (Braun-Courville, & Rojas, 2009). Television is more able to show explicit sexual activities and simultaneously fails to emphasise the significance of using contraceptives and condoms to avoid possible health risks

associated with sexual activity, including sexually transmitted infections (STI's) and unplanned pregnancy (Braun-Courville & Rojas, 2009).

According to Svedin et al. (2011), both adolescent boys and girls have inadvertently or intentionally visited internet pornographic websites before the age of 18. The percentages of young men watching pornography have been reported more prevalent than those of young females (Donevan & Mattebo, 2017; Svedin et al., 2011). There is robust evidence that suggests that most of these adolescents participate in sexual behaviours and have faced teenage pregnancy two to three years after being exposed to sexual arousing material (Braun-Courville & Rojas, 2009; Kumar et al., 2013; Luder et al., 2011). Like in South Africa, in the United States sexual initiation during adolescent is prevalent (Madkour et al., 2010).

Studies also revealed that the most common platforms for mass media such as magazines, television and the internet websites significantly influence a wide range of adolescent attitudes and behaviours including sexual relationships, sexual behaviours, violence, eating disorders, and substance use (Braun-Courville & Rojas, 2009). As much as mass media provides constructive messages about particular aspects, media also have some material that may be distorted and fail to show the negative consequences of sexual intercourse and, consequently, poses a potentially harmful factor for adolescents. In addition, these studies have discussed that access to pornographic sites has encouraged young people to be sexually active before they are ready and have unprotected sexual intercourse (Kumar et al., 2013). The internet exposes adolescents to sexually explicit material with pornography, violence against partners and women as sexual objects. As argued by Braun-Courville and Rojas (2009, p. 156), “sexual references on television and movies may be a key contributor to early coitarche, negative attitudes toward condoms and contraception, having multiple sexual partners and teen pregnancy”.

In this new era, it is common for adolescents to spend each day using mass media, including television, video games, music, and computers. Mass media provides both helpful information and harmful information to adolescents. Studies conducted looking at dating relationships have found that teens constantly cite the importance of television and internet use as the primary sources of information on dating (Braun-Courville & Rojas, 2009; Phuhongtong et al., 2018). Other studies found that adolescents report mass media as an essential source of sexual health information, in addition to peers, schools, and parents (Braun-Courville & Rojas, 2009; Thongnopakun, Maharachpong, & Abdullakasim, 2016). This is because studies have

highlighted that adolescents spend their time using cell phones and computers for internet access, with 70% of adolescents found to be using the internet to access pornography (Svedin et al., 2011; Thongnopakun et al., 2016). Evidence looking at how adolescents utilise the internet has revealed that most adolescents ranging from 15 to 17 years old have reported coming across pornography online by accident whereas some adolescents visit the internet to satisfy their sexual curiosity (Braun-Courville & Rojas, 2009; Kumar et al., 2013).

2.5 PERCEPTIONS OF ADOLESCENTS ABOUT SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

Collins et al. (2009) found that adolescent females believe that sexual behaviours occur only within the context of romantic relationships rather than outside of them. Given the high prevalence of teen birth, unplanned pregnancies, and STI cases, adolescents engage in sexual activities that are often non-consensual. According to De Vries et al. (2014), adolescents believe that non-consensual sex is possible in sexual relationships, and they justify this action in various ways. It has been reported that both girls and boys adolescents are aware that non-consensual sex is rape (Heeralal, 2014). However, although they are aware, non-consensual sex still exists in their sexual relationships. It appears that boys, as compared to girls, hold more positive views about non-consensual sex, and they often associate this with signs of love, acceptable to punish a female partner, appropriate to fulfil sexual urges, and fit if the girlfriend is financially dependent on the boyfriend (De Vries et al., 2014).

On the other hand, girls disagree that if a girl is dressed in a provocative or sexy way, it is fit to force her into having sex (De Vries et al., 2014). Having mentioned these attitudes and beliefs, it is worrying that adolescents justify non-consensual sex at their young age. Also, the chances are that adolescents who hold these perceptions are more likely to transition with the same perceptions into adulthood. Therefore, it is important to study adolescents' perception of sexual relationships and their strategies of negotiating sex to provide a guideline for an awareness programme on sexual education.

2.6 RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH ADOLESCENTS' SEXUAL ACTIVITIES

2.6.1 Teenage Pregnancy

Early sexual initiation during adolescence is a universal problem affecting underdeveloped, developing and developed countries. As a result, adolescents experience unplanned, untimed and unwanted teenage pregnancy due to having unprotected sex at a young age (Mchunu et al., 2012). The World Health Organisation (2014) has revealed that about 16 million adolescents

aged 15 to 19 have given birth due to their first sexual intercourse. WHO (2014) and Chandra-Mouli et al. (2014) reported that over one million adolescent girls from low and middle-income countries such as Ghana, Bangladesh, Brazil, Congo, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria and Thailand were found to give birth yearly, and adolescent births increased to 95% (Campus, 2018; Chandra-Mouli et al., 2014). This implies that these young girls are already pregnant or have given birth, and some of them being infected by HIV by the time they reach their early 20's (Madkour et al., 2010; Phuhongtong, Homchampa, & Sirithanawuttichai, 2018; Scott et al., 2011; Thongnopakun, Maharachpong, & Abdullakasim, 2016). Not only are these countries facing a heightened increase in HIV cases, they are also facing a new rise of 70% STI cases among adolescents aged 10 to 19 years (Short et al., 2013).

In South Africa, De Wet, Amoo and Odimegwu (2018) revealed that approximately 30% of teenage girls fall pregnant yearly and that 65% to 71% of these teenage pregnancies are unplanned. According to De Wet et al. (2018), South Africa has the highest rates of teenage pregnancy compared to other countries with high income. This is supported by other studies that have found teenage pregnancy is more prevalent in Eastern Cape, Limpopo, and KwaZulu-Natal, in 2010 with more than 17 000 teenage pregnancies (De Wet et al., 2018). However, as many unplanned pregnancies result in childbirth, some end up in unsafe abortions (Mchunu et al., 2012). This was found to occur mainly in girls aged 13 to 16 years who contributed to 23% of illegal abortions, where 14.9% represented those aged between 17 and 19 years of age (Mchunu et al., 2012)

2.6.2 Poor School Performance and School Dropout

Studies have looked at how learners are limited to successfully attend school and engage in learning due to low family income that presents stressful events and difficult circumstances. The most significant risk of leaving school is related to the children's household income. However, this could be coupled with other factors such as teenage pregnancy. This factor can significantly compromise the education of female learners to resume or reengage with their education after delivery (Jonas, Crutzen, van den Borne, Sewpaul, & Reddy, 2016). Although this factor hardly affects boys, according to Shi et al. (2015), other contributing factors can cause young men not to complete their secondary education level, including poor school performance, substance use, and engagement in delinquent acts. A study by Shi et al. (2015) revealed that learners who drop out of high school are more likely to be at risk of being unemployed, receive public welfare, experience mental health problems, form part of a gang,

and engage in criminal behaviour. Moreover, studies provide evidence that these factors fall among other challenges that interfere with their educational attainment, which lowers job opportunities (Gonzalez et al., 2016).

A study focuses on the relationship between poverty and school achievement of children (Morrissey, Hutchison, & Winsler, 2014), the financial circumstances of parents are associated with low academic achievement of their children. Parents' economic conditions limit their ability to purchase educational requirements such as books for their children (Duncan, Ziol-Guest, & Kalil, 2010). There is substantial literature indicating how parents' levels of economic conditions are positively linked to their children's education attainment (Bank, 2009). High family income allows parents to provide material and resources such as books to their children and in turn, these children have access to more learning opportunities compared to children from low-income families, who often miss school or be late on a regular basis than higher-income children (Bank, 2009). The consistency of family income may contribute to the school attendance and the overall achievement of adolescents between the poor and rich.

Furthermore, Bank (2009, p. 34) argues that it is “particularly detrimental for children from low-income families to miss or be late to school because such families are less likely to have the time or resources necessary to help children “catch up” with missed school material, compared with peers from more advantaged backgrounds”. Moreover, compared to children from disadvantaged backgrounds, peers from high-income families are likely to attend high-quality schools that often have access to resources that educators can use to assist children with poor attendance and who are often late for class. On the other hand, children from low-income families are more likely to attend low-quality schools that often lack resources for educators to intervene when children have poor attendance or who are often late to class (Duncan, Ziol-Guest, & Kalil, 2010).

The prevalence of school dropouts worldwide indicates that 42% of learners in Sub-Saharan Africa leave school early compared to 33% of learners in Southern and Western Asian (Weybright, Caldwell, Wegner, & Smith, 2017). In South Africa, school dropout remains high, with 50% of learners who leave school in grades ten and eleven (Hartnack, 2017). According to the statistics released in 2017, 60% of learners drop out of school before completing grade 12 (Weybright et al., 2017). It is reported by Spaull (2015) that in 2014 learners who were enrolled in secondary school were 1,085,570, and out of that total, only 532,860 (60%) learners wrote matric where 403,874 passed and the remaining failed. Again, among those who left

school, 33% of them were female learners who left because of teenage pregnancy and childbearing (Spaull, 2015). These female learners were 289,795, and the majority failed, namely 190,362. As a result, they dropped out of school and were held back between 2010 and 2014 due to childbearing (Spaull, 2015).

2.6.3 Health Risks of Adolescent Sexual Activities

Worldwide, STI's and HIV/AIDS are primarily spreading through heterosexual relationships. STI's are transmitted from one person to another through sexual relations. However, these can also be acquired in other ways than through sexual intercourse (Newman & Newman, 2012). In Eastern and Southern Africa in 2017, an estimated 120,000 adolescents aged from 10 to 19 formed part of the newly infected with HIV (UNICEF, 2018). According to UNAIDS's 2018 report, 1.8 million adolescents make people who are living with HIV or are patients of HIV (UNAIDS, 2018). Other countries such as Mozambique and the United Republic of Tanzania, together with South Africa, have been proven to account for half of those who have newly contracted HIV infection (UNAIDS, 2018). In 2018, the number of adolescents living with HIV had reached an estimated 1.9 million in the Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, and Mpumalanga (UNICEF, 2018).

In South Africa, adolescent boys are also at risk of contracting STI’s and HIV/AIDS due to sexual relationships between young girls and older men. If girls have sexual intercourse with these older men, they also sleep with boys their own age, which places young boys at risk to contract STI’s and HIV/AIDS (UNICEF, 2013). Again, one of the studies showed that some adolescent boys are often in positions where they are expected to satisfy the financial needs of their girlfriends (Campus, 2018). Thus, adolescent girls’ socioeconomic status, family income, and poverty all influence adolescent girls to engage in pre-mature and premarital sexual relationships with both young and older men for financial security (Mcanyana, et al., 2017; Wood, 2010).

2.7 RELEVANT LEGISLATION, REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES IN RELATION TO ADOLESCENTS' SEXUAL ACTIVITIES

2.7.1 Children's Act No. 38 of 2005

Section 134 of the Children’s Act focuses on access to contraceptives by highlighting that children who are 12 years and above should not be refused to buy condoms and should be given access to free condoms on request (Children’s Act 38 of 2005). Other contraceptives besides

condoms should be provided to children on request without their parents or care giver's consent if that child is 12 years or above, given appropriate medical advice and medically examining the child to validate whether a specific contraceptive should be provided to the child or not, due to medical reasons (Children's Act 38 of 2005). The confidentiality of children given contraceptives, condoms, and contraceptive advice should be respected, except in situations where child abuse is suspected.

2.7.2 Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act No. 32 of 2007

The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act No. 32 of 2007 protects children from sexual offenses in any form. Section 57 of this act states that both the male and female child cannot give consent to sexual acts if that particular child is less than 12 years of age, and also when the child is 12 years and above but not yet 16 years of age and the age difference between the child and the other person is not more than three years. However, despite this act, children still engage in early sexual intercourse under the age of 16 years, and this is evident due to the high rates of teen parents aged 15 across low and middle-income countries (Chandra-Mouli et al., 2014).

2.7.3 Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act No. 75 of 2008

Section 11 of the criminal justice act 75 of 2008 states that the court needs to prove if the child who is ten years or older but below 14 years is capable of a criminal offense and if the child can distinguish between what is right or wrong and able to act in accordance to their thinking of what is right and wrong. This act relates well with the child's moral development theory, in which a child develops the capacity to distinguish the bad and good to avoid punishment and gain a reward (Child Justice Act of 2008).

2.7.4 Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act No. 92 of 1996 (Amended Act No. 38 of 2008)

The choice on termination of pregnancy act 1996 permits a pregnant minor to request termination of pregnancy and should be advised to consult their parents or legal guardians in this regard, though termination of pregnancy should not be denied when the pregnant minor fails to consult with the parents or the legal guardians (Constitution, 1996). The South African government recognises persons under 18 as legal minors (Constitution, 1996). However,

although children cannot act or survive independently of their parents or legal guardians, the South African legislators acknowledge that children can make their own decisions and have therefore passed laws that permit children to make certain decisions (Constitution, 1996).

2.7.5 Department of Basic Education Draft National Policy on the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy in Schools

The policy on prevention and management of learner pregnancy states that schools need to be enabling and supportive by taking on reasonable steps to ensure that pregnant learners are supported to continue with their education during their pregnancy and after giving birth (Government Gazette, 2018). This policy is against the exclusion and discrimination of learners who are pregnant at school by making it possible for pregnant learners to be supported before and after delivery, by stating that these learners need to be provided with accurate information on sexual and reproductive health in order for them to make informed decisions going forward (Government Gazette, 2018). This policy protects and promotes the rights of pregnant learners to education, dignity, and non-discrimination, bodily and psychological integrity as well as their right to privacy (Government Gazette, 2018).

Welkom High School and Harmony High School, located in the Free State, were found to apply policies that supported the exclusion of pregnant learners at these schools (Spaull, 2015). These policies were adopted by the school governing bodies for their respective schools between 2008 and 2009 (Spaull, 2015). According to the Constitutional Court of South Africa, expelling pregnant learners from school is unconstitutional. It, therefore, violates the rights of pregnant learners to gender equality, access to education, access to comprehensive pregnancy prevention and reproductive health services, dignity, privacy, and confidentiality. Although it is against the policy, Spaull (2015) argues that expelling learners who are pregnant from school is commonly practiced in formal and informal schools in South Africa.

2.7.6 Department of Education Guide to Drug Testing in South African Schools

Regulations for safety measures at public schools have been established to ensure that school environments are free from drugs by prohibiting any person on the school premises from having illegal drugs (Department of Education, 2013). If it is suspected that there are learners who have illegal drugs in the school, a police officer or the principal or their delegate should first investigate if the suspicions are true before searching for drugs (Department of Education, 2013). When learners are found to have drugs, they should be taken for counselling or treatment

while at the same time protecting their right to education and confidentiality (Department of Education, 2013).

2.8 SUMMARY

This chapter revealed that adolescence is a critical transient stage that prepares adolescents for adulthood. The theoretical framework relevant to the study was discussed. Overall, this theory helped me to understand the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents regarding sexual relationships. The literature reviewed discussed that adolescence is a stage characterised by biological, psychological, and social development. The literature review highlighted and discussed key factors that shape development during adolescence, and these were identified and discussed. Adolescents' perceptions about sexual relationships were explained, and risks of adolescents' sexual activities were highlighted and explained. And lastly, the relevant legislation, regulations, and guidelines related to adolescents' sexual activities were identified and discussed. In the next chapter, the researcher will provide a detailed explanation of the research methodology used.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an in-depth explanation of the research methods utilised in the study. The first part of the chapter provides a description of the paradigm in which the qualitative research approach is rooted, the qualitative approach applied and an explanation of a multiple case study design utilised in this research study. The third part identifies the study population, followed by the sample and sampling procedures and the type of research instrument used. The methods of data collection and analysis are highlighted. Trustworthiness of the study, the ethical considerations observed, and the study limitations and delimitations are explained.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Qualitative research is rooted in the interpretive and constructivism paradigms or world views. Constructivism holds the notion that reality should be interpreted from social action by taking into account the subjective meaning of experiences in which research participants attach to their cycle of everyday life (Creswell, 2014; De Vos, Strydom, Fouchè, & Delport, 2011). Therefore, this type of research approach was appropriate for this study to understand the events, situations, and actions that the study participants were involved in their sexual relationships and the verbal accounts they gave of their lives and lived experiences during their adolescence. Qualitative research also allowed for understanding how they make meaning of their actions and their understandings of what influences their behaviour.

3.2.1 Research Approach and Design

A qualitative research approach was used in this study. Creswell (2014, p. 2) defines qualitative research as “an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem”. It is an approach that seeks to view the world through the internal or emic perspectives of individuals and the perceptions they hold (Greenstein, Roberts, & Sitas, 2013). The individuals are the insiders that the approach sought to understand, including how they interpret and make meaning of their subjective experiences of the world they live in (Greenstein, Roberts, & Sitas, 2013). This approach was appropriate for this study to further the researcher’s understanding on how adolescents perceive sexual relationships and

to allow the adolescents to express themselves and share their experiences and perceptions. The research was exploratory and descriptive.

A case study research design is a method of inquiry that explores an in-depth understanding of a programme, event, process, activity, person, or group of individuals (Creswell, 2014). A case study is an intensive study that gives a comprehensive view by either one or several data collection methods such as observations, interviews, documents, audio-visual material, and archival records or reports (Creswell, 2014; Gustafsson, 2017). In this study, a collective case study (or multiple case study), was used to further the researcher's understanding of how adolescents perceive sexual relationships. This research design was again chosen for this study because it allows groups of individuals to be studied to obtain detailed and extensive information about them. Additionally, Gustafsson (2017) argues that researchers who use multiple cases seek to "understand the differences and the similarities between the cases" (p. 3). In the study, the use of multiple cases assisted me in determining if there are similarities and differences between male and female adolescents' perceptions about sexual relationships.

3.3 POPULATION, SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

3.3.1 Population

The study population was learners from grades ten and eleven attending two public secondary schools in Soweto, Gauteng. The study population was approximately 2100 learners. Soweto mainly accommodates black families. Therefore, in the two schools I have identified, mainly black learners from different areas in the community attended those secondary school. The population of this study was limited due to the highly sensitive nature of the study and the context of lockdown.

3.3.2 Sample

In order to select a sample from the population, purposive sampling, alternatively known as judgemental sampling, was used to select potential participants. As the name specifies, purposive or judgemental sampling is a sampling technique in which a researcher relies on her judgement (subjective) to select members of a population to participate, whom the researcher believes will provide a better understanding of the research problem explored (Antonius, 2003; Neuman, 2006). It is a sampling strategy that may be useful to select participants that are not difficult to access (Neuman, 2006). In addition, purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling and a technique where each individual of the population in a sample is unknown (De

Vos et al, 2011). Also, it does not give all the individuals in the population equal chances of being selected (De Vos et al, 2011).

The sample for this study was 20 adolescent girls and boys in grades ten and eleven in each of the two public secondary schools. A sample of 20 participants was chosen in order for the researcher to gather more information on how adolescents perceive sexual relationships. There were two groups of both adolescent girls and boys per school. Each group consisted of five learners, and one group was for males and the other for females. The reason for involving not more than seven participants per group is because Creswell (2014) suggests that each focus group should have a maximum of six to seven participants. Five participants were selected per group because, Creswell (2014) suggests involving few participants in focus groups as big groups are hard to manage and facilitate. Potential participants were 20 learners representing both the identified public secondary schools in Soweto.

Participant inclusion criteria were as follows:

- Learners had to be between 14 to 18 years old and willing to participate in the study.
- Learners had to be in grades ten and eleven and attending the two identified public secondary schools in Soweto.
- Learners had to be willing to remain after school to participate in the focus group discussions.
- Learners had to be willing to complete an open-ended survey (structured as a written interview) as an alternative data collection method in case focus groups did not work out due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participant exclusion criteria were as follows:

- Learners who were not prepared to have the focus group discussion be audio recorded.
- Learners who were not willing to remain behind after school to participate in the study.

3.3.3 Sampling procedures

Due to Corona Virus (COVID-19) outbreak, collecting data in schools was almost not feasible because visitors were not allowed in schools. Fortunately, the researcher was part of Youth Opportunities South Africa (YOSA), an organisation that works in the two identified schools in Soweto. The organisation has professional Social Workers who render services in the Schools in Soweto, and had permission from Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) and the principals of the schools to engage with the learners. The researcher obtained permission by

YOSA to approach the learners. The Director of YOSA made arrangements with the principals of the schools to allow the researcher to market the research study to potential participants. The researcher talked to the learners for about 10 minutes during class-based workshops facilitated by social workers and invited those interested and met the inclusion criteria to share their names and contact details with the researcher. This allowed the researcher to contact the potential participants and follow them up.

Due to COVID-19, it was planned that all potential participants would provide mobile numbers of parents/guardians. The researcher could then contact the parents/guardians and explain the participant information sheet to them. In this way, parental consent would have been obtained verbally, and it would be audio recorded. However, the principals of both schools preferred that the researcher give the learners who are interested in the study the participant information sheet for parents/guardians. The principals indicated that it was better for parents/guardians to sign in black and white rather than giving verbal consent telephonically. The researcher could then keep evidence that the parents/guardians have agreed that their children participate in the study. All COVID-19 protocols were adhered to when the hard copies of the information sheets were handed to the learners. Due to the Corona Virus (COVID-19) outbreak and lockdown, the study's data collection took place in the third term of 2020.

3.4 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

In this study, the research instrument used was a focus group guide for focus group discussions. An open-ended survey (structured as a written interview) was also prepared as an alternative research instrument if it was not possible to use the focus group guide. According to Stewart and Shamdasani (2015), a focus group guide contains questions that stimulate discussions and interactions in focus groups. A focus group guide sets a guided group discussion. It provides a structure to be followed by participants to direct their interactions and articulate their thoughts and feelings (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2015). The researcher took the role of the moderator and led the group through the questions on the focus group guide, and facilitated the discussions among all the group members (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2015). The focus group guide had nine predetermined set of questions. I used one focus group guide with the same set of questions in all four focus groups that I conducted. I conducted the focus group discussions similar to semi-structured interviews because I was able to probe and ask more questions in order to get more information, make follow ups and to get clarification.

A focus group guide is similar to an interview guide because they both consist of less structured questions and do not provide potential responses. Clarke and Braun (2013) advise that the predetermined questions on the focus group interview guide should be flexible to give room to ask other questions by giving allowance to the researcher to probe in-depth information and seek clarity. The use of a focus group interview guide was to inquire and obtain facts and opinions from adolescents regarding their perceptions of sexual relationships. The focus group interview guide questions aimed to allow for discussions by the participants to address the research problems. This research instrument also probed and explored the participants' perspectives and perceptions of the research topic.

Alternatively, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, I had planned to use an open-ended survey (structured as a written interview) as a research instrument to replace the focus groups if it was not going to be feasible to collect data using focus groups due to COVID-19. According to Jackson and Trochim (2002), open-ended surveys are used to gather qualitative data such as new information about an experience or topic. They can also be used to explore different dimensions of the participants' experiences using their own words. The open-ended questions in the survey are used to explore, explain and/or reconfirm existing ideas (Jackson & Trochim, 2002). Disadvantages of using an open- ended survey (structured as a written interview), is that it can be time consuming to analyse. Participants may not answer all the questions, and the trustworthiness of the findings might be threatened by the researcher's coding decisions (Mossholder, Setton, Harris, & Armenakis, 2016). The advantage of using an open-ended survey, is that they can provide a "rich description of the participants' reality at a relatively low cost to the researcher" (Jackson & Trochim, 2002, p. 307). Participants answer questions from their frame of reference (Mossholder, Setton, Harris, & Armenakis, 2016). In comparison to face-to-face interviews or focus groups, open-ended survey questions can offer "greater anonymity to responders and often elicit more honest responses" (Jackson & Trochim, 2002, p. 307).

3.5 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

Focus groups which are also called group interviews, were used as a data collection technique in this study. Focus groups in research is a method of collecting qualitative data through a small number of interacting individuals brought together by a facilitator to obtain their perceptions about a specific area of interest (De Vos et al., 2011). In this study, focus groups were utilised as a principal source of data. Focus groups are ideal for collecting data simultaneously from

many individuals than it would be when collecting data from participants individually (Rubin & Babbie, 2010). Focus groups provide the researcher with the opportunity to interact directly with participants and ask clarity, to make follow up questions and for probing for further responses and therefore allow the researcher to gather rich and detailed data from participants themselves (Rubin & Babbie, 2010; Stewart & Shamdasani, 2015). However, the open response format of focus groups often leads to detailed information that is hard to process and therefore makes interpretation of results difficult (Rubin & Babbie, 2010; Stewart & Shamdasani, 2015).

Four focus groups were conducted, two focus groups per school; one for boys, and one for girls in each school. The researcher facilitated the group discussions in one of the classes in the schools. The duration of the focus group discussion lasted for 45 – 60 minutes. One focus group per week per school was conducted after school hours for four consecutive weeks. The focus group discussions were audio-recorded and transcribed for data analysis after collecting data. The researcher ensured the participants that whatever they discuss within the group will not be shared with anyone except the research supervisor. No information will be revealed that can trace those who share the information. To ensure that I did not miss discomfort or important non-verbal clues of participants, an observer who is a registered social worker was present during the focus group discussions. The researcher ensured that the observer is well informed about the process as well as the ethical principles.

Alternatively, if the situation did not allow the researcher to collect data using focus groups, an open-ended survey (structured as a written interview) would have been used. The researcher had planned to use the contact details provided by participants and would telephonically use a WhatsApp group and send the questions one by one on the WhatsApp group and then record their answers. In this way, the researcher would ensure that they answer all the questions one by one and record the information. Recording the information would have allowed the researcher to probe and follow up to gather rich data.

Moreover, due to COVID-19 pandemic, I asked permission from the principals and teachers concerned to use classrooms to conduct the focus groups to arrange desks into 1.5-meter distance between seating spaces to maximise the space between participants. The researcher rearranged the desks to face the same direction instead of facing each other to reduce transmission caused by the virus droplets from talking, sneezing, and coughing. In addition,

the researcher provided surgical masks to the participants and sanitised their hands before the focus group discussions.

3.6 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the collected data. Thematic analysis is well known for data analysis in qualitative research. This method of data analysis is used to guide researchers to organise their data by transcribing the information and subsequently numerously reading the transcripts to identify codes and record patterns of data sets which are also known as themes (Punch, 2016). After organising the data, coding the data, identifying themes, and putting data together for presenting and interpretation a written research report is produced (Greenstein, Roberts & Sitas, 2013; Punch, 2016). The collected qualitative data was analysed using six phases proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006; 2013) and Creswell (2014). These are as follows:

Phase 1: Familiarising yourself with the data

Data collected was audio-recorded and transcribed. The researcher achieved this by listening to the audio recordings of the different focus groups and transcribing the audio recordings. Thereafter, the researcher familiarised herself with the data by reading and rereading the focus group transcripts. She immersed herself with the data and was familiar with the information obtained while simultaneously formulating possible analysis and taking into account the patterns that have emerged from the written transcripts (Clarke & Braun, 2013; Creswell, 2014).

Phase 2: Generating initial codes

This phase was achieved by developing a firm understanding of data collected by way of thoroughly reading through the focus group transcripts, followed by reducing the data by grouping it together, compiling or categorising information into different segments according to its relevance. Then codes were created to analyse data more efficiently (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The label given, reflected the information that it represents (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

Phase 3: Searching for themes

During this phase, the focus group transcripts were read numerously to get a complete sense of the underlying meanings of the information provided. The information was revisited to get a general sense of the information and the overall meaning (Creswell, 2014). This was followed by developing themes among codes, and subsequently looking for recurring patterns of

responses across data sets (similarity in data) (Clarke & Braun, 2013). In order to identify themes, while coding I assigned colours to similar data sets in order to make it easier for me to code well and to develop themes. During this process, I combined the different arranged codes into overarching themes that accurately depict the different data sets (Creswell, 2014).

Phase 4: Reviewing themes

The researcher relooked the themes after they were fully coded and possible themes within the data identified. The themes that have emerged from the transcripts matched and could be incorporated to develop well-grounded themes. Sometimes there might be a disconnection between themes because there was not enough data to support them (Creswell, 2014). This phase was to allow the researcher to determine the accuracy of the intended meaning within the data and to be able to "consider the validity of individual themes in relation to data sets" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 21).

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes

This phase was achieved by defining and refining the primary themes that have emerged from the data. Identifying the essence of the themes was about making decisions on which aspects of the data should be captured within the themes (Clarke & Braun, 2013). At this stage, themes such as dating because of friends, wanting to have sex and asking for permission before sex emerged and I had to put together more responses that support those themes in order to refine the initial identified themes by bringing more similar data together.

Phase 6: Producing the report

The final analysis and write-up of the dissertation should consist of sufficient concrete evidence which supports the themes within the data sets (Clarke & Braun, 2013). The themes needed to depict the essence, contributions and meaningful understanding about the story in which the researcher is the narrator (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

The four constructs, credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability of trustworthiness, were considered (Bless, Higson-Smith, & Sithole, 2013; Shenton, 2004).

Credibility

Credibility is similar to internal validity in quantitative research. Credibility is achieved by ensuring that the researcher, the participant, and the readers of the account, find the research

findings accurate from their standpoint, meaning that the findings have to be truthful and believable (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Cope (2014) further argues that the research findings should enable other readers to realise that they share similar experiences with other individuals. Cope (2014) also states that there should be coherence in how the participants' views are interpreted and represented. In this study, the researcher used member checking (Shenton, 2004) to ensure credibility. Some participants were called telephonically to ask questions of clarification and ensuring that the transcript accurately reflects the discussions and the intended meaning during interactions in the focus group.

Dependability

Shenton (2004) suggests that dependability is based on the assumption that there is a probability of finding the same results when researching in another context using the same methodology of the initial study. This study's dependability was achieved by explaining in detail the methodology used in the study. It might guide other researchers with the same research interest to use a similar methodology to achieve similar findings. In addition, the same focus group guide with the same set of questions was used across all four focus groups to try and ensure that participants respond to the same propositions.

Confirmability

According to Anney (2014), confirmability is addressed when the research findings are not the researcher's imagination but derived from the collected data and could be confirmed by another. In this study, the researcher used a reflexive journal to remain objective and avoid being biased by writing honest personal reflections and all the study-related events in the field (Anney, 2014). The researcher also used sufficient direct quotations so that other readers will get a complete picture of what participants were saying and how the researcher has interpreted the information they shared (Bless et al., 2013).

Transferability

Transferability implies that findings of the study can be applied from one particular context to another case or situation with new settings and new samples of individuals (Creswell, 2014; De Vos et al., 2011; Lietz & Zayas, 2010). In this study, the researcher made it possible for other researchers to use the study to understand other settings with other individuals using substantial descriptions (Anney, 2014). Substantial description involves explaining in detail

the research processes in this dissertation, beginning from contextualising the study, methods used during the execution of the study (Anney, 2014).

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The following ethical principles were observed:

Ethical approval

The researcher carried out the study after receiving the ethics clearance approval from the University of the Witwatersrand, Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), protocol number: H/20/03/09. Prior to conducting any study, the researcher needs to submit the research proposal for the proposed study to obtain ethical clearance (Creswell, 2014). Similarly, at the University of the Witwatersrand, researchers are required to submit a research proposal before the study to obtain ethical clearance from the Human Research Ethics Committee (non-medical) if it involves minors (under 18 years of age) because they are considered to be a vulnerable group.

Permission from site and participants

The study was conducted in two public schools in Soweto, and permission was requested from YOSA and the Department of Education. Considering the ethical issues that pertain to the study, the researcher first obtained consent and assent from parents and learners, respectively, since learners were minors (under the age of 18 years). The researcher completed the application form to request permission to conduct a study from the Gauteng Department of Education. The researcher obtained permission to access the schools from school principals and from the director of YOSA, an organisation that works within the two schools.

Voluntary participation

According to Rubin and Babbie (2010), voluntary participation means that research participants should not be coerced to participate in a study. Participants needed to be aware of their participation in this study and be informed of the consequences of participating and giving consent willingly to participate. The researcher adhered to the COVID-19 protocols of sanitising and keeping social distance before engaging with potential participants to give them the participant information sheets and consent forms. They decided on their own whether or not to be involved in the focus group discussions, and under no circumstances were participants under duress to participate, and all participation was voluntary (Dunn, 2009).

Informed consent

Informed consent in research refers to the "process whereby participants are told what taking part in research entails, including any potential risks or benefits associated with doing so" (Dunn, 2009, p. 66). The researcher has ensured this by giving the participants information on the nature of the study and having asked for their permission to willingly make a conscious decision to take part in the study, as explained in Appendix B (Dunn, 2009). Parental consent was obtained in writing, whereby learners who were interested in the study were given parental consent forms requesting permission for their adolescents to participate in the study. Also, the assent forms were given to adolescents before participating in the focus groups. It was indicated in the participation information sheet that participation is voluntary and that anonymity and confidentiality are not guaranteed due to the nature of focus group discussions.

Confidentiality

Johnson and Christensen (2008) argued that confidentiality keeps private all the identifying information about participants except for the researcher and others involved in the same research. According to Dunn (2009), a researcher must explicitly inform participants that their personal information will be kept confidential by keeping neither their names nor any other information that can be linked to their responses. The researcher ensured the participants about confidentiality by informing them that the researcher and her supervisor only would see the collected data and therefore, no piece of information would be traced back to any participant by any other readers (Antonius, 2003). In addition, the researcher further informed the participants that, although she would take on necessary measures to maintain the confidentiality of the data collected, confidentiality could not be guaranteed due to the nature of focus group discussions. However, the researcher encouraged participants to respect the privacy of their fellow participants and not repeat what was said in the focus group to others.

Anonymity

According to Rubin and Babbie (2010), a research participant is anonymous when the researcher cannot identify a participant who has given a particular response. In keeping the participants' identities anonymous, the researcher asked the participants not to mention their real names on the assent forms but asked them to use pseudonyms that could only be identified by the researcher so that the researcher would be able to select learners for focus group dialogues. In addition, the researcher informed the participants that their names or any other identifying information would not be disclosed in the research report and that any other readers

would not be able to identify the participants. However, the researcher also mentioned that anonymity could not be guaranteed due to the nature of focus group discussions.

Data protection and management

Wiles (2013) argues that the researcher needs to fairly and lawfully process the personal data of potential participants, and this information should never be exposed. According to Creswell (2014), once the data is analysed, it needs to be kept for a reasonable period of time. In addition, it is recommended that the data should be kept for five to ten years, whereas APA recommends a five-year period (Creswell, 2014). After this period, the data should be discarded so that it does not fall in the hands of other researchers who might misuse the data. Having mentioned this, the researcher informed all participants about the possible duration of publication and told them that the summary of the key findings would also be made available to them if and when they request it. Also, the researcher informed all participants that data would be kept safely in a password-protected computer.

Appropriate Referral

In this study, it was anticipated that the participants might experience a level of some emotional distress or discomfort, which could compromise the participants' psychological and social well-being (Bless et al., 2013). Therefore, should that happen, that the participant experience any distress or discomfort, the focus group discussion would be stopped and resumed another time. Alternatively, the researcher made arrangements beforehand for a referral to qualified Social Workers in Youth Opportunities South Africa (YOSA) to manage the adverse results of the study towards the participants. However, the study did not intend to trigger any negative emotions from the participants and there were no issues encountered in all the focus group discussions.

3.9 STUDY LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

Table 3.1: Limitations and delimitations

Limitations	**Delimitation**
Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, visitors in schools were not allowed, and the researcher	To counter this limitation, the researcher approached the director of YOSA, sought and was granted permission to access their

had to approach the schools to gain permission prior to collecting data.	learner population. The Director of YOSA made arrangements with the principals of the schools to allow the researcher to market the research study to potential participants and to collect data after consent was granted.
Some participants were reluctant to share certain information or discuss certain personal experiences in focus groups due to the nature of the study since some participants may have felt like discussing sexual relationships was sensitive and personal.	To counteract this limitation, the researcher explained in detail the purpose of the study to all participants and that they need not to share their experiences but their perceptions on sexual relationships in order to develop a guideline for possible awareness programmes around sexual education.
When conducting the focus groups, participants would shy away from sharing certain information or be discouraged from discussing information that they would have discussed without an audio record.	To address this limitation, the researcher assured the participants that the audio recorder, including all the information they share, would be kept confidential. The researcher also used member checks to seek clarification where she felt the participants were withdrawing certain information to ensure that she transcribes accurate information.
Some participants wanted to express their ideas and opinions using their local vernacular instead of English.	To address this limitation, the researcher allowed the participants to express themselves in their vernacular and then translated their vernacular into English when transcribing the findings.

3.10 SUMMARY

The chapter provided an in-depth explanation of the research methods followed in the study. The chapter explained the qualitative research approach and explained its relevance to the study. The multiple case study design was defined, and the rationale for choosing the design was highlighted. The study population was presented, and the data collection processes followed to gather data and data collection method. The chapter also highlighted data trustworthiness and ethical principles followed by the researcher from data collection to presenting the research findings. Lastly, the study presented the limitations and delimitations of the study. In the following chapter, the interpreted collected data will be presented and discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4. 1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the study findings which emerged from the collected data after transcription and using thematic analysis are presented and discussed. Firstly, the demographic profiles of participants are provided. This is followed by presenting the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the collected data. The findings will be presented and discussed in relation to the objectives of the study. The themes and sub-themes that emanated from the study will be described, supported by verbatim quotes from participants and the integration of literature to support or contrast the findings.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF PARTICIPANTS

In this section the demographic profiles of the participants are presented in Table 4.1

Table 4.1: Profile of participants (N=20)

Demographic Factors	Sub categories	Number of participants
Gender	Male	10
	Female	10
Ages	15 years	10 (5 males and 5 females)
	16 years	9 (4 males and 5 females)
	17 years	1 (1 male)
Grades	10	10 (5 males and 5 females)
	11	10 (5 males and 5 females)

Table 4.1 shows the demographic profile of adolescent males and females who participated in the study. This table illustrates that a total of 20 adolescents, from two high schools in Soweto representing both genders equally participated in the study. All participants were black, and speaking mainly IsiZulu and Sotho. The participants were between the ages of 15 and 17 years. Five females and five males were aged 15 years, five females and four males were aged 16 years and one male was 17 years old. Of the 20 participants, 10 were from one school (five females and five males) and 10 from the other school (five females and five males) participating in the research study.

4.3 THE THEMES AND SUB THEMES EMERGED FROM THE COLLECTED DATA

In this section the identified themes and sub themes that emerged from the findings of the study will be discussed in relation to the objectives. The themes and sub themes identified in the collected data are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Themes and sub themes that emerged from the study

Theme	Sub theme
1. Views on sexual relationships	1.1 Meaning of sexual relationships 1.2 Reasons for entering into sexual relationships 1.3 The appropriate age to be in a relationship with someone special 1.4 Significance of being in a special relationship
2. Different genders' perceptions about sexual relationships	2.1 Differences in perceptions 2.2 Similarities in perceptions
3. Negotiation strategies in sexual relationships	3.1 Negotiating having a sexual encounter 3.2 Peer pressure 3.3 One sexual partner 3.4 Negotiating consent
4. Existing sexual education programmes in schools	4.1 Sexual education in the life orientation subject curriculum 4.2. Sexual education by grass-roots football and other organisations
5. Enhancing sexual education programmes in schools	

Objective 1: To explore the views of adolescents regarding sexual relationships

4.3.1 Theme 1: Adolescents' views on sexual relationships

Four sub themes emerged from this theme. The sub themes were meaning of sexual relationships, reasons why adolescent are in sexual relationships, the appropriate age to be in a relationship with someone special, and the significance of being in a relationship with someone special. The sub themes are presented in detail below and substantiated with direct quotations from the different participants.

4.3.1.1 Sub theme 1.1: Meaning of sexual relationships

Majority of participants both male and female in the focus group discussions, highlighted their understanding of sexual relationships and mentioned that sexual relationships involve a level of personal connection, sharing of romantic feelings, love, someone to talk to other than friends and family members, and spending time together between two people who are involved in a sexual relationship. Participants commented:

> *"…being in a relationship with someone special to you, should mean a lot to you because you have someone loving you other than your parents. You have someone that you can connect with, so you'll have someone that you can share with your personal life. Sometimes, you can go out and have fun with that person other than your friends or family members. It will only be just you and your girlfriend or your boyfriend, so it should mean a lot to you, you get more comfortable to talk to the one you love"* Participant 4 F2

Another participant added:

> *"Some people have a relationship because they want someone they can talk to"* Participant 1 F4

Female participants felt that a sexual relationship involves sharing romantic feelings. One of the female participants stated that:

> *"I understand that it is a relationship between two people who have feelings for each other, and decide to explore those feelings and get to know each other and share moments together"* Participant 1 F1

To demonstrate this point further, other participants reported that a sexual relationship involves two people in a relationship to love one another, communicate, have fun and share their

personal lives together. There is a strong focus on companionship in the meaning adolescents attach to sexual relationships.

> *"I understand that it is a relationship between two people whereby they love each other and whereby they share everything with each other, like their personal stuff"* Participant 2 F1

> *"I think a relationship between two people is like when you need someone to talk to, you can go to that person and communicate, have fun together you know"* Participant 4 F1

4.3.1.2 Sub theme 1.2: Reasons why adolescents are in sexual relationships

Participants were asked how they view adolescents in sexual relationships and the reasons why adolescents are in sexual relationships. Participants identified various reasons for adolescents to enter into sexual relationships, such as bragging to their friends, to be loved, supported and for sexual benefits. Participants emphasised that adolescents should be in sexual relationships because they choose to and therefore it is a choice made by an individual willingly. This theme was captured when the participants said:

> *"Some people have relationships so that they can brag to their friends that they have a boyfriend or a girlfriend"* Participant 1 F4

> *"Being in a sexual relationship is not a bad thing, because everybody needs to be loved…so we all should be in a relationship to love and be loved. But then by choice, everyone should make their choice to wait or to have someone special"* Participant 1 F2

Supporting what was said by other participants, another participant added that:

> *"…according to me, like in everything, as an adolescent you need someone to support you other than your parents, someone who can love you back. So you need to love in order to get loved"* Participant 2 F2

However, few participants reported that some adolescents enter into sexual relationships with wrong intentions and mentioned that there are adolescents who expect sexual intercourse in a sexual relationship of which they feel it is wrong. One of the participants gave the following response:

> *"The problem is, most of the adolescents look for sex in their relationships, which is wrong…Because sometimes you'll make a girl fall pregnant at an early age and become a teenage father"* Participant 4 F2

Another participant gave the following response:

> "*Boys our age only get into relationships for sex. Even when they talk to each other you can hear that they start relationships for sex, they do not love us girls"* Participant 4 F1

These quotes substantiate the argument by De Wet et al. (2018) who highlighted that adolescents who have sexual encounters in their early ages are more exposed to unwanted pregnancy and HIV infections alongside other sexual transmitted infections. However, other participants disagreed and indicated that it is right to expect sexual benefits in a sexual relationship. One of the participants passed this indication:

> *"Sexual activities should be expected in sexual relationships, because some people are sexual active and when they are in a relationship, they cannot go for a long time without having a sexual intercourse. So it also counts or it should be expected"* Participant 1 F2

> *"…to be honest, all I think about is, okay, when I have sex with my girlfriend, after sex what's going to happen to our relationship? And after having sex I just to go and find another girl because there is nothing else to look forward to, most relationships end after sex because even if she says no after that I will still go look for sex from someone else"* Participant 2 F4

4.3.1.3 Sub theme 1.3: The appropriate age to be in a relationship with someone special

The researcher explored what the appropriate age is in order to be in a relationship with someone special. Participants in the study suggested different ages for adolescents to start relationships with their special persons ranging from 12 to 21 years of age. However, participants could not agree on one age and have given different ages that they disagreed with for one to be in a relationship with someone special to them. Similarly, other participants disagreed that being in a relationship has no specific age and that it just happens. Participants commented:

> *"I say 16 years and above because I feel like when you are 16 years and above, you are a bit more mature and you understand certain situations and you know how to handle certain situations or problems and you know you have control in the*

relationship. Also that there is no one who is going to force you to do something that you are not ready to do. So if you are 16 years and above you can be in a relationship but it should be with your age mates, I think that's good in my view" Participant 2 F2

"16 years but personally I feel like to date, it only just comes at any time, like you start having feelings and you cannot just say to yourself that you don't want to be in a relationship at this time or at this age, it just happens and you find yourself in a relationship" Participant 3 F2

"I agree that being in a relationship does not need you to be at a certain age, I think if you have feelings for someone, you will feel ready to date them and be in a relationship with them" Participant 4 F2

Some participants argued that adolescents cannot be in a relationship without engaging in sexual activities. One of the participants pointed out that:

"Being in a relationship anytime I feel like it's wrong, for instance if you are 12 years or 11 years, I just feel like you are rushing into a relationship, being in a relationship is not only about talking to someone but you must be sexually ready, so if you are in a relationship it means that you are ready to engage in sexual activities at a young age" Participant 5 F2

Another participant added that being in a relationship at a young age could potentially lead to having a life time partner. The participant stated that:

"18 to 21 years of age I say, because some people have the opportunity of finding someone at a younger stage and they end up being together as they develop a special bond over the years. For instance if the two people in a relationship were friends at a young age and have met in primary or secondary school, then they can decide to start their future together at a young age and grow up together until they end up marring each other. At least they would have had this life journey with the person they love from a young age" Participant 1 F3

Another participants added:

"At least at 18 years you are old enough to express your feelings to another person and be able to talk about your feelings" Participant 2 F4

One of the participants disagreed and gave the following statement:

> *"At the age of 15 to 16 years you know nothing about love and you don't understand your feelings, so you just like someone just to explore sexual relationships only"* Participant 3 F3

4.3.1.4 Sub theme 1.4: The significance of being in a relationship with someone special

Female participants highlighted the importance of being in a relationship with someone special. The participants said as follows:

> *"I say it is important because we all need someone who we can talk to"* Participant F4

> *"To get to know them and to explore and see the romantic side of another person"* Participant 1 F3

In contrast, as much as being in a relationship could be important, other participants felt that it is wrong to be in a relationship. This is what they had to say:

> *"It is wrong to be in a sexual relationship. A lot of things happen or come out in a sexual relationship such as pregnancy, dropping out of school to take care of your baby and that ruins your future"* Participant 2 F3

> *"To me I would say that it is not that important because adolescents just do it for fun"* Participant 4 F3

> *"I believe it is part of growing up and it's up to an individual if they want to engage in sexual relationships or not. It is up to an individual if they are ready to be in a sexual relationship or are not ready, it's part of growing up but not for everyone. Sexual relationships are not significant to everyone, they are more important to others than everybody else, its's part of growing up, it's something that will eventually happen"* Participant 1 F1

This theme and sub themes provided information in relation to the first objective of the study namely: to explore the views of adolescents regarding sexual relationships.

Objective 2: To highlight if there are similarities and differences between male and female adolescents' perceptions about sexual relationships

4.3.2 Theme 2: Different genders' perceptions about sexual relationships

During the focus group discussions I explored the participant's perceptions about sexual relationships. I was interested in finding out whether male and female adolescents have similar and/or different perceptions about sexual relationships. Two sub themes emerged.

4.3.2.1 Sub theme 2.1: Differences between male and female adolescents' perceptions about sexual relationships

The findings revealed that female participants have certain expectations of a sexual relationship but these typically does not include sexual activities, whereas male participants were open to the possibility of engaging in sexual activities. This theme was captured as follows:

Female participants indicated:

> *"We as girls we enter into relationships looking for a life time partner, someone we can grow old with and build a future together. The unfortunate part is that boys get into relationships for sexual pleasure, to have fun and explore, nothing serious"* Participant 4 F3

> *"We don't necessarily expect to have sex as girls unlike boys because we all wish to finish school first and get married before having kids. Unfortunately, if you want to avoid having sex at a young age, you have to remain single because we can't trust boys"* Participant 5 F1

> *"You will never find girls talking about sex but boys talk about sex all the time and that is the reason why we think they date us to have sex and for us it's more than that. I want to be loved"* Participant 3 F3

While on the other hand male participants stated:

> *"Most boys amongst our friends they always go for girls who are physically attractive and look for such girls for sex rather than a serious relationship. Where else girls are looking for a long-term relationship and love"* Participant 3 F4

> *"I think it's hard from us boys to inter into relationships without expecting sex"* Participant 5 F4

4.3.2.2 Sub theme 2.2: Similarities between male and female adolescents' perceptions about sexual relationships

Participants were asked to name adolescents' expectations of a relationship with someone special. Findings have shown that male participants and female participants have similar expectations from sexual relationships except for sexual activities. As stated in the previous theme, female participants seemed to have similar expectations of a relationship that does not include sexual activities, whereas male participants acknowledge that they expect sexual activities.

Most male participants gave the following responses:

> *"Loyalty, caring, commitment, honesty, love and understanding…you have to understand each other, if she's not ready to have sex you should understand, if you really like her, you'll wait, you'll be patient, even if it's for years. But every guy expect to have sex from his girlfriend"* Participant 2 F2
>
> *"Sexual activities, they are obvious because some people are sexual active and when they're in a relationship unlike others they cannot go for a long time without having sex. So it also counts or it should be expected"* Participant 1 F2
>
> *"Respect…and it should be someone who is mostly supportive because sometimes you can do something in life, maybe start a business, you need that someone to give you support and tell you that you're doing well apart from your parents"* Participant 2 F2
>
> *"Love, commitment, loyalty, honesty, someone understanding and someone to give me attention"* Participant 4 F4

Female participants indicated that:

> *"I can say that relationships are healthy when there's love and honesty"* Participant 1 F3
>
> *"I expect loyalty, love, connection, romance, honesty and someone who is caring"* Participant 5 F4
>
> *"I expect a friend, someone trustworthy…to have someone who is caring and someone to talk to me openly"* Participant 3 F1

> *"Love for me matters more in a relationship. I need to know that he loves me"* Participant 2 F2

These findings are supported by studies that revealed that boys are more concerned about sexual intercourse whereas girls are more concerned about commitment in a sexual relationship (Hooke, Capewell, & Whyte, 2000; McCabe, 2005). These studies found that boys are looking for affection, understanding and commitment as much as girls, however, boys are more concerned about sexual involvement than girls (Hooke, Capewell, & Whyte, 2000; McCabe, 2005).

Objective 3: To explore which strategies adolescents use when negotiating sexual relationships

4.3.3 Theme 3: Negotiation strategies in sexual relationships

This theme highlights the circumstances surrounding sexual relationships and the challenges adolescents face when negotiating sexual encounters. A number of sub themes emerged from this theme and are discussed below.

4.3.3.1 Sub theme 3.1: Negotiating having a sexual encounter

Participants have been asked the strategies they perceive as used by adolescents when negotiating the sexual part of the relationship. Participants acknowledged that adolescents need to talk about the sexual part of the relationship at the beginning of the relationship and set boundaries. Participants suggested that sometimes girls submit to their partner's sexual demands and acquiesce to sexual intercourse. Two participants stated the following:

> *"I feel like sometimes people make irrational decisions and act based on current feelings and end up being sexually active without thinking about the consequences of what might happen after that such as teenage pregnancy and STIs. So I feel like there has to be a conversation first and then a mutual agreement first. Because sometimes one might want to have sex because they are afraid of losing their boyfriend and they have no choice but to just have sex"* Participant 1 F1

Another participant added in support and stated:

> *"If you do not want to have sex then you state it in the beginning of the relationship and you need to have boundaries"* Participant 4 F3

Drawing from these responses, the study found that it is ideal to anticipate the sexual part of the relationship and should not come as a shock to the other party. These quotes shows that communication plays a key role in sexual relationships. These findings were revealed when participants highlighted that the sexual experience should be wanted by both parties in a sexual relationship, who are both ready, who have discussed and come to a positive decision about having a sexual encounter. However, communication is largely seen as a challenge between most adolescents. Also that mutual agreement is often absent from their sexual relationships. These findings are further substantiated and supported by the discussion and verbal quotations as provided below:

> *"I once involved myself in a serious relationship for like a year, for us to have sex, it has never been a hesitation, we never discussed it because I trusted her and she trusted me"* Participant 5 F2

Participants were asked why they think it will be difficult to discuss the sexual part of the relationship beforehand. Participants commented:

> *"The reason is that as boys we are seen as when we date girls we just want to have sex so when you ask your girlfriend if she's ready to have sex, she will think you just want to have sex with her only, so that's why we don't want to be open about it and direct"* Participant 2 F2

> *"We're afraid of disappointment"* Participant 1 F3

Female participants have mentioned that they are open and others are reluctant to discuss the sexual encounter in the relationship. They believe that it is better avoided than discussed. Female participants commented:

> "*I think that it's very weird that you just met and now you are talking about sex maybe if you avoid it, your partner will see that you don't want to do it"* Participant 2 F3

> *"…it's weird because if you talk about it in the beginning, he will assume that you think that he dated you for sex, and it becomes a turnoff"* Participant 2 F1

Male participants stated as follows:

> *"…telling her that you want sex she will see you as a pervert…she will think when you talk about sex you are in a relationship with her for sex that's why most of the time we don't talk about it"* Participant 4 F2

"She will see you as someone who wants only sex from her" Participant 5 F4

Male participants highlighted that negotiating to have a sexual encounter with a girl will make her think that you are only in a relationship with her because you want to have only a sexual encounter with her. These findings revealed that girls and boys have conflicting agendas. In other words, girls and boys have different expectations that contradict with each other. A male participant commented:

> *"I'll just be like okay, babe when are we going to have sex and if she replies no, she's not ready so I'll taste the waters and ask if she can come to chill in my house, if she comes then I'll know that she is ready"* Participant 1 F4

Moreover, participants were asked how they think adolescents in sexual relationships should communicate to their partners if they are not ready to be sexually active. Female participants mentioned different reasons that could be used to respond to their partner. A female participant highlighted that:

> *"You start by telling your partner the reasons why you are not ready to have sex…you can tell him that you are waiting for that special moment where you will be with someone special to you, who you really feel like he deserves to take your virginity as your pride. But obviously you cannot tell him that...so you give him excuses which will make him give you a chance to think about it and not do things which you do not want to do. So, for example, if he invites you to his place, you come with excuses that will make you not to visit him in his house"* Participant 1 F1

Another one commented:

> *"I think they should just stay as mutual friends, because if one partner is ready and the other is not, then one of them will not make the same effort, neither get the same effort, one will not reciprocate the love given to them, so they rather remain as friends once, because it's not going to be fair to the other party, one will feel under pressure to please the other…and the other can feel less loved or not loved enough, so I believe that they should just remain as friends"* Participant 1 F3

On the other hand, it was discovered in the study that girls tend to use excuses to avoid being sexually intimate. Now the question is, what could happen if their partner is able to interdict their excuses, wouldn't that leave them defenseless? Female participants could not give

responses to this question, instead they thought of more excuses that could possibly be used. Another female participant added that:

> "Y*ou can also tell him you promised your mother that you are going to break your virginity after eighteen years, so you can't do it before that age… maybe if during that moment there is no condom you can say to him that you cannot do it because you do not have protection"* Participant 5 F1

In addition, male participants mentioned that they plan prior to the sexual encounter by carrying condoms with them when they meet their girlfriends, so it is pre-planned. They also disclosed that prior to meeting their girlfriends, they will either carry condoms just in case they have intercourse or they can obtain them from friends when they sense that intercourse will become a certainty. Another participant added that they often have condoms in their wallets or they go and ask for condoms from a friend before going to meet their partners. This is what the male participant remarked:

> *"but as a guy you always have condoms in your wallet, you always plan that you are going to have sex so you must have at least condoms for protection and you know what you expect from your relationship, you know but she won't"* Participant 1 F2

Other participants mentioned that it comes as a surprise to both parties where they just want to engage in sexual encounters without verbal communication and planning beforehand.

> *"I feel like most people in a relationship don't talk about or plan about engaging in sexual activities, it's something that just happens when they have been in a relationship for a long time. Like every time they kiss, their kisses become intense and everything that they do in their relationship builds up to that moment where they both eventually want to have a sexual encounter"* Participant 2 F1

Participants were asked if they think adolescents negotiate to have a sexual encounter. Participants responded and said that there's often no negotiation to have a sexual encounter.

> *"No, there's no negotiation, but you can talk about that with her maybe on Facebook or WhatsApp and tell her that you want to have sex with her but the timing of when it's going to happen, you can't determine it, it just happens"* Participant 5 F2

This response substantiate the argument by Burkett and Hamilton (2012) who highlighted that most sexual encounters start when both partners engage in flirtation and sex talks on their

phones and when young women comply to this engagement, it implies to the male partner that they are willing to follow through with intercourse when they meet face to face. On the other hand, this might not be the case as some participants have mentioned that, one partner can be ready while the other is not and this will only make the one who is not ready to feel uncomfortable when their partner wants to go further sexually.

4.3.3.2 Sub theme 3.2: Peer pressure

Participants in the study shared that adolescents are often influenced by friends to have a sexual encounter. In the study it was explored how adolescents are influenced by their peers to start engaging in sexual activities and participants shared their thoughts. Male participants cited that it is pressure imposed by their peers as a leading reason and prime driver to engage in sexual activities. These participants indicated that their peers put them under pressure during their interactions. They experience this pressure when their peers start sharing with them their sexual experiences, and this lead them to initiate sexual relationships and subsequently leading them to engage in sexual activities. They do this in order to also have an input and contribute their sexual experiences when they are interacting within their peer groups. Female participants had nothing to say about peer influence as they were against getting involved in sexual relationships and engaging in sexual activities. Male participants said the following:

> *"Some get influenced by friends…some group of friends can say that they have done it and so you'll be the only one who haven't done it, so even if you're not ready, you'll do it because others have done it"* Participant 2 F2

> *"Because of if you haven't had sex at the age of 18 in your group of friends, you'll look like a loser"* Participant 4 F2

> *"As a boy it is difficult to abstain from sexual activities when your friends are having sex and talking about their experiences of it…on the other hand you have nothing to say. So it makes you feel like you need to have sex so that you will be able to have something to tell them about your experiences"* Participant 1 F2

> *"And when your friends are talking, you can't lie, they will know you are lying because they know you, you are their friend and they might ask the name of the girl that you slept with or you are dating"* Participant 3 F2

> *"When you have a girlfriend, your friends keep asking when are you going to have sex and if you don't answer, they start making jokes and you feel it is a weakness not to have sex"* Participant 5 F2

Studies focusing on peer pressure among adolescents supports this finding by highlighting that peer affiliation encourages adolescents to initiate and purse sexual relationships and at the same time influenced to have sexual intercourse (Cherie & Berhane, 2012; Prinstein, Meade & Cohen, 2003). Collins et al. (2019) supports this finding by suggesting that adolescents' boys feel the pressure from their friendship to showcase to them that they can also be able to get a girlfriend. Moreover, Heeralal (2014) argues that adolescent boys are more vulnerable to peer pressure that encourages them to engage in sexual intercourse than girls.

In contrast, these quotes above also suggest that not all adolescent boys are vulnerable to peer pressure, some participants viewed that it is an individual decision to choose whether to have a partner or not depending on what they want for themselves. Moreover, some studies acknowledge that peer pressure is experienced by both adolescent boys and girls to engage in sexual activities in order to gain a status within the group and be popular. According to Vanden-Abeele, Campbell, Eggermont and Roe (2014) both adolescent girls and boys who are popular tend to engage more in sexual activity than peers who are less popular. A study by Grant (2012) also substantiate these findings by highlighting that both girls and boys are susceptible to sexual activity triggered by peer pressure and mentioned that girls are vulnerable because of their desire to have good things and aspire to look just like their better off friends and as a result they are open to sexual activity with men who have money in exchange for monetary value and gifts.

4.3.3.3 Sub theme 3.3: One sexual partner

Majority of male participants had an understanding that most adolescents find it difficult to abstain from sexual intercourse and they argued that adolescents should have a sexual encounter with one person. On the other hand, minority of male participants disagreed and stated that it is difficult to abstain because they find themselves in situations where they find it difficult to resist getting tempted. This theme was captured when male participants commented:

> *"when you want to have sex as adolescents you must be faithful to each other and know that you only have sex with her or him…so I believe that it should be done, we should have sex in a relationship but only with one person"* Participant 2 F2

> *"I believe you can have sex with one person because those who can`t have sex with one person are those that get easily tempted you see, it means he agrees to everything, even if a girl can approach him and say, can you have sex with her he will just go with the flow you see. You can also choose not to have sex as a guy but it all depends on what you want"* Participant 4 F2

> *"Having different sexual partners will put you at risk of having HIV and AIDS while you are still young"* Participant 3 F4

> *"…some end up having sexual transmitted infections because they are not faithful to their partners"* Participant 5 F4

Another participant disagreed and stated as follows:

> *"because there`s a feeling that comes up every time when you meet a girl, like when you a hug a girl there`s something that you know…so that is why you can`t have sex with one person"* Participant 3 F2

These quotes suggest that participants were aware that there are consequences after having sexual intercourse. A study by Doyle, Mavedzenge, Plummer and Ross (2012), highlights that the consequences of having unprotected sexual intercourse include HIV and AIDS and unplanned pregnancies and these are associated with having multiple partners. Similarly, as much as some participants did not agree with the idea of having one sexual partner, studies often show that there's a high prevalence of people who contract STIs including HIV and AIDS by engaging in unprotected sexual intercourse with multiple partners than those with one sexual partner (Cherie & Berhane, 2012; UNAIDS, 2018; UNICEF, 2018).

4.3.3.4 Sub theme 3.4: Negotiation for consent

Participants expressed and acknowledged that prior to having sexual intercourse, both parties involved should have a mutual agreement about what they both want. Following this discussion, participants were asked why they think it's important to gain consent before a sexual encounter. Both male and female participants acknowledged that it is important to gain consent from their sexual partner before having a sexual encounter. Most male participants suggested that it is essential to gain consent from a sexual partner before having intercourse in order to be given access to her body. Furthermore, male participants revealed that as much as they know that it is important to ask for permission prior to intercourse, they find it difficult to

communicate and make the assumption that if there is no explicit refusal received or explicit communication from either one of the two parties then intercourse in certain.

> *"…because at the end of the day it is her body…without permission it's going to seem like rape you see. And things won't be the same between the two of you. Because you had sex with her without a permission… And in other ways, you may find out that, maybe she has some sicknesses like HIV, so when you ask for her permission, she might tell you that she's HIV positive and she can't have sex and give you the reason why and that's when you may have to use condoms for protection… without permission, you might not feel comfortable, you don't know if she's comfortable or if she does it just to satisfy you, so that's why you must ask for permission. You don't know, she might turn at the end of the day and say that you forced yourself to her to the police and you know the police, they believe women nowadays, even if she can be wrong""* Participant 2 F2

And:

> *"It's important because by asking for her permission, you gain her trust, ask her before than doing it without her willing to do it with you"* Participant 4 F2

These quotes are substantiated by a study conducted by Brady, Lowe, Brown, Osmond and Newman (2018), who argued that young people often engage in sexual activities without negotiating consent and young men tend to assume consent if the other party does not verbally refuse or demonstrate refusal by pulling away. Similarly, studies by Fantasia, Sutherland, Fontenot and Ierardi (2014) and Hust, Rodgers and Bayly (2017) highlighted that young men use non-verbal forms of communication such as body language while as young women often use verbal cues. This study has also found that differences in young men and women regarding communication could contribute to misunderstandings and misinterpretations and as a result cause confusion as to whether one or both partners gave consent to sexual activity. Therefore, Brady et al. (2018) explained that it is usually male partners who seek and initiate intercourse without seeking consent prior and it should therefore be the female responsibility to either refuse or act along to show their interest of having intercourse.

However, as much as participants all understand the importance of negotiating the sexual part of the relationship prior to the sexual encounter. Male participants highlighted that they do not discuss the sexual part of the relationship until it's about to happen. They believe that when the time is convenient, then it might happen depending on whether the girlfriend agrees or not. Moreover, these findings illustrates that sexual intentions and expectations are not verbalized.

Participants underlined that over time in the relationship, whatever that the partners do together will build up to the moment where either both or one party is ready to have a sexual encounter with the other. Therefore, they believe that girls should read the situational cues about what's going to happen next in their sexual relationship. A female participant added:

> *"I feel like most people in a relationship don't talk about or plan about engaging in sexual activities, it's something that just happens when they have been in a relationship for a long time. Like every time you kiss, your kisses become intense and everything that you do in your relationship builds up to that moment where you both eventually want to have sex"* Participant 2 F1

Male participant added:

> *"Because sometimes when you call your girl and say come over, she will come, then you make jokes and sometimes mover closer, kiss and touch, at the end of the day she will be tempted and she will think of sleeping with you because she will tell what's about to happen, so by the time you initiate it she moves along"* Participant 3 F2

From the responses drawn above, it is evident that boys have their expectations fulfilled because girls fail to communicate their doubt about having intercourse to their partner beforehand. Girls are aware of what can happen and what that their partner wants and therefore would submit to their partner's sexual demands, and therefore negotiation for a sexual encounter becomes virtually impossible.

Moreover, Fantasia, Sutherland, Fontenot and Ierardi (2014) argues that sexual consent has been found to be difficult, rarely verbal and unclear but instead easier when implied by the situation that happens between partners such as physical behaviours like kissing, petting, fondling and being alone with a partner.

Lastly, the study argues that negotiation for a sexual encounter becomes virtually impossible because male participants have not clearly indicated the importance of negotiating and gaining consent, they believe in the notion of actions speak louder than words. That the physical subtle should communicate to the other party that they are ready to have intercourse. In other words, the strategy of using non-verbal communication, such as moving closer to your partner and responding to a partner's moves, are prevalent to indicate sexual interest. Male participants believe that girls are generally able to interpret these signs.

Objective 4: To explore what sexual education programmes have been implemented in the secondary schools to address issues around sexual relationships

4.3.4 Theme 4: Existing sexual education programmes

This theme highlighted the sexual education programmes implemented in secondary schools to address issues around sexual relationships. Sexual education programmes include information from the life orientation subject taught in schools and from the soccer football team such as the grassroots football and other organisations that occasionally come to their school.

4.3.4.1 Sub theme 4.1: Sexual education in the life orientation subject curriculum

This theme was concluded when participants spoke about two sources that are available for them in schools that informs them about sexual education. Participants were found to get sexual education from the life orientation subject curriculum. This theme was captured when participants gave the following remarks:

> *"The Life Orientation subject teaches us about sexual relationships but it does not mainly teach about that only, the whole textbook is not on sexual education, and there are a lot of organizations that come and teach us about issues such as teenage pregnancy and drinking problems and these organizations educate us a lot with different things. This helps us to get more information especially if the teachers are not teaching enough about such things. And I feel like this reduces the burden on teachers to teach us everything, so they don't have to teach us a lot because this information is easily accessible in those organizations"* Participant 5 F2

Participants indicated that the Life Orientation subject does not address the sexual issues openly and that the content of the subject does not look into other aspects of an individual such as their emotional and spiritual being. Some participants stated that:

> *"For me, I do not feel like some teachers talk about it openly. Sometimes some teachers are not comfortable with teaching us learners about such things"* Participant 2 F2

> *"Regarding the content, yes, they teach us about sex but like they do not go deep into these issues, they don't teach us the deep sense of everything, and that sexual relationship will not only result on physical things that will happen such as teenage pregnancy, but there are also emotional and spiritual aspects, and they don't teach*

those aspect of it. So, I feel like sexual education should be broader and not only focus on physical after- effects such as teenage pregnancy but should also include other aspects and I feel like there's more to sexual education that they can teach us" Participant 1 F2

Participants spoke about the stigma related to the way teachers teach about teenage pregnancy. They suggested that sex education should deliver content on teenage pregnancy on a positive way without stigma. And that teachers of sexual education should be non-judgemental and welcoming. One of the participants said:

"Here at school, they use sexual education platforms to judge and stigmatize pregnancy. So, they tell us that we should stop having sex or else we will be pregnant and they start pointing at other learners who have been through that or going through that" Participant 3 F3

Participants mentioned that there are things they wish to learn from the subject but the subject is limited to a certain content that includes safe sexual practices such as using a condom and that sexual risk behaviours have consequences that include teenage pregnancy, HIV and STIs infections.

"They tell us that we should use condoms, but they are not telling us how especially parents because they feel like we are going to do it and people get pregnant because they didn't know how to use the condoms" Participant 4 F4

"Most of them avoid the important parts. Even in textbooks they only address things they want us to hear. We find out on our own what we should do mostly from the internet. Even parents avoid these things. Parents think that when they tell us, they are encouraging us to do it" Participant 5 F3

"I think it's limited because they are afraid that they will get into trouble as some learners will go have sex, and then after they will tell people that teachers told them to have sex, that's why they limit" Participant 1 F4

4.3.4.2 Sub theme 4.2: Sexual education by grass roots football and other organisations

The study explored the participants views about the content of sexual programmes offered in schools. In giving their response, participants mentioned that they get information about sexual education at school from grass-roots football and other organisations that occasionally come to

their school. On the contrary, the adolescents' experiences in relation to the educational programmes presented by grass-root football and other organisations were different. This theme was captured when participants gave the following remarks:

> *"Well, grass-root football teams used to come and teach us about sexual education. I just feel like they would give us all the information including how to use protection, how to say no, knowing the reasons why you date and they would educate us about everything. We have books that educate us and even television shows teach about sexual education whereby they show you the consequences of what will happen if you have sex, for examples the teens mom's show but some still go for relationships whereas they see what happens in sexual relationships. I feel like there's a lot of information about sexual relationships, even at clinics, the information is accessible, and we can also find condoms even at our age for protection and it is now normal to ask for those*" Participant 2 F1

From the above responses, a challenge uncovered from these findings is about accessing these sexual education programmes. Organisations that assist schools by offering sexual education do not target all secondary schools but select certain secondary schools and overlook other schools. Similarly, grassroots football only assisted one of the schools in teaching sexual education where this data has been collected and overlooked the other school in which the participants were located.

Objective 5: To explore adolescents' views on how secondary schools can enhance programmes on sexual education

4.3.5 Theme 5: Suggestions on how secondary schools can enhance programmes on sexual education.

This theme highlights the adolescents' views on how secondary schools can enhance programmes on sexual education.

A few different suggestions were made by the participants and are presented below.

> *"The content should speak positively about teenage pregnancy instead of judging teenage pregnancy and those that are HIV positive. The content should motivate our fellow learners who find themselves in such circumstances to continue with their studies regardless. If someone is a victim of this, teachers should continue teaching them like other learners instead of looking down on them"* Participant 4 F3

> *"They should also teach us boys how to talk to girls and how to tell girls that we want to have sex with them, like how we can talk to our partners about sex"* Participant 2 F4

In addition, participants suggested that there should be focus group discussions conducted in class and that these should be facilitated by teachers where adolescents both male and female will educate each other about their experiences in sexual relationships and where they will discuss the disadvantages and advantages of sexual relationships so that everyone will be informed to make sound decisions. Participants commented:

> *"We can have focus group discussions to talk about our experiences in relationships and educate each other about that. Also, now that we have smart boards in our classrooms, you can put a video for us to learn because they will never demonstrate certain things in class"* Participant 2 F2

> *"Maybe we should have talks once every week like every Wednesday about those things on our own so that we can be open and share our experiences and what we think and the teachers should be the ones who facilitate it. And they should split us into groups and we talk and have a girls talk and boys talk and also make us aware that there's no problem if someone is no longer a virgin because some take it somehow"* Participant 3 F2

> *"Boys should be included in our talks, because if they split us the boys won't get the same education as us. So we want to know about each other's views, we should know how boys think about these things because obviously boys and girls have different views about this as we all see things from different angles"* Participant 5 F2

Another participant added:

> *"They have to involve the parents if they want to teach us about everything about sexual education…they need to educate all the parents about the importance of talking to us and they should tell parents that they need them to teach us about sexual relationships, including that they need to show us how to have safe sex and to tell us the advantages and the disadvantages about the whole information"* Participant 1 F2

Participants suggested that sexual education programmes should reach all adolescents in all aspects by focusing more on male learners rather than focusing more on female learners. Again, participants added they believe that the content of sexual education is biased and is mainly focused on girls rather than focusing on boys. Participants felt that girls are taught and

encouraged to abstain from sexual activities whereas boys are not discouraged. Participants suggested that boys should be taught what's relevant to them.

> *"…before anything else they should teach us how you should react if someone touches you inappropriately…such things you know, and they can tell us what to do and ask us to demonstrate it in class so that we understand better when looking at people acting rather than when they only use words to explain…Boys should also be taught more about how to take ownership about their lives because they get a lot of pressure from their friends. If they are not ready, they shouldn't be made to feel bad by other boys"* Participant 5 F2

> *"…they should have people who will act out these situations to learners in schools and demonstrate what they teach us…I also feel like they should educate them too, to a point whereby they also learn to set appropriate relationship goals…We feel like the sexual education programmes that are available for us they focus more on girls than boys"* Participant 2 F2

> *"I also think that most organizations focus more on girls and tend to exclude boys. This is wrong"* Participant 1 F2

> *"I think they should get teachers who are more open to teaching learners about sex education and be able to make learners open to them. And the sexual education programs should be offered by someone who is a young adult as compared to older teachers, someone young understands and can relate because old teachers teach stereotypes…boys should also be taught how to say, no, since girls can be the ones to initiate sex sometimes"* Participant 3 F2

Donkor and Lariba (2017) conducted a study focusing on the impact of sexual education on pupils' of basic schools to reduce the high rates of teenage pregnancies, their recommendations on their study supports the participants' suggestions when they stated that sexual education programmes should reach all adolescents in all aspects of sexual matters. Donkor and Lariba (2017), suggested in their study that sexual education should not be treated as a concept and that it should be developed as a complete discipline for basic schools. They also added that sexual education should not be treated as part of other learning areas and should be taught on its own, with its own learning outcomes (Donkor & Lariba, 2017). They believe that learners will be exposed to more firsthand information on sex related issues and this would potentially

“enable learners to receive information in full and not in pieces in order to dissipate ill-informed advice through the media and peers” (Donkor & Lariba, 2017, p. 220).

4.4. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented and discussed different themes and sub themes that emerged from the study. The participants highlighted their views and expectations regarding sexual relationships. The study illustrated the importance of getting into sexual relationships, whether a sexual encounter is negotiated or not and further concluded that negotiating the sexual part of the relationship is virtually impossible for adolescents however participants were also aware of the importance of asking for permission beforehand. The participants also mentioned that sexual education programmes offered in schools are limited including the content and provided suggestions on how the content can be enhanced. The final chapter will provide a summary of the main findings, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

MAIN FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the aims and objectives that guided the study, a summary of the main findings, conclusions and recommendations emanating from this study. The study explored adolescents' beliefs and perceptions of sexual relationships and their views on the programmes on sexual education implemented at secondary schools.

5.2. AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

The study's primary aim was to explore adolescents' beliefs and perceptions of sexual relationships and their views on the sexual education programmes implemented at secondary schools. The achievement of the aim was guided by the following research question(s).

- What are the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents about sexual relationships?
- What are the views of adolescents on the sexual education programmes offered in schools?

The aim of the study was achieved through the following objectives:

Objective 1: To explore the views of adolescents regarding sexual relationships

This objective was achieved in chapter four, where the collected data were presented and discussed. The study revealed that adolescents, both male and female, understand sexual relationships as companionship that involves a level of personal connection, sharing of romantic feelings, love, having fun, talking to other than friends and family members, and spending time and spending personal lives together. Participants believed that adolescents enter into sexual relationships for various reasons, including bragging to their friends, being loved, and gaining sexual benefits. Similarly, a study by Collins et al. (2019) found that having a girlfriend or a boyfriend is important as it may help maintain or elevate an individual’s level of status within their peer groups. According to Collins et al. (2019) adolescent girls are attracted to boys who are more attractive, popular, and older than their peers and who are able to afford to bring them gifts. Collins et al. (2019) also found that Boys desire girls who are good looking so that they can brag and showcase them to their friends, which then puts pressure on their other friends to also look for a girlfriend to date. Participants added that adolescents enter into a sexual relationship out of their own will. On the other hand, some participants

disclosed that adolescents get involved in sexual relationships expecting to be sexually involved, and they indicated that it is wrong to expect sexual intercourse in a sexual relationship. In contrast, some participants felt like it should be expected to have sexual intercourse in a sexual relationship.

Objective 2: To highlight if there are similarities and differences between male and female adolescents' perceptions about sexual relationships

This objective was achieved through the literature review and findings presented and discussed in chapter four. Findings of the study indicated that adolescent girls and boys have similar views and differing views about expectations of a sexual relationship. The study has found that adolescent girls have certain expectations of a sexual relationship that does not include sexual activities. In contrast, adolescent boys were open-minded to the possibility of engaging in sexual activities. Apart from the differences, findings revealed that adolescent boys and girls appear to have similar expectations regarding sexual relationships that exclude sexual activities. Female and male participants mentioned similar expectations of a relationship. However, male participants acknowledged that they also expect sexual activities. Both adolescent boys and girls have similar expectations: Love, Caring, Loyalty, Honesty, Trustworthiness, Affection, a Friend, Understanding, Commitment, Supportiveness, Fun, and Romance. This study confirms findings that were reported by Hooke, Capewell and Whyte (2000) and McCabe (2005) who argued that boys are more concerned about sexual intercourse. In contrast, girls are more concerned about commitment in a sexual relationship. These studies found that boys are looking for affection, understanding, and commitment as much as girls, however, boys are more concerned about sexual involvement than girls (Hooke, Capewell, & Whyte, 2000; McCabe, 2005).

Objective 3: To explore which strategies adolescents use when negotiating sexual relationships

This objective was achieved in chapter four, where the collected data were presented and discussed. Findings of the study highlighted that the biggest challenge when negotiating sexual relationships is having communication about the sexual part of the relationship at the beginning and boundary setting. As a result, participants' revealed that girls submit to their partner's sexual demands and acquiesce to sexual intercourse. As a result, the study found that it is ideal to anticipate the sexual part of the relationship, and the other party should not be shocked. It is evident from the findings that communication plays a crucial role in sexual relationships

because both parties need to discuss and reach a mutual agreement about getting sexually involved. However, the study discovered that communication is essentially seen as a challenge between most adolescents. Also that mutual agreement to have a sexual encounter is often absent in sexual relationships. Some female participants mentioned that adolescents can either be open or reluctant to discuss the sexual encounter in the relationship. They believe that it is better avoided than discussed.

As discussed in the literature review, De Vries et al. (2014) found that girls and boys are aware that non-consensual sex exist in sexual relationships. De Vries et al (2014) argues that boys as compared to girls, hold more positive views about non-consensual sex and they often associate this with signs of love, acceptable to punish a female partner, appropriate to fulfil sexual urges and fit if the girlfriend is financially dependent on the boyfriend. In the study, participants highlighted that adolescents are reluctant to talk about sexual intercourse beforehand because they see it as weird and unacceptable to assume that sexual intercourse will occur in their relationships. Male participants seemed to be more concerned about how the other party would react if the discussion is started by the other. As a result, these findings revealed that girls and boys have conflicting agendas. In other words, girls and boys have different expectations that contradict with each other.

In addition, the study discovered that girls tend to use excuses to avoid being sexually intimate. Female participants suggested that it is better to make excuses rather than openly discussing the sexual part of the relationship. On the other hand, male participants mentioned that they plan before the sexual encounter by carrying condoms with them when they meet their girlfriends, so it is pre-planned. They also disclosed that before meeting their girlfriends, they would either carry condoms just in case they have intercourse or obtain them from friends when they sense that intercourse will become a certainty. Other participants mentioned that it comes as a surprise to both parties where they want to engage in sexual encounters without verbal communication and planning beforehand.

Objective 4: To explore what sexual education programmes have been implemented in the secondary schools to address issues around sexual relationships

This objective was achieved in chapter four after discussing and presenting the findings. The study found that adolescents get information about sexual matters from the life orientation subject taught in schools and from the soccer football team such as grassroots football and other organisations that occasionally come to their schools. Participants indicated that the Life

Orientation curriculum or content does not address the sexual issues openly. The content of the subject does not look into other aspects of an individual that can be affected when in a relationship, such as their emotional and spiritual being. Participants believed that the Life Orientation subject does not comprehensively and adequately address all issues around sexual relationships. Another challenge uncovered from these findings is about accessing these sexual education programmes. Organizations that assist schools by offering sexual education do not target all secondary schools but select certain secondary schools and overlook other schools.

Similarly, grassroots football only assisted one of the schools in teaching sexual education where this data has been collected and overlooked the other school in which the participants were located. In this study, participants spoke about the stigma related to the way teachers teach about teenage pregnancy. They suggested that sex education should deliver content on teenage pregnancy in a positive way without stigma. The teachers who offer sex education should be non-judgmental and welcoming. Participants mentioned that there are things they wish to learn from the subject. However, the subject is limited to a specific content that includes safe sexual practices such as using a condom and that sexual risk behaviours have consequences that include teenage pregnancy, HIV, and STIs infections.

Drawing from the findings of the study, adolescents have more access to sexual education at school as compared to their homes. Literature review revealed that sex is often seen as a taboo subject to talk about (Nambambi & Mufune, 2011). Part from secondary schools, discussions around sex happen either with elders giving advice to the youth, or with peers advising each other. Again, direct expressions are not used during sex discussions, instead they use “language coated with euphemisms, politeness, idioms, gestures and symbols” because explicit or direct expression is considered as a disrespect or disgrace (Ndinda, Uzodike, Chimbwete, & Mgeyane, 2011, p. 2). Moreover, parents are unwilling to talk to their children concerning sex and as a result they limit their discussions to the importance of virginity and side line issues such as sexual activity and the consequences thereof, and sharing information on reproduction health services (Mudhovozi et al., 2012). Parents have fear to corrupt their children due to being explicit as they believe that they will promote sexual activity or sexual experimentation in their children, and therefore they resort to impart messages associated with danger, shame and fear as well as the value and honour that comes with maintaining virginity (Mudhovozi et al., 2012).

Objective 5: To explore adolescents' views on how secondary schools can enhance programmes on sexual education

Participants suggested that there should be focus group discussions conducted in class. Teachers can facilitate the group discussions, and adolescents, both male, and female will educate each other about their experiences in sexual relationships. The disadvantages and advantages of sexual relationships should be discussed so that everyone will be informed to make sound decisions. Participants suggested that sex education programmes should reach all adolescents by focusing more on male learners rather than focusing more on female learners. Again, participants believed that the content of sex education is biased and mainly focuses on girls rather than on boys. They reasoned that girls are taught and encouraged to abstain from sexual activities, whereas boys are not discouraged. In conclusion, participants suggested that boys should be informed about what is relevant to them.

In light of the literature review, authors such as Mudhovozi et al. (2012) and Nambambi and Mufune (2011) suggested that proper communication between parents and young people on sexual matters may increase the use of contraceptives, the time taken to become sexual active, girls become less likely to fall prey of premarital pregnancy, reduce multiple sexual partners and STI's. Barriers that lead parents not to impart sexual education to their adolescents were found to include embarrassment, unawareness of what to discuss, lack of confidence, poor parental communication skills, fear that sex education will lead to sexual experimentation, as well as the lack of traditions which usually leads parents to discuss sexual matters with their children and fear to corrupt their children (Nambambi & Mufune, 2011). Again, it is emphasised in this study that, as much as sex is considered a taboo subject, adolescents direly need discussions around sexual matters because studies and statistics have revealed that a great number of adolescents are engaging in sexual activities and should therefore be educated to be more responsible in their sexual relationships to avoid issues such as teenage pregnancy and contracting of STIs.

5.3. KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Finding 1: Appropriate age to start a relationship with someone special

Participants in the study could not indicate the appropriate age to start a relationship with someone special. They suggested that the appropriate age to be in a relationship with a particular person starts from 12 years to 21 years. During the study, participants concluded by highlighting that being in a relationship has no age limit. It has no specific age, and that it just

happens at any time, provided that the two people in the relationship are ready to be together. As a result, some participants argued that adolescents cannot enter into sexual relationships without engaging in sexual activities. Some saw the potential to have a lifetime partner. However, the findings ultimately indicated that relationships can be important for some individuals and not for others and that not all adolescent's value being in relationships.

Finding 2: The importance of negotiating and gaining consent before intercourse

In the study male participants acknowledged that it is essential to seek consent from their sexual partner before having a sexual encounter. However, as much as participants understood how important negotiating the sexual part of the relationship before the sexual encounter is, male participants highlighted that they do not discuss the sexual part of the relationship until it happens. They believe that when the time is convenient, it might happen depending on whether their partner agrees. Moreover, these findings illustrate that sexual intentions and expectations are not verbally communicated. Participants underlined that over time in the relationship, whatever that the partners do together will build-up to the moment where either both or one party is ready to have a sexual encounter with the other. Male participants believe that girls should read the gestures or situational cues about what will happen next in their sexual relationship. As a result, boys have their expectations fulfilled because girls fail to communicate their unwillingness about having intercourse to their partners beforehand. On the other hand, girls were seen to be aware of what can happen and what their partner wants and would still submit to their partner's sexual demands. Therefore negotiation for a sexual encounter becomes virtually impossible.

In the review of sexual consent by Fantasia, Sutherland, Fontenot and Ierardi (2014), sexual consent has been found to be complicated, rarely verbal and unclear but instead more straightforward when implied by the situation that happens between partners such as physical behaviours like kissing, petting, fondling and being alone with a partner. This literature confirms the findings by suggesting that adolescents use non-verbal communication as a strategy to negotiate. On the other hand, Brady et al. (2018) explained that it is usually male partners who seek and initiate intercourse without seeking consenting prior. Therefore, it should be the female responsibility to either refuse or act along to show their interest in having intercourse.

Finding 3: One sexual partner

The majority of male participants understood that most adolescents find it difficult to abstain from sexual intercourse and argued that adolescents should have a sexual encounter with one person. On the other hand, the minority of male participants disagreed and stated that it is difficult to abstain because they find themselves in situations where they find it difficult to resist getting tempted. These quotes suggest that participants were aware that there are consequences after having sexual intercourse. A study by Doyle, Mavedzenge, Plummer and Ross (2012) highlights that the consequences of having unprotected sexual intercourse include HIV and AIDS and unplanned pregnancies, and these are associated with having multiple partners. Studies show that there is a high prevalence of people who contract STIs, including HIV and AIDS, by engaging in unprotected sexual intercourse with multiple partners (Cherie & Berhane, 2012; UNAIDS, 2018; UNICEF, 2018), some participants disagreed with the idea of having one sexual partner.

Finding 4: Peer pressure

Participants in the study shared that adolescents are often influenced by friends to have a sexual encounter. The study explored how their peers influence adolescents to start engaging in sexual activities, and participants shared their thoughts. Male participants cited that it is pressure imposed by their peers as a leading reason and prime driver to engage in sexual activities. These participants indicated that their peers put them under pressure during their interactions. They experience this pressure when their peers start sharing their sexual experiences, which leads them to initiate sexual relationships and subsequently engage in sexual activities. They do this to have input and contribute their sexual experiences when interacting with their peers. Female participants had nothing to say about peer influence as they were against getting involved in sexual relationships and engaging in sexual activities.

Studies that explored peer influence among adolescents support this finding by highlighting that peer affiliation encourages adolescents to initiate and pursue sexual relationships and be influenced to have sexual intercourse (Cherie & Berhane, 2012; Prinstein, Meade, & Cohen, 2003). Collins et al. (2019) support this finding by suggesting that adolescents' boys feel the pressure from their friendship to showcase to them that they can also get a girlfriend. Moreover, Heeralal (2014) argues that adolescent boys are more vulnerable to peer pressure that encourages them to engage in sexual intercourse than girls.

In contrast, the study has found that it is not all adolescent boys who are vulnerable to peer pressure. Some male participants viewed that it is an individual decision to choose whether to have a partner or not depending on what they want for themselves. Moreover, some studies acknowledge that both adolescent boys and girls experience peer pressure to engage in sexual activities to gain status and popularity within the group. According to Vanden-Abeele, Campbell, Eggermont and Roe (2014), both adolescent girls and boys who are popular tend to engage more in sexual activity than less popular peers. A study by Grant (2012) also substantiates these findings by highlighting that both girls and boys are susceptible to sexual activity triggered by peer pressure and mentioned that girls are vulnerable because of their desire to have good things and aspire to look just like their better-off friends. As a result they are open to sexual activity with men who have money exchanging monetary value and gifts.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1 Department of Basic Education

Given the findings from this study, it is recommended that the DBE consider revising the content of the LO curriculum. It might be conducive if the DBE engages experts or guest speakers to present sex education in schools. It is proposed that sex education programmes in schools should empower learners to delay sexual involvement. The following is recommended for consideration as part of the content of sex education programmes:

- Adolescents need knowledge and skills about why and how to say "no" to engage in sexual activities, especially when they are not ready.
- Adolescents need to be informed about negotiating sexual encounters beforehand and negotiation for consent.
- In particular, it should be emphasised more for boys to respect their partner's when they say "no". That "no" means "no". They should not rely on using non-verbal strategies to express their sexual interest because that could result in unwanted sexual activities that could then lead to other issues later on.
- Additionally, adolescents need to learn how to communicate their intentions and expectations at the beginning and during their relationships. Skills in setting boundaries regarding sexual behaviour in the relationship are also needed.

These points may provide a means to delay the initiation of sexual intercourse among adolescents because adolescents will be assertive enough to communicate their wishes in relationships. They need to be empowered with knowledge on how they can avoid having a

sexual encounter rather than focusing on the consequences of such behaviour and the content that focuses on STIs and pregnancy prevention.

In addition, School Social Workers are recommended to consider conducting workshops in schools to educate parents and legal guardians about the need to engage children on sexual matters. This would be to ensure that these learners are also supported with sex education even at home.

5.4.2 Secondary Schools

In light of the findings, it is recommended that secondary schools look into the need to monitor how learners are taught LO and if they are taught openly and comprehensively about sexual matters. The findings revealed that the content of sexual education in LO subject is not explicit, and the content seems to favour female learners the most compared to male learners. The researcher proposes the following measures to be put in place:

School Social Workers should be considered to conduct focus group discussions on topics that relate to sex education and facilitate them. Furthermore, School Social Workers can help suggest sex education topics most relevant to learners and the kind of content that is more suitable for meeting their needs.

It is recommended that more sex education programmes be established to encourage both girls and boys to abstain from sexual involvement. These sexual programmes should equip girls and boys with skills and knowledge to promote chastity and equip them with skills to resist peer pressure that contributes as a leading factor to their sexual involvement.

5.4.3 Future research

The following recommendations are proposed for future research:

More studies should be conducted in other communities and schools to determine whether adolescents throughout the province have similar beliefs and perceptions regarding sexual relationships. These studies can include LO teachers as key informants.

Furthermore, researchers should consider looking at the following specific theme in the field for further research:

- Future studies should consider exploring the views of DBE officials, who are responsible for the curriculum development on how sexual education could be developed as an independent curriculum that could be taught on its own, without other

learning areas and topics just like in the Life orientation subject. The results of the study created a solid basis for further research in this regard.

In addition, future studies should consider making use of different data collection methodologies.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Mabasa

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: H20/03/09**
PROJECT TITLE	Beliefs and perceptions of adolescents about sexual relationships: A case of two public secondary schools in Soweto, Gauteng
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Ms T Mabasa
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	Human and Community Development/
DATE CONSIDERED	13 March 2020
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved Risk Level: Medium
EXPIRY DATE	04 October 2023

DATE 05 October 2020 **CHAIRPERSON** J. Knight
(Professor J Knight)

cc: Supervisor : Professor E Pretorius

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10004, 10th Floor, Senate House, University. Unreported changes to the application may invalidate the clearance given by the HREC (Non-Medical)

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to complete a six (6) month progress report.**

_____ **Signature** **Date** ____/____/____

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Go to

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

APPENDIX B: LEARNER ASSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY

Title of the study: Perceptions of adolescents about sexual relationships: a case of two public secondary schools in Soweto, Gauteng

I _____

_____ (full name) agree to participate in the research study being conducted by Tintswalo Mabasa, a postgraduate student from the Department of Social Work at the University of the Witwatersrand. I have read the information sheet and understand what the research project involves.

I understand that:

- ✓ My participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may refuse to answer any questions I might not feel comfortable with or about.
- ✓ I have been informed that I have the right to withdraw my participation in the study at any time and that will not be held against me.
- ✓ I agree to participate in the focus group or open ended survey (structured as a written interview) after school.
- ✓ Due to the nature of focus group discussions, confidentiality and anonymity cannot be guaranteed.
- ✓ I understand that the information I provide will be used in the write up of a master's project and may also be presented in conferences and journal articles.

Name of participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

APPENDIX C: LEARNER ASSENT FORM FOR AUDIO-RECORDING OF THE FOCUS GROUP

Title of the study: Perceptions of adolescents about sexual relationships: a case of two public secondary schools in Soweto, Gauteng

I _____

_____ (full name) agree to participate in the research study being conducted by Tintswalo Mabasa, a postgraduate student in the Department of Social Work at the University of the Witwatersrand. I have read the information sheet and understand what the research project involves.

I understand that:

- ✓ The reason for recording the focus group discussions is to ensure accuracy when transcribing the information I share.
- ✓ I understand that all the information I provide that could identify me will be removed and will not be used in the transcripts and the research report.
- ✓ The transcripts may be stored and used for future research without any identifying information directly linked to me.
- ✓ Due to the nature of focus group discussions, confidentiality and anonymity cannot be guaranteed.
- ✓ I have been informed that the duration of the focus group will take about 45 to 60 minutes in the after school.

Name: _____

_____

_____

Date: _____

_____

_____

Signature: _____

_____

_____

APPENDIX D: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS

Title of the study: Perceptions of adolescents about sexual relationships: a case of two public secondary schools in Soweto, Gauteng

Good day,

My name is Tintswalo Mabasa, a post graduate student registered for the Master of Arts degree in Social Work at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of my studies I have to undertake a research project, and my focus of study is on the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents about sexual relationships and the views of adolescents on the sexual education programmes offered in schools. The aim of this research project is to gather information that could be useful to develop a guideline for appropriate awareness programmes around sexual education. The study plan, is to use focus groups. One focus group discussion for boys and another one for girls which will be facilitated by me. However, if focus group discussions are not possible due to COVID19, an open ended survey (structured as a written interview) will be used as an alternative method of data collection. I would like to request your permission for your child(ren) to participate in the research project. Your child(ren) will be asked to give written assent. I have been granted permission by the department of education and the school to conduct the study.

Participation of learners is voluntary and they can withdraw from the study at any time. There will be no advantages or disadvantages associated with participating or not. I shall arrange a separate focus group discussions for boys and another one for girls only which will be facilitated by me. The learners will be required to participate in focus group discussions and will last for 45 to 60 minutes after school hours. Alternatively, if the situation is such that the researcher cannot collect data using focus groups, an open ended survey (structured as a written interview) will be used telephonically. The questions on the open ended survey will be sent through a WhatsApp group and the answers will be recorded.

They will also be allowed not to answer or respond to questions that make them feel uncomfortable. Under no circumstances will any of the learners' responses be shown to anyone other than me and my research supervisor. However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed due to the nature of focus groups. Personal details including the name of learners will not be

included in the final report. Data collected will be stored in a password protected computer and may be used for future research.

For further information, I can be contacted at the following numbers should you wish to enquire further information regarding the project: 072 989 1542 or at my email address, Tintswalom7@gmail.com or my supervisor Prof Edmarie Pretorius on 011 717 4476 or Edmarie.Pretorius@wits.ac.za .We shall answer the questions to the best of our ability. If you have any concerns or complaints about the study, please contact Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical) Contact Details: Chairperson: Jasper.Knight@wits.ac.za or the administrator: Ms Shaun Schoeman Tel: 011 717 1408 or Shaun.Schoeman@wits.ac.za

I would like to thank you for taking interest in my research project.

Yours Sincerely

Tintswalo Mabasa

Date: 01 July 2020

PARENT CONSENT FORM (including audio recording permission)

I _____

_____ agree that _____

_____ may participate in a focus group discussion facilitated by Tintswalo Mabasa, for her study on the perceptions of adolescents about sexual relationships. I understand that:

- ✓ Participation in this research is voluntary
- ✓ That my child will participate in either the open ended survey (structured as a written interview) or the focus group discussions
- ✓ That focus group discussions will be recorded and the recording will be stored in a password protected computer with restricted access to both the researcher and the supervisor
- ✓ My child is allowed to withdraw from the study anytime and that will not be held against your child
- ✓ Anonymity with focus groups cannot be guaranteed in resulting research reports or publications
- ✓ Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed due to the nature of focus groups

Thank you for allowing your child to participate in my study.

Signed: _____

_____

Date:_____

APPENDIX E: PARTICIPATION INFORMATION SHEET FOR LEARNERS

Title of the study: Perceptions of adolescents about sexual relationships: a case of two public secondary schools in Soweto, Gauteng

Good day,

My name is Tintswalo Mabasa, a post graduate student registered for the Master of Arts degree in Social Work at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of my studies I have to undertake a research project, and my focus of study is on the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents about sexual relationships and the views of adolescents on the sexual education programmes offered in schools. The aim of this research project is to gather information that could be useful to develop a guideline for appropriate awareness programmes around sexual education. I therefore, wish to invite you to participate in my study by taking part in either a focus group discussion or an open ended survey. One focus group discussion for boys and another one for girls which will be facilitated by me. However, if focus group discussions are not possible due to COVID19, an open ended survey (structured as a written interview) will be used as an alternative method of data collection.

If you agree to take part in the study, I shall arrange the focus group discussions one for boys and another for girls. The focus group discussion will last between 45 to 60 minutes, and it will take place after school hours. However, if the situation is such that the researcher cannot collect data using focus groups, an open ended survey (structured as a written interview) will be used telephonically. The questions on the open ended survey will be sent through a WhatsApp group and the answers will be recorded.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and if you refuse to participate, nothing will be held against you. There will be no advantages or disadvantages associated with participating or not. You are free to choose to withdraw at any time without any penalty. You may choose not to answer questions you feel uncomfortable answering.

Given your permission, I would also like to record the focus group discussions using an audio recordings. No one other than the researcher and the supervisor will have access to the audio recordings.

The audio recordings will be saved on a password protected computer. A copy of the focus group transcript without any identifying information will be stored permanently in a locked cupboard and may be used for future research.

Please note that due to the nature of focus group discussions, confidentiality and anonymity of your responses cannot be guaranteed. However, participants are encouraged to respect the privacy of their fellow participants and not repeat what is said in the focus group to others. Be assured that your name and personal details will be kept confidential and will not be included in the final research report.

The focus group discussions and/or completing the open-ended survey may include sensitive issues, and there is possibility that you may experience some feelings of emotional distress. Should you experience any distress or discomfort, we will stop the focus group discussion for a while or resume at another time. If you feel the need for counselling following the focus group discussion or after completion of the open-ended survey, I have arranged for services to be provided free of charge at Youth Opportunities South Africa (YOSA). To make an appointment, you may contact qualified social workers on 078 222 5783 or 065 874 4573.

Should you have any questions regarding my study, please contact me on 072 989 1542 or email Tintswalom7@gmail.com or my supervisor Prof Edmarie Pretorius on 011 717 4476 or Edmarie.Pretorius@wits.ac.za .We shall answer the questions to the best of our ability. If you have any concerns or complaints about the study, please contact Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical) Contact Details: Chairperson: Jasper.Knight@wits.ac.za or the administrator: Ms Shaun Schoeman Tel: 011 717 1408 or Shaun.Schoeman@wits.ac.za

Thank you for taking your time to consider participating in the study.

Yours Sincerely

Tintswalo Mabasa

APPENDIX F: FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

Title of the study: Perceptions of adolescents about sexual relationships: a case of two public secondary schools in Soweto, Gauteng

QUESTIONS:

As adolescents, a relationships with someone special is important.

1. What do you understand about having a relationship with someone special?
2. At what age do you think it is appropriate to be in relationship with someone special?
3. Why do you think it is important to have a relationship with someone special?
4. What are your expectations of a relationship with someone special?
5. In general what are your views on sexual relationships among adolescents?
6. What are your beliefs about sexual relationships among adolescents?
7. When you enter into a serious relationship with a partner, how do you negotiate/discuss/talk about the sexual part of the relationship?
8. Sexual education programmes are implemented in many schools. Do you think that these programmes address the issues openly and what are your views about the content of the programmes offered at the schools?
9. If you were employed by the Department of Education and your assignment is to develop the sexual education programmes for secondary schools in South Africa, what content would you suggest to be part of the programmes and how do you think these programmes should be presented?

APPENDIX G: GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

GAUTENG PROVINCE
Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/4/1/2

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	**25 February 2020**
Validity of Research Approval:	**04 February 2020 – 30 September 2020** **2019/414**
Name of Researcher:	**Mabasa T.L**
Address of Researcher:	**House No 21**
	24 Erasmus Straat
	Bramley View, 2090
Telephone Number:	***072 989 1542***
Email address:	**1118079@students.wits.ac.za**
Research Topic:	**Beliefs and perceptions of adolescents about sexual relationships: A case of four public secondary schools in Soweto, Gauteng.**
Type of qualification	**Master of Art in Social Work**
Number and type of schools:	**Four Secondary Schools**
District/s/HO	**Johannesburg North and Johannesburg Central**

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

25/02/202

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management
7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel: (011) 355 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

1. *Letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*
2. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.*
3. *A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*
4. *A letter / document that outline the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.*
5. *The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.*
6. *Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.*
7. *Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.*
8. *Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.*
9. *It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.*
10. *The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.*
11. *The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.*
12. *On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.*
13. *The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.*
14. *Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.*

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards



Mr Gumani Mukatuni
Acting CES: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 25/02/2020

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management
7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel: (011) 355 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

APPENDIX H: YOSA RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTTER

Reg. 2016/022961/08
PBO: 930067049
8299 Sisulu/Mahalefele
Road Orlando West
Tel: +27 630712093
Cell: +27 72 663 9448

Youth Opportunities South Africa | +2776118 6382 | info@youthopportunitiessa.org www.youthopportunitiessouthafrica.org

24 August 2020

Dear Miss Tintswalo Mabasa

Re: **Permission to Carry Out Your Research in Youth Opportunities South Africa**

Here is hoping that you are well.

You are welcome to proceed with your research in Youth Opportunities South Africa (YOSA) however, in the execution thereof; you are reminded to heed the non-negotiable aspects of being mindful of protecting contact time.

YOSA has express authority to work in all schools in the Johannesburg Central District. Our social workers are placed in schools to improve the teaching and learning environment through direct services to learners, educators, and parents/guardians. You will therefore be placed to work alongside the relevant Youth Development officers who will facilitate your access to conduct your focus group discussions.

We note that you have already obtained approval of the Gauteng Department Education. YOSA wishes you great success with your research and reminds you to comply with the terms and conditions against which approval has been granted by the Knowledge Management and Research Directorate of the Department of Education.

Yours Faithfully,

Astonishment Mapurisa
Director

APPENDIX I: RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER FROM SCHOOL



IBHONGO HIGH SCHOOL

575 Cnr Dinizulu Street & Chris Hani Road
Tel: (011) 986 8258
Fax: (011) 984 2583
ibhongohighschool@gmail.com
info@ibhongohighschool.co.za
www.ibhongohighschool.co.za

23 September 2020

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The above mentioned school has permitted Tintswalo Mabasa Student no: 1118079 to conduct research with our learners between the ages of 14 and18 years as per your request.

Thank you for highlighting the fact that, the research participation is voluntary as we may not impose learners to participate. We are hoping that their parents will grant them permission to take part on the research.

Hope you will find this in order.

Thank you.

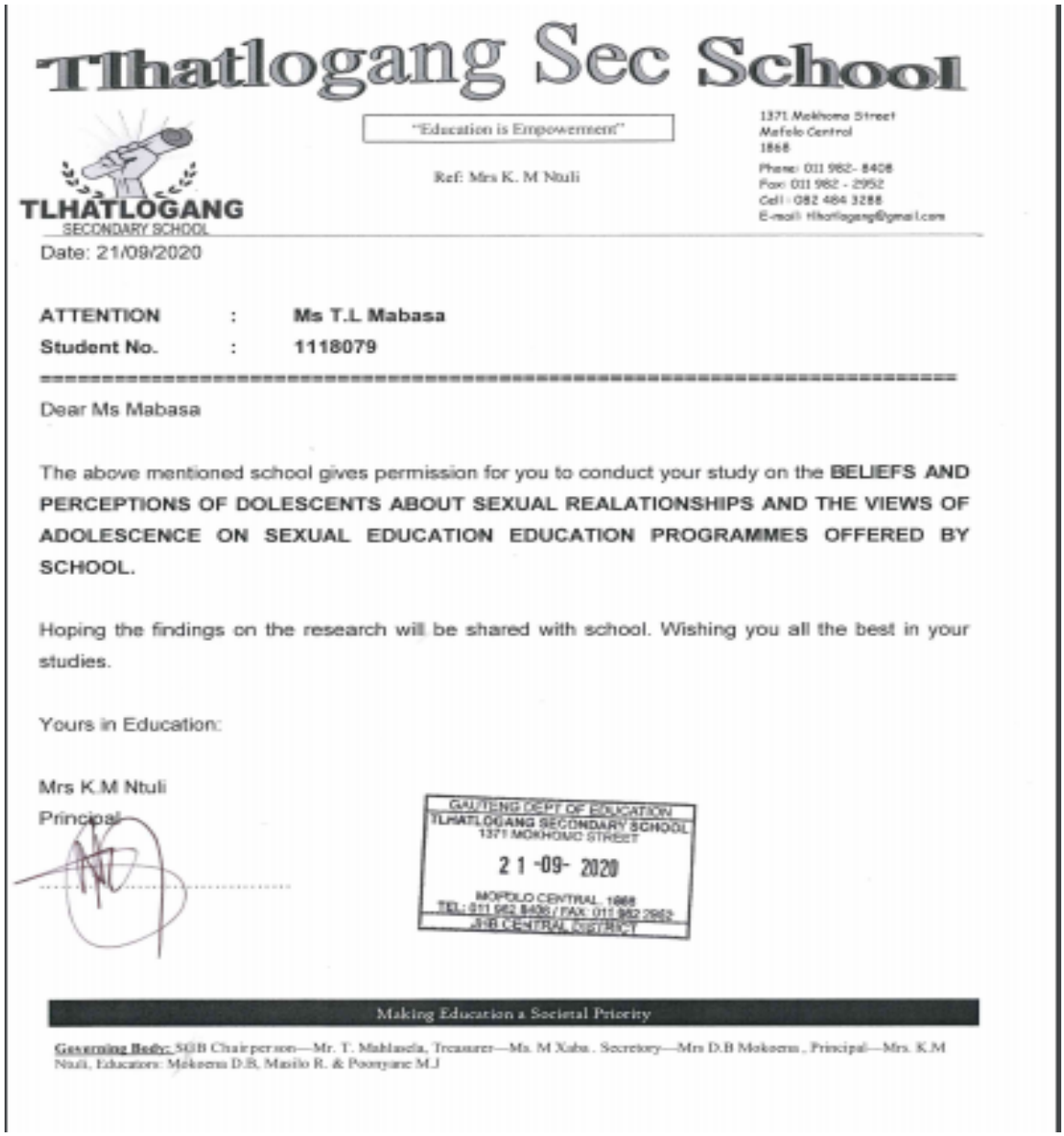
Regards

PRINCIPAL

Ms B.M Mpambo

IBHONGO HIGH SCHOOL
Striving for Excellence
23 SEP 2020
575 Dinizulu Str & Chris Hani Rd, Diepmeadow
P.O. Box 133, Tshiawelo 1818
Tel: (011) 986-8258 Fax: (011) 984-2583
Email: 121392@gov.za.net

APPENDIX J: RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER FROM SCHOOL



Tlhatlogang Sec School

TLHATLOGANG
SECONDARY SCHOOL

"Education is Empowerment"

Ref: Mrs K. M Ntuli

1371 Mokhomo Street
Mafelo Central
1868
Phone: 011 982- 8408
Fax: 011 982 - 2952
Cell : 082 484 3288
E-mail: tlhatlogang@gmail.com

Date: 21/09/2020

ATTENTION : Ms T.L Mabasa
Student No. : 1118079

Dear Ms Mabasa

The above mentioned school gives permission for you to conduct your study on the **BELIEFS AND PERCEPTIONS OF DOLESCENTS ABOUT SEXUAL REALATIONSHIPS AND THE VIEWS OF ADOLESCENCE ON SEXUAL EDUCATION EDUCATION PROGRAMMES OFFERED BY SCHOOL.**

Hoping the findings on the research will be shared with school. Wishing you all the best in your studies.

Yours in Education:

Mrs K.M Ntuli
Principal

GAUTENG DEPT OF EDUCATION
TLHATLOGANG SECONDARY SCHOOL
1371 MOKHOMO STREET
21 -09- 2020
MOFOLO CENTRAL, 1868
TEL: 011 982 8408 / FAX: 011 982 2952
MOFOLO CENTRAL 1868

Making Education a Societal Priority

Governing Body: SGB Chairperson—Mr. T. Mahlaela, Treasurer—Ms. M Xaba . Secretary—Mrs D.B Mokoena , Principal—Mrs. K.M Ntuli, Educators: Mokoena D.B, Masilo R. & Poonyane M.J